



Flamingo



Newsletter of the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat

Vol.1, No. 3 & 4 : 2003

EDITORIAL

In the last issue of our newsletter, we had drawn attention towards illegal trading of owls by the people believing in black magic or 'superstitions'. The first report of seizing of 9 owls from an 'Ashram' near Nadiad appeared in the newspaper in April 2003. Then started a series of such reports from different parts of the state. Media gave proper coverage to such seizing and helped to bring awareness amongst laymen. Several individuals and NGOs played an important role in seizing of illegally captivated owls.

From several reports we learned that Great Horned Owl *Bubo bubo*, Mottled Wood Owl *Strix ocellata*, Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* and Barn Owl *Tyto alba* were the victims and seized. Besides capturing these species from our forests, the traders had brought some birds from south India too. This is alarming information as prevailing superstitions at one place may take toll of birds in other region also. It is very important that superstitions are broken and black magicians are exposed immediately. We require to take following steps: 1. Discourage people believing in superstitions/ black magic 2. Bring awareness amongst laymen about the superstitions and black magic requiring sacrifices of innocent birds. This can be done by writing popular articles in local daily and fixing posters at public place. 3. Help forest officials to prevent bird trade. 4. The officer seizing birds should know correct identity of the species and each species should be released back in their proper habitat.

The owls are farmer's friends as they are the only check on the population explosion of rodents and some nocturnal insect pests. Unfortunately, the owls and some birds of prey also become victim of secondary poisoning by rodenticides. If the rodents killed by rodenticides are not buried properly, they are consumed by the owls and a chain of secondary poisoning starts, leading to population crash. Hence there is a need for sensible dealing with our nocturnal friends.

First meeting of the expanded executive committee of our society was held in August. We decide to start some field programmes for the members. Under this, a field camp was arranged at Dang during 27-30 October with help of Surat nature Club. Harrier count is proposed at Velavadar National Park in collaboration with state forest department on 22 November.

Though publication of this issue of 'Flamingo' is delayed, we have decided to publish it more regularly. At least 6 issues will be published annually. All the members are requested to send their observations in form of a note or regular article.

ARTICLES

A VISIT TO HINGOLGADH: by Bakul N Trivedi, 19/414, Satyagrah Chhavani, Satellite Road, Ahmedabad - 380 015.

I visited Hingolghadh during 15-16th of August 2003. Because of good rains it was all green around. All small ponds and check dams in this area were almost full; if not overflowing.

I was in look out for Whitebellied Minivet but could not find one. It was disappointing. Small Minivet were seen occasionally but not in groups as I am used to see them elsewhere, routinely. Another bird I was specifically interested in was, Marshall's Iora. I could spot it every time we went out for birding. It was quite satisfactory. Discrete black cap of the male is quite characteristic. Marshall's Iora is distinguishable from Common Iora not only by its plumage but also by its call.

The whole area is ruled by Redvented Bulbuls. There was no place or time you do not see them. I occasionally spotted Common and Jungle Babblers. Little Brown Doves were in plenty, while Ringed Dove I heard once or twice. Other two varieties of doves were not seen. Common Mynas were seen near the fort. Brahminy Mynas too were seen occasionally. We could spot a small flock of Rosy Pastors in flight.

Fort has a small colony of House Swifts. Some 15 – 20 birds were seen in flight, circling over the fort, almost throughout the day. In spite of my best efforts, I could hardly make out them feeding insects in flight. I saw a few Dusky Crag Martins also. I remembered Shri Lalsinhbhai having told me about late Sh. Shivraj Kumar Khacher who had shown him the Crag Martin at this fort, some 20 years back. It was told to me that Alpine Swift is seen here occasionally, but it was not to be this time.

While climbing on 'Zarukhas' of the fort, I also remembered Sh. Lavkumar having mentioned of a traditional nesting of Whitebacked Vulture on the roof of one of them in older times; the nest then was used by Laggar Falcon in later years (I am yet to confirm the year when this happened). Hardly any prey birds today. I spotted one Honey Buzzard in flight. When we were at 'Bhimkui', some 2 km from the fort, one Blackwinged Kite was spotted hovering over Juna Dungar. In a stretch of 7 km between Vinchhiya and Hingolgadh, we counted 4 Blackwinged Kites. But that is all for prey birds. No vultures, no kites.

