

Short Birding Notes



White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonias leucopeterus*) near Rajkot

I was looking forward to this month to find this bird, as White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonias leucopeterus*). It was only possible to identify it in breeding plumage. It is hard to spot it between flocks of Whiskered Terns (*Chlidonias hybrida*) as it is of the same size and merges almost with the breeding plumage of the Whiskered Terns, I took this at Nyari Dam on 10 April 2021 hope this meets the short note description, not that good on writing notes I always have to take help from Prasad Ganpule, Editor, Flamingo Gujarat.

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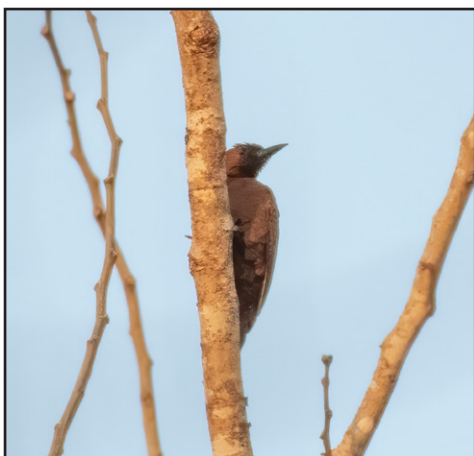


Sighting of Mongolian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella dukhunensis* at Kachchh

Mongolian short-toed Lark or Sykes's Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella dukhunensis*). Earlier, it was considered a subspecies of the Greater Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*), but now, it elevated to a separate species status. Mongolian Short-toed lark can be separated by a short, conical bill and the colour of the bird is warmer brown with a rust-colour tinge on the breast and underparts, there is so much confusion in the identification of this rarity. there are very less confirmed records of Mongolian Short-toed Lark in Gujarat.

I was lucky to confirm clearly by world main Lark experts Per Alstrom and Hadoram Shirihai, at the Servo Dhandh, Nr. Hodko village, Banni. I was photographing birds with my son Nirav Parekh on 6th November 2022 there was a big scattered flock of Bimaculated Lark (*Melanocorypha bimaculata*). Generally, a very small group of 2-5 birds has been seen in Kutch but this time, there was a very big flock of Bimaculated Larks, around 70-80 birds, which were feeding on small plants and at the edge of the water in wet, muddy soil. the birds were feeding in groups and after some time flock was changing spots nearby. As one bird flies, all birds fly. I saw this flock from 6 to 14th November continuously at the long wide edge of Servo and clicked many photographs. While checking photographs after transferring to my laptop, I found some interesting birds which were looking quite different from Bimaculated Larks as well as Greater Short-toed Larks. (See comparison picture: Bimaculated Lark [Top], Greater short-toed lark [Middle], and Mongolian Short-toed lark [Lower]) colour of the bird was warmer brown with a rust-coloured tinge on the breast and underparts, there were at least 3-4 birds that clicked at different times from that flock. while transferring data from Oriental bird images to e bird/maculatory library, my picture of 2014 was classified and uploaded on ebird as a Mongolian short-toed lark which was clicked at Naliya grassland Kutch.

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Rufous Woodpecker (*Micropeternus brachyulus*) at Vandsa National Park

On 19 March 2023, during Dang bird festival, we were birdwatching in Vandsa National Park (VNP). Birds were more active due to the rain previous day. Around 8'o clock, we reached a lake surrounded by tall trees where a Brown-cheeked Fulvetta (*Alcippe poioicephala*) was calling from the top of trees more than usual. So, I was scanning tree canopies to find them. I heard a distinct call of an unknown woodpecker between a Fulvetta calls that drew my attention. Scanning in that direction with binoculars, I saw two Golden Backed Woodpeckers (greater / lesser?) on a tree. Another birdwatcher Sabana pointed out the third woodpecker with those two. I clicked it and checked the photo It was a Rufous Woodpecker (*Micropeternus brachyulus*). I managed to click 2-3 more clicks but it flew away. We also saw an Emerald Dove, Forest Wagtail, Scimitar Babbler, and Malabar Trogon during the same trek. Rufous woodpecker is known to be in VNP, but its sighting is notable.

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