

Sighting of Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) at Kumbharwada Wetland, Bhavnagar

Himanshu Vegad: Bhavnagar. himanshu.bvn@gmail.com

Jay Langaliya: Bhavnagar.

Payal Langaliya: Bhavnagar.

Bhartendu Dave: Bhavnagar.



On the morning of 23rd January 2023, we were doing our birdwatching at Kumbharwada wetland Near Bhavnagar city. The first author sighted a different-looking wader through binocular foraging in a swamp area of wetland. We took a photograph of it. After seeing the photographs, we concluded that it looks like Dowitcher but cannot finalize which one. Then we send photos to senior birdwatchers Jaidevbhai Dhadhal, Kandarp Andharia and Prasad Ganpule and confirmed the bird as Long-billed Dowitcher. We are delighted to find this rarity in the Kumbharwada wetland, Bhavnagar. Subsequently, many birdwatchers from Bhavnagar and other places visited the Kumbharwada wetland and observed this bird at the Same place up to 2nd February 2023. (ebird website).

Referring to its status and distribution in the world 'Fairly

common breeding in arctic beyond tree limit usually near fresh water: in eastern Siberia from the Yana east to western Alaska and north-west Canada. Non-breeding in freshwater wetlands south from California, Virginia, Gulf Coast and Central America to Panama; rarely Hawaii. Regular vagrant to Europe and much less commonly as far east as India' (Chandler 2009). There are a few records of Long-billed Dowitcher in India, in 10 different places (ebird website). In Gujarat, this record is the third one. Earlier Sightings (two) from Marine National Park, near Jamnagar (Froster & Lindholm 2008) and Khijadiya in 2012 (Unpublished photo of Single bird by Laurens Steijn- see Indian Birds 8 (4): 101-103, Photos available) (Ganpule 2016). So, its status and distribution in Gujarat is "Vagrant-Winter. Isolated records from coastal parts of Saurashtra (Ganpule et al. 2022).

Kumbharwada wetland of Bhavnagar is the host of thousands of resident and wintering birds every year, various species of wetland birds, like Geese, Pochards, Ducks, Storks, Teals, wintering raptors and many species of waders. Wetland is degraded by human interference. So, in our view, this wetland should be declared a Ramsar site as it is also eligible.

References

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Sighting of Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrocus birostris*) in Bandiya Beli, Mandav Reserve Forest

Nilesh K. Sapra: Forest colony, Nr. GEB, Thangadh, Dist. Surendranagar, nileshs3012@gmail.com

Mayurdhwajsinh B. Jhala: Garasiya Street, Chotila 363520, Surendranagar, Gujarat, m.zala1211@gmail.com

An Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrocus birostris*) was sighted for the first time at Bandiya Beli, part of Mandav Reserved Forest under Surendranagar division, on May 15, 2022, the day after Cyclone Tauktae hit Gujarat on May 14, 2022. The first author made the first sighting, and later confirmed by the second author. The hornbill was seen at the same place for three

consecutive days. During this period, the bird preferred to sit on Banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*) and Peepal (*Ficus tsiela*) trees. Most of the time, birds were observed eating the fruits that were lying on the ground under these two trees. The sighting was made for two consecutive days, while no sighting was made on the third day. Bandiya Beli patch of forest houses a

dense canopy with huge trees amidst the scrubby forest of Mandav Reserved Forest. The forest of Bandiya Beli is near Thangadh, geographically centered between Rajkot and Surendranagar city. The appearance of this bird at this place is an exclusive sighting that has never been reported earlier.



Despite many searches, it was not found in the surrounding area. About a month and a half later, on June 28, it was seen on

a pile of harvested groundnut crops in a groundnut field adjacent to the reserved forest, about three km northeast of the first location. where the bird used to fly from three trees, Peepal (*Ficus tsiela*), Khijdo (*Prosopis cineraria*), and Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), to the pile and feed the groundnut seeds. After staying there for four consecutive days, the bird was nowhere to be seen.

About a year later, in March 2022, a hornbill was reported to have appeared in Jasdán, Rajkot. Apart from this, a few birds were released in February 2022 in Gir National Park by Wildlife Division Sasan, Junagadh. Before these two occasions, this bird had been seen in the Surendranagar. In any case, this bird may have drifted in this direction due to the storm. And the possibility that the bird seen in Jasdán and roaming around in this area is the same individual cannot be ruled out. The Indian Grey Hornbill is expanding its territory in parts of Gujarat, including parts where it was historically reported and new territory where tree density has increased over the year. □

Sighting of Brown-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa muttui*) at Sundarvan, Ahmedabad

Deep Shah: Park Manager, Sundarvan-Nature Discovery Centre, Jodhpur Tekra, Near ISRO, Ahmedabad, deep.shah@ceeindia.org



Introduction

The Brown-breasted Flycatcher is a small passerine bird in the flycatcher family Muscipidae. The species breeds in North Eastern India, Central and Southern China and Northern Burma and Thailand, and migrates to Southern India and Sri Lanka in winter (Birds of Gujarat 2023). Dull but rather cute flycatcher with large white-framed eyes. Dark brown above and white below with a gray head, brown flanks, and two distinct dark 'mustache' lines (eBird, 2023).

Observations

On 17th February, 2023 (Thursday) at around 3 pm, on a routine Bird watching at Sundarvan- Nature Discovery Centre, Ahmedabad, Brown-breasted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa muttui*) was sighted sallying for insects in an area (23.026° N 72.521° E; 60m above msl) within a radius of 5 m of its perch on a dead tree (~1.5m perching height) situated in a small woodland area surrounded with Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), Asopalav (*Polyalthia longifolia*) and Fishtail Palm (*Caryota urens*). Earlier, it was recorded on March 03, 2018, in an area of Anandnagar Road, Satellite, Ahmedabad (Mukherjee et al. 2020). There are a few other reported sightings of the species in Gujarat state: from Kachchh (Tiwari & Varu 2010), Saurashtra (Varu & Zala 2010), Girnar forest in Junagadh (Mashru 2014; Singhal 2018), Gandhinagar (Mashru 2016), Jamnagar (Sabhaya et al. 2017), Thol Bird Sanctuary, Ahmedabad (Trivedi 2018) and Rajkot District (Sureja et al. 2022).

References

Birds of Gujarat. 2023. Brown-breasted Flycatcher. <https://www.birdsofgujarat.in/chats-old-world-flycatchers/brown-breasted-flycatcher/>