Roseringed Parakeets seemed to have occupied holes on the eastern face of the fort. Some 4-5 birds were regularly seen in that area. We saw 3 active nests of House Sparrow in the fort. Especially interesting was a pair taking interest in an old nest in Ravan tree (wild Jamun) within the fort premises. I thought initially, that birds must be taking away twigs from the nest for their use elsewhere, but at times they seemed to be rearranging some of the twigs within the nest.

In addition to Franklin's Wren-warbler, I also saw an actively moving Ashy Wren Warbler in its full plumage. I saw a Rufousfronted Wren-warbler so closely for the first time in my life. Rufous on the forehead was quite diagnostic. It was actively foraging in small bush, spending more time on the ground.

Redwinged Bush Lark was another bird I enjoyed watching as it would fly up and then descend down gradually like a parachute spreading its wings. Though the red on the wings was not very distinct in the available light situation, I distinguished it from the Singing Bush Lark by the pattern on its body. After referring the books, I was stunned and rather depressed to see the variety of larks and similarity amongst them! It is difficult to swear and say about their identity. I also noticed one Crested

Lark on our way to 'Bakhalvad' but could not identify which specific one was it!

At Bileshwar Mahadev Temple - about 2 km from Hingolgadh, some old Banyan, Ravan and Peepal trees have created a picturesque spot. Flowing water and check dams have contributed in its tropical transformation. The temple complex has grown significantly. I had a discussion with Sh. Asgarbhai about how such places of worship on one hand have demolished the natural habitat and preserved them in patches around them on the other hand. A few Lesser Whistling Teals and a pair of Comb Duck seemed to have been drawn to this check dam. Later in the daytime, this place was to be flocked by people, as there was a 'Mela'.

A fruit bearing picturesque Banyan tree in 'Bhimkui' - a preserved area of Motisari Jungle - some 2 km from the fort, had attracted about 50 Redvented Bulbuls, a few Brahminy Mynas and a solitary Crimsonbreasted Barbet.

There were some quails too which I am not good at identifying nor they are, in obliging you by revealing themselves fully for a longer period. But we identified Rock Bush Quail for sure from the call.

Going to 'Bakhalvad' at God's acre - a creation by Sh. Asgarbhai Jasdanwala was an experience and deserves a separate write up. An acre of Rain forest is created from a wasteland by Sh. Asgarbhai in the midst of grassland and shrub forest. Though we did not see one during our two days stay, it is said that here one can feed Tickell's Blue Flycatcher in the varandah. Adjoining Alansagar dam had received good waters in this season and so also a little pond in this farm. Some fully-grown Tamarind (AMLI) trees in the farm were home to about 200+ flying foxes. In fact a pair of Spotted Owlet, which had reared two chicks in a tree hole recently, greeted us to the farm. A good birdwatching place as it is, 'Bakhalwad's' visit is incomplete unless you know the man behind the show-Sh. Asgarbhai.

Fairly satisfied with the visit, we returned carrying along with, the enchanting memories of the fort, the shrub jungle, with beautifully shaped 'Gorads' and undulating landscape, with cool breeze creating waves in the grass stretched in front of us.

(Hingolgadh Nature Education Sanctuary popularly known, as 'Hingolgadh' is a shrub jungle spread out in about 6.2 km² area amongst hillocks near Jasdan, in Rajkot district.)

FIRST RECORD OF BREEDING OF GLOSSY IBIS *PLEGADIS FALCINELLUS* IN BHAVNAGAR: by I. R. Gadhvi¹ and V. B. Raol²

: ¹ Zoology Dept, Sir P.P. Institute of Science, Bhavnagar - 364 002, ² "Aishwarya", Hill Drive, Bhavnagar - 364 002.

Glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* is found during monsoon and winter in the marshlands around Bhavnagar. Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) describes it as a rare in Saurashtra. Salim Ali (1956) mentioned the status of this ibis as uncertain. But, in the present years the population of the Glossy Ibis has been strikingly increased. Vikas Trivedi (pers. comm.) observed a flock of about 125 Glossy Ibis in a marshland in Kumbharvada-Nari Road area in Bhavnagar during August 2003.

