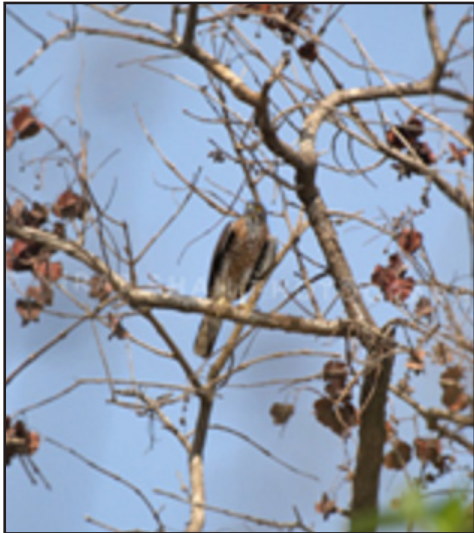




### **Sighting of Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* near Junagadh**

I visited Narayan Dhara, Bhavanth area, near Junagadh, on 21 January 2021. There, I saw many flycatchers like Asian Brown Flycatcher (*Muscicapa dauurica*), Brown-breasted Flycatcher (*M. muttui*) and Taiga Flycatcher (*Ficedula albicilla*). I saw one different looking flycatcher which was somewhat shy and was harassed by the Asian Brown Flycatcher. It was overall brown above with rufous throat and breast, white belly, black bill and weak eye ring. I identified as a female Blue-throated Flycatcher (*Cyornis rubeculoides*). On 22 January, 27 January and 3 February, I saw it at the same place. Many other bird watchers also saw it here. It was last seen on 18 March 2021 by Naman Doshi at the same place. This suggests it was winter migrant to the Girnar area. The Blue-throated Flycatcher has been seen in a few places in Gujarat; it was recently seen in South Gujarat in Vansada National Park (Jat 2022). Bird watchers should look out for this species in Gujarat during the winter.

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### **Besra *Accipiter virgatus* in Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary**

On 23 April 2022, I was bird-watching in Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary when I heard "tchew-tchew" calls at around 08:30 hrs. This was when small birds like Jungle Babbler (*Turdoides striata*) and White-naped Woodpecker (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*) started uttering alarm calls and so I knew that it had to be a bird of prey. I scanned around with my binoculars but did not see anything. After some time, at around 09:15 hrs, I again heard the same calls and a small bird of prey with a dark mesial stripe on whitish throat, orangish pattern on underparts and dark tail bands took flight and perched in a tree. I took some photographs and identified it as a Besra (*Accipiter virgatus*). I shared the photos with experts and they confirmed that it was a female Besra. The Besra is usually seen in forests from North Gujarat to South Gujarat, and in Gir/Girnar area. There are a few records from Shoolpaneshwar WLS but it is rare here (Khadakkar *et al.* 2016).

I would like to thank Raju Kasambe (BNHS), Mukesh Bhatt, Anil Bharadwaj, Dharmesh Kantharia, and Nirav Bhatt for their precious guidance and for confirming the identification.

**Niraj Shah**



### **Sighting of a 'white' Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* in Gir Wildlife Sanctuary**

I was transferred to the Savarkundala Range of Gir Wildlife Sanctuary on 9 April 2021 and within a week, I saw one 'white' Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) when on my round of Nani-Vadal vidi. But after that sighting, I was unable to see this individual again in my subsequent visits to this area. I thought it may have died during the cyclone 'Tauktae' which had hit this area last year. But on 27 March 2022, I sighted this 'white' peafowl again in the same area and I took pictures of it. It was entirely white, and quite likely the same bird. This bird was with other normal plumaged peafowl in a group, grazing on the ground. This is first instance of a sighting of a 'white' peafowl during my 14 years in Gir Wildlife Sanctuary. There is another instance of a sighting of a 'white' peafowl in a forest area by Raviraj Rathod, DCF Ratanmahal Sanctuary, at the Naldha Camp Site, in Ratanmahal Forest, on 5 May 2022; photos were taken with a mobile. Thus, it is quite surprising that such 'white' Indian Peafowls have been seen in forest areas and are surviving in the wild. The identification of the mutation causing aberrant plumage is often quite difficult; experts need to look into identifying the mutation and the factors causing this.

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