

Yellow-browed Warbler....

upperparts, white underparts, distinct pale yellowish supercilium, white edged tertials, pale legs, pale base of bill and prominent wing bars.

The bird was very shy and came out from the foliage only for a very few seconds. I visited this site three times but could not see it again. But, on 4 February 2022, I saw the same bird there and got good photographs. More photographs of this bird are given in eBird checklists: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S98834372>, <https://ebird.org/checklist/S102000629>.

The Yellow-browed Warbler is a vagrant to Gujarat (Ganpule 2016) and Dr. Anand Patel had photographed a Yellow-browed Warbler at Shoolpaneshwar WLS on 25 December 2015 – see eBird checklist <https://ebird.org/checklist/>

S96386913. As per eBird data, Ashwin Vishwanathan and Esha Munshi recorded the call of this warbler at the Mahal Campsite, in Dangs, on 12 February 2022. It is possible that this warbler is overlooked due to identification difficulties. Birders should be on the look-out for this warbler in well wooded areas of Gujarat. If good photographs are obtained, then identification is easier and call recordings can confirm the identification beyond doubt. It is likely that more records of this species will be made in the coming years.

References

Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo* 8(3) – 12(4): 2-40 □

Sighting of Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* at Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar

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The Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) is a medium-sized owl, which lives in edges of woodlands, forests and groves. Long-eared Owls are distributed in Europe, western, central, and eastern Asia, North America, Northern Africa, and the northern Indian Subcontinent. This species is a winter visitor to Pakistan and Northwest India. For Gujarat, this species is considered to be a winter vagrant (Ganpule 2016). There are historical records from Kachchh (Ali 1954) and two recent sightings are known from Kachchh; one with photograph from Naliya grasslands (Deomurari 2012) and another is a sight record from Banni (Joshua *et al.* 2006).

A Long-eared Owl was seen and photographed at Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar, on 27 February 2022 by Shrey Mehta along with the authors. The authors and Shrey Mehta were on a safari in the national park and they saw this bird perched on a *Prosopis juliflora*, locally known as *gando-baval*, about five feet from the ground and approximately 20 feet away from the safari road. The nearest wetland is approximately 500-600 mts from this site. The bird was located at around 08:30 hrs and was seen for about five minutes. Shrey Mehta managed to get good photographs of this owl, which helped in confirming the identification. This bird was seen only once in the national park and attempts to relocate it failed.

This is first record of the Long-eared Owl from the Saurashtra region.



Photo: Shrey Mehta

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Beak deformity in Sand Lark *Alaudala raytal* near Navlakhi, Morbi District

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There are numerous salt-pans near Navlakhi, in Morbi District. The Sand Lark (*Alaudala raytal*) is quite common in these salt-pans, especially around small temples where local villagers put grains and keep pots filled with water for the birds. At such places, more than 20 Sand Larks are usually present in the morning and late evening, feeding on the grains and drinking water. I visit this area frequently to watch waders and other birds. I report here two instances of beak deformity in Sand Larks observed in this area.

mandible could have led to difficulties for this bird during feeding and while drinking. But, surprisingly, on a visit to the



On 19 February 2019, while photographing Sand Larks, I saw an individual with a deformed beak (photo 1); both the mandibles were overgrown, making the bill rather long, with a curved upper mandible and a gap was visible between the mandibles. This bird had normal movements and was seen feeding on the grains. A different individual, again with a beak deformity, seen on 15 August 2021, had a very long lower mandible, while the upper mandible was short but not like in normal birds (photo 2). This individual also had a deformed/diseased left foot. It was possible that the long lower



same area on 17 April 2022, I happened to see this Sand Lark again (photo 3). Since the bill was so distinctive, I recognized this individual immediately. Though it was difficult for this bird to pick up grains, it was actively feeding by lowering its head, picking up a grain in its beak and swallowing it. It was noted that this individual was in worn plumage; when seen earlier in August 2021, it was in fresh plumage and the difference between the fresh and worn plumage can be seen in the photos presented here. The