Good monsoon in the present year has created a very favourable situation in the Krishnakunj Lake in the Victoria Park, Bhavnagar. The area of the lake is about 8-9 ha within the 250 ha reserved forest of Victoria Park. The lake is flooded and the *Prosopis chilensis* shrubs in the water has provided safe nesting site for the waders like ibis, herons, egrets, cormorants, darters etc. One of us (VBR) has been monitoring the colony since July 2003 onwards. In the fourth week of July 5-6 pairs of Glossy Ibis started nesting in the mixed heronry. Video film of the nesting activity was also recorded. Surprisingly in the first week of August the glossy Ibis left the site and shifted to the interior part of the heronry, which could not be monitored, from the shore. The movement of a flock of 25-30 glossy ibis around the heronry revealed the subsistence of nesting activity of the ibis. On 24th August, Dr. Parasharya, Vikas and Dishant recorded a few Glossy Ibises entering in the heronry at 10:00 hrs. The position of nests of Glossy Ibis was not visible from the margin of the lake because of the thick mesh of *Prosopis*. A boat was made available on 12th Sept. and we visited the heronry at 07:30 hrs. We spent 3 hrs in the boat and closely observed the heronry. With our surprise, we counted seven nestlings of Glossy Ibis from three nests. The nestlings were still having rose coloured bill with black band in middle. We took the movie as well as pictures of the parent birds feeding their nestlings. A glossy ibis was also seen incubating in the nest. All the nests were 1-2 m above the water level.

It is probably the first record of breeding of Glossy Ibis in Bhavnagar. Table 1 shows the approximate number of nests of each species in the colony at Krishnakunj Lake.

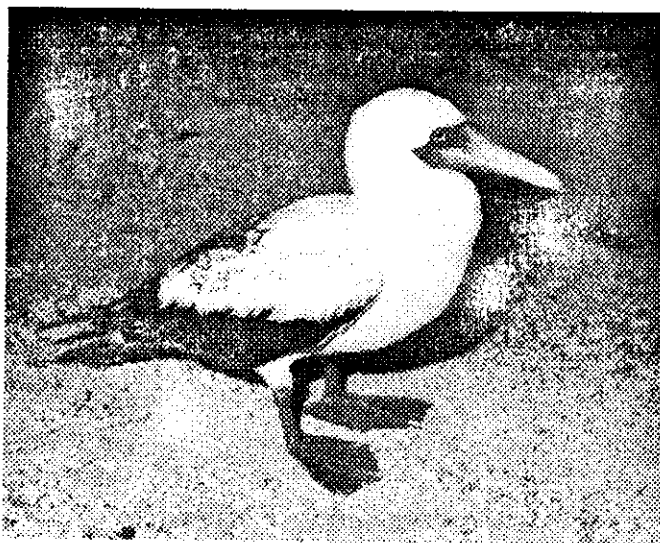
References:

Ali, S., (1956). *The Birds of Gujarat*. Gujarat Research Society, Bombay.
 Dharmakumarsinhji. R. S. (1955). *Birds of Saurashtra*. Times of India Press, Bombay.

Table 1. Nests number of waterbirds in Krishnakunj Lake heronry at, Victoria Park Bhavnagar in September 2003.

Species	No. of Nest
Cattle Egret (<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>)	1500-1600
Little Egret (<i>Egretta garzetta</i>)	800-900
Night Heron (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)	1200-1500
Pond Heron (<i>Ardeola grayii</i>)	30-40
White Ibis (<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>)	700-800
Little Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>)	1200-1500
Indian Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>)	13-14
Greater Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	08-10
Darter (<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>)	04
Glossy Ibis (<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>)	04

SIGHTINGS OF MASKED BOOBY *SULA DACTYLATRA* AT MITHAPUR - FIRST RECORD FOR GUJARAT: by Satish H. Trivedi, Amateur Rangers Nature Club, E-1, New Merchant Colony, Mithapur - 361 345.



Mithapur is located 20 km north of the holy city of Dwarka (22° 14' N, 69° 01' E) in the Jamnagar District of Gujarat. The Dwarka tahsil is a peninsula surrounded by the Arabian Sea on the west and north and the Gulf of Kachchh on the east. Aquatic birds visit this place in hordes, particularly during the winter season as the Dwarka tahsil has a long coastline with tidal mudflats and a number of wetlands. Many a times one also gets to see birds which are not common to this region.

The Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*, which is never reported earlier from Gujarat state, has been sighted a number of times in and around Mithapur during 1988 to 1994. However, since then there have been no reports of this bird. Details of the records are given below.

9th August 1987: A dead Masked Booby was found on Mithapur beach. The lower mandible of the beak had cracks on either side with traces of blood. The body had two puncture marks (could be of canine teeth of some predator) with fresh bloodstains. Jackals, fox, hyena and dogs are common here. The shine in the eyes was prominent indicating that the bird must have died just a few minutes ago. Live ticks were seen below the feathers on the breast region.

Mithapur had experienced cyclonic turbulence and gusty winds the previous two days. The Booby could perhaps have been blown off course and swept by the gusty winds to the Mithapur coast. This exhausted / sick bird, probably had been killed by some predator. The dead bird was photographed and the news was given coverage by the local dailies.

28th July 1988: A fisherman at Mithapur seacoast recovered a dead bird on 28th July 1988. Heavy rains and strong winds lashed the Mithapur region the previous day as also the day on which the dead bird was recovered. The dead bird was photographed.

17th July 1989: Two Masked Boobies were sighted flying over the Sagar seawater intake ponds at Mithapur at 7:07 PM.

21st September 1990: Three Masked Boobies were sighted at the Sagar seawater intake ponds at Mithapur at 6:12 PM.

4th August 1993: A sick Masked Booby was recovered near the Sagar seawater intake ponds in the evening. The bird seemed to be very weak and did feed on the fish offered to it. It died at 1:50 PM on the following

day i.e. 5th August 1993. The bird was photographed.

11th July 1994: A sick Masked Booby was recovered from the Sagar seawater intake ponds by a fisherman. The bird seemed to be very weak. However, it started feeding fish from the next day onwards and recovered fully within a week. This bird was released on 18th July 1994 at the Sagar seawater intake pond.

All the sightings are during southwest monsoon period i.e. July to September. Heavy cyclonic rains preceded Sightings/ records of the booby.

Although there have been reports of Masked Booby sightings on the west coast (Kerala and Udupi region), there hardly seems to be any sightings recorded north of the Bombay coast in India (Grimmett *et al.* 1998 and Kazmierczak 2000). However, on Pakistan coast it is recorded as erratic or occasional on Makran coastal waters (Kazmierczak 2000). Mithapur coast is very close (< 100 km) to this area.

This is the first record of the Masked Booby from Gujarat coast. A regular watch on our seacoast is urgently needed to record presence/ occurrence of such oceanic birds.

References:

Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (1998): Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Kazmierczak, K. (2000): A Field Guide to the Birds of India. Om Book Service, New Delhi

BLUEFOOTED BOOBY ON MAHUVA COAST: A FIRST RECORD FOR THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT: by Ruchi Dave, Pravinsinh Dodiya and Jaidev Dhadhal, Mahuva.

While bird watching on coastal areas near Pingaleshwar, 8 km far from Mahuva, Chirag Kotadiya, Bhavesh Bhalodiya, Bharat Solanki, Sandip Vaghela, Naimish Trivedi and Harish Vishnukarma, members of Flamingo Nature Club, Mahuva found a bird, which died next day as it was very sick and unable to fly. By referring the Hamlyn Photographic Guide to Birds of the World, we found that the bird was Blue-footed Booby (*Sula neboxii*), which is a Neotropical bird. It has never been recorded in India before. The body of this bird has been sent to specimen department, BNHS.

The bird was found on 3rd July 2003. Mr. Zafar-ul-

Islam from BNHS has confirmed that the bird is Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxi*). Yes, this specie has been never recorded in Indian Subcontinent before.

There are doubts that Masked Booby, Brown Booby and Red-footed Booby breeds on Lakshadweep and Maldives. Anyway, Blue-footed Booby found on our coast is something worth to take note of and we must watch our coasts more carefully and regularly with hope to find more birds of the family.

FLAMINGO IN GUJARAT DURING 10-26 JANUARY 2003: by Anika Jadhav and B. M. Parasharya, AINP on Agricultural Ornithology, Gujarat Agricultural University, Anand 388 110.

Following table is an account of the flamingos counted by us on the known and accessible sites during January. We counted 28, 333 Greater Flamingo and 369,901

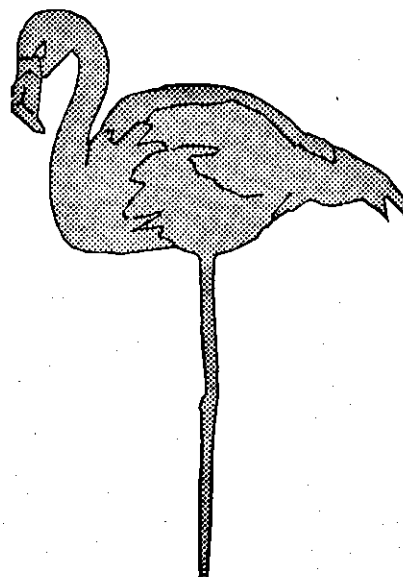
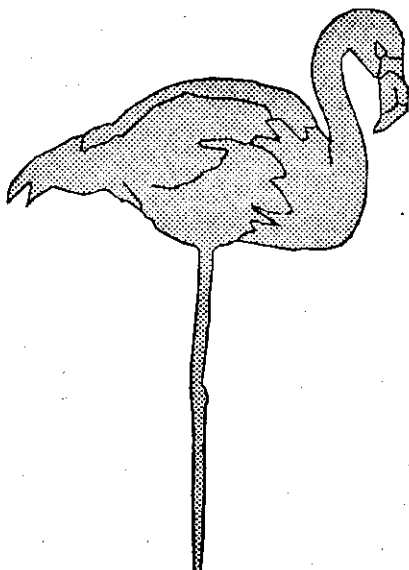
Lesser Flamingos making a total of 398,234 flamingos. This is the largest figure of flamingo count in India. Adding the number of flamingos counted by the participants of AWC 2003 in January 2003, total count of Greater Flamingos was 33,033 and that of Lesser Flamingos was 375,778. All together 408811 flamingos were counted. Major concentration of Lesser Flamingo was in Gulf of Khambhat whereas the Greater Flamingos were uniformly distributed on the coastal wetlands. We can still refine this count, as several other important sites could not be covered due to several reasons.

Shri P. D. Chavda provided assistance all throughout the field surveys. Sh. Bharat Rughani, Sh. Satish Trivedi, Dr. K. L. Mathew, Sh. Jummabhai Moria, Vikas Trivedi, Dishant Parasharya, Dr. I. R. Gadhavi, Raju Chauhan, N. A. Thakor, and several other friends accompanied us in the field and provided local hospitality.

Table 1.

Distribution of flamingos in coastal and inland wetlands of Gujarat during 10-26 January 2003.

Wetlands	Number of		
	Greater Flamingo	Lesser Flamingo	Total Flamingos
(A) Coastal	28,217	369,901	398,118
a) Gulf of Kachchh	10,756	31,381	42,137
b) Gulf of Khambhat	8,298	297,366	305,664
c) Other coastal sites	9,163	41,154	50,317
(B) Inland fresh water	116	0	116
Subtotal	28,333	369,901	398,234
Count by AWC counters	4,700	5,877	10,577
Grand Total	33,033	375,778	408,811



FLAMINGOS COUNT BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF AWC IN JANUARY 2003

No	District/ Sites	Counters	Date	Greater	Lesser	Total
	Vadodara					
1	Muval	G. S. Padate, R. V. Devkar, Pratyush	15	5	0	5
	Surat					
1	Onjal	Surat Nature Club	23	15	25	40
	Bhavnagar					
1	Ghogha-Haathab	Vikas Trivedi	10	0	110	110
2	Odarka	Vikas Trivedi, D. P. Parasharya	13	70	0	70
3	Kareda	Vikas Trivedi, D. P. Parasharya	13	10	0	10
4	Avaniya saltans	Vikas Trivedi, D. P. Parasharya	9	61	0	61
6	Bhandhara, (Nikol)	Jaidev Dhadhal, P. P. Dodia	19	300	1200	1500
	Junagadh					
1	Kaj wetland	I. R. Gadhavi	12	2000	250	2250
	Kachhh					
1	Vijay sagar reservior		6	2	0	2
2	Hamirsar tank	Subodh Hathi	5	1	0	1
3	Bhadreshwar creek	Trilochan Chhaya	12	35	74	109
4	Nakti creek	S. N. Varu,	12	800	1000	1800
5	Rudramata dam	S. N. Varu,	14	72	0	72
6	Rukmavati creek	Ashwin Pomal	19	16	0	16
7	Ratnal Creek dam	Pratap Sevak	12	2	0	2
	Rajkot					
1	Nyari-I	Parsottam Patel, Firoz Engineer	14	39	0	39
3	Fad Dang Beti	H. L. Chauhan, Pradeep Sojitra	12	31	0	31
	Sabarkantha					
1	Limbhoi	B.N. Trivedi, U. Vora, Niraj Joshi, Vipula Goswami	12	1	0	1
	Surendranagar					
1	Dholidhaja Dam	Faruk Chauhan, Chiku Vora, Yogendra, Mahavirsinh	18	0	13	13
2	Nayaka dam (Muli)	Yogendra, Chiku Vora, Faruk Chauhan, Mahavir	12	70	100	170
3	Nava Talav	Shabbir Malik,	25	100	3000	3100
	Amareli					
1	Jafrabad Kharapat	Gautam Joshi	14	500	50	550
2	Jafrabad salt pans	Gautam Joshi	14	105	55	160
	Navsari					
1	Nani Kakarad	Piyush Patel, Jat Mohammat	12	355	0	355
	Ahmedabad					
1	Vasana Sewage	Dr. Peter	12	93	0	93
2	Jetalpur village pond	Patel Jayprakash, Dave Jignesh	23	4	0	4
	Mehsana					
1	Thol Bird Sanctuary	Patel J. P., Vaidya Bhavesh,	19	13	0	13
	Total			4700	5877	10577

Records of Mallards

No.	District/ Sites	Counters	Date	Number
Vadodara				
1	Timbi	Rohit Vyas, Anil Gohil, Suvarna Sonavane, D. A. Shaikh	9/2/03	7
2	Wadhavana	G. S. Padate	26/1/03	16
3	Jamli	Ami, Jayesh Bhatt, Kalpesh Anjaria	2/2/03	2
Ahmedabad				
1	AEC Ash Pond	Uday Vora	23/1/03	4
Gandhinagar				
1	GEB Ash Pond	Uday Vora	9/2/03	6
Surat				
1	Onjal	Surat Nature Club	23/1/03	3
Bhavnagar				
1	Kareda lake	Darshan Andheria	25/1/03	5
2	Bhandhara, (Nikol)	Jaydev Dhadhal, P. P. Dodia	19/1/03	10
Dahod				
1	Dahod		2/2/03	2
Kachchh				
1	Lair reservoir	Trilochan Chhaya	28/12/02	1
2	Don village tank	S. N. Varu	19/1/03	9
Rajkot				
1	Nyari-I	Bhavesh Trivedi, Purshotam Patel, Firoz Engineer	14/1/03	2
2	Aji II	Tushar Sanghani, Dilip Joshi, Kanubhai Suthar	19/1/03	1
Sabarkantha				
	Hathmati dam	Uday Vora	22/1/03	40
1	Vanaj dam	A. M. Patel, Mayur Mistri, I. A. Kumpavat	29/1/03	19
Bansakantha				
	Dantiwada dam	Uday Vora	12/2/03	4+
Navsari				
1	Nani Kakarad	Piyush Patel, Jat Mohammad	12/1/03	2
Jamnagar				
1	Lakhota lake	K.L. Mathew, Suresh Bhatt, Keyur, Jay,	11/2/03	2
Kheda				
	Pariej	Uday Vora	7/2/03	6
Anand				
1	Lambhvel sewage	B. M. Parasharya, Anika Jadhav	20/1/03	4
Porbandar				
1	Meedha Creek	Anika Jadhav, B. M. Parasharya, Bharat Rughani	12/1/03	20
2	Vanana to Gosa	Anika Jadhav, B. M. Parasharya, Bharat Rughani	12/1/03	4
TOTAL				169

NOTES

NOTE FROM VELAVADAR: by Dishant Parasharya, Vikas Trivedi and Dishith Mehta, Bhavnagar.

We visited Velavadar National park on 23-03-03 with Dr. I. R. Gadhavi and Sh. Vijay Rathod (R.F.O.). In the evening we spotted a Lesser Florican, 15 harriers (most of them were Marsh Harrier and Montague's Harrier) and a Shorteared Owl.

SUMMER COUNT ON WETLANDS AROUND BHAVNAGAR: by Vikas Trivedi and Dishant Parasharya, Bhavnagar.

Gaurishankar Lake (Bortalav), 24-05-03, 0630hrs: White-necked Stork - 1, Little Cormorant and Indian Shag 300, Spot-billed Duck 15, Little Grebe 20, Coot - 40, Greater Flamingo-20.

Kumbharwada sewage and saltpans, 24-05-03, 0815 hrs: Lesser Flamingo-8200, Sub-adults of Lesser Flamingo-180, Spot-billed Duck-35, egrets - 48

Freshwater pond of Ruva on Newport Road, 27-05-03, 0645 hrs: Spot-billed Duck- 6, Young ones of Spot-billed Duck-11, Northern Shoveller-1, Spoonbill-7, Little Cormorant-5, Indian Shag-35, Night Heron-1, Whiskered Tern-50.

BREEDING OF LONG-BILLED VULTURE IN KACHCHH: by Shantilal Varu and Ashwin Pomal, Bhuj.

While birdwatching at Edmond Lake (about 8 km west of Bhuj city) on 13-04-2003 we saw one Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus* in low flight near one cliff. We thought that there must be nesting of this bird. When we reached near the cliff, we saw a nest with an adult bird sitting in. One chick was moving in the nest. The nest was at about 40 feet above the ground and a few years before Bonelli's Hawk Eagle used the same nest.

When we reached near second part of the cliff near dam, where 4 more nests were seen with an adult bird sitting inside. Three nests had a single chick whereas in the fourth nest, probably the adult was incubating an egg. One additional nest was located on 22-04-03 on the same cliff and an adult was sitting inside. On 26-04-03, total six nests were seen, each one with a chick. Total 9 adults were seen around this colony. It seems that this species is now recovering which is a good sign.

NOTE FROM KACHCHH: by Ashwin Pomal and Shantilal Varu, Bhuj

Today (31-08-03) we (friends) visited Chhari Dhandh (morning time). Near Kiro hill in a wetland, we saw a nesting colony. Details of the species nesting is as follows:

Cattle Egret-100+ nests with 2/3 chicks per nest; Spoonbill - 20+ nests (incubation stage); Night Heron - 5+ nests; White Ibis - 5+ nests; Glossy Ibis - 1 nest with 1 chick; Purple Heron-1 nest; Painted Stork - 1 nest, total 12 adult storks; Little Cormorant - 50+ nests.

Near the Chhari village, on Dharka wetland we saw 200+ River Tern. In the evening time we were going to Vekariya Dhandh where we saw 20 nests (under incubation) of Blackwinged Stilt at the edge of roadside. Out of 7 Ruff and Reeves seen one was white form.

DEATH OF A SARUS CRANE DUE TO KITE THREAD: by Gaurav Pandya and Snehal Patel, Veterinary College, Anand.

On 13 January 2003, a farmer and RFO of Matar tahsil came to our college along with an injured Sarus Crane. There were several injuries on its right wing. When they reached here, excess blood had flown out and as a result the bird could not be saved. On inquiry, the farmer revealed that when the crane was in flight it got entangled in the kite thread due to which the wing was injured and the crane got grounded. Kite flying around Makarsankranti (14th January) is taking toll of several endangered birds.

REDCRESTED POCHARD: SIGHTINGS DURING AWC 2003:

1. We saw Red Crested Pochard on 19/1/2003 at Don village tank near Mandvi, about 15 km west north. A good photograph is taken. **Ashwin Pomal, Bhuj.**
2. Two males at Pariej reservoir (Kheda district) in January 2003. The birds were too far for photography. **R. B. Balar, Ahmedabad**

STANDARDIZED ENGLISH AND SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT-2002: The 'Book of Indian Birds' and 'Pictorial Guide to the Birds of Indian Subcontinent', by Salim Ali were the only field guides for the birdwatchers in India and so we were familiar with the common English names and scientific names given in the same. In 1996, Oriental Bird Club (UK) came out with

their *Annotated Checklist* (Inskipp *et al.* 1996), Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp with 'Birds of the Indian Subcontinent' in 1998 and Kazmierczak with his 'Field Guide' in 2000. All these books had new English names (and scientific names too) with which Indian birdwatchers were totally unfamiliar. In view of this, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) decided to bring out a standardized list of English bird names that could be used by Indian birdwatchers and institutions. The ENVIS center at BNHS was given this task and Ranjit Manakadan set about it in such a way that, ornithologists and birdwatchers across India were consulted before the names were finalized. Aasheesh Pittie of Birdwatchers Society of Andhra Pradesh (BSAP) added the complete scientific binomials to these names, realizing that this was an opportunity to put together a slim and portable checklist of the birds of the Indian Subcontinent. This list was first published in 'Buceros' the newsletter of the ENVIS Centre of BNHS (Mankadan and Pittie, 2001). For a wider circulation of this revised nomenclature and its popularization, 'Newsletter for Birdwatchers' have published the entire checklist in special issue of May – June 2002. We all have to adopt a new nomenclature to avoid further confusion about nomenclature. To maintain harmony with the other organizations, BCSG has decided to accept the new nomenclature and use it in its newsletter. Members are requested to refer to the Newsletter for Birdwatchers Vol. 42, issue no. 3 of May-June 2002. Those members who do not have access to it, can have a xerox copy of the same on request (the cost of xeroxing and postage to be born by the members).

BCSG REPORTING

LAVKUMAR KHACHER TO BE HONOURED

AT BNHS: President of BCSG, Shri Lavkumar will be honoured with 'Excellence in Ornithology' by BNHS on 12th November 2003. Society on behalf of EC and all members congratulates him on his achievement.

BCSG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE EXPANDED:

To execute the objectives of the society in a better way and to make a true state level body, we have expanded our existing executive committee. The new members co-opted in the committee are: 1. Dr. Geeta Padate, Vadodara, 2. Dr. Indra Gadhavi Bhavnagar, 3. Bharat Rughani, Porbandar, 4. Ajay Desai, Dahod, 5. Mayur Mistri, Vijaynagar, 6. Dr. Piyush H. Patel, Valasad, 7.

Prof. V. C. Soni, Rajkot, 8. Ashok Mashru, Rajkot, 9. Dr. Raju Desai, Navsari, 10. Shri Mukesh Bhatt, Surat, 11. Shri Niraj Joshi, Ahmedabad, 12. Ms. Ila Vora, Gandhinagar, 13. Dr. D. N. Rank, Anand.

Our treasurer, Dr. C. K. Borad has resigned from his post as he has gone to Israel on post doctorate fellowship in June 2003. Now, Dr. D. N. Rank of Anand will hold the responsibility as treasurer.

FIELD PROGRAMMES:

Annual Camp at Dangs: We will have our first field camp at Dang 27-30 October 2003, exclusively for the members of 'Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat (BCSG). This is the first general field programme for the members of the society. We expect a large participation. Contact: Shri Snehal Patel, 81, Sarjan Society, Athwalines, Surat- 395 007. Phone: 0261-2227596.

Harrier Count at Velavadar National Park, November 2003: A collaborative harrier census programme is arranged at VNP on 22nd and 23rd November 2003. For other detail please contact Dr. Indra Gadhavi on Phone: 0278 – 2565686.

Details of the field programme are already dispatched under separate post to the members.

NESTING OF CASPIAN TERN AT CHARAKLA SALTPANS: The staff of the Marine National Park, Jamnagar reported nesting Caspian Tern in July 2003 on one small island within the salt pans of Charakla, Mithapur. About 400 pairs nested during July and August 2003. This is the largest number ever recorded in our territory and third record of breeding in Indian Territory. Earlier two records were from the Little Rann of Kachchh. Shri Satish Trivedi of Mithapur has sent several photographs of various nesting stages and also sent other details through e-mails. However, we are waiting for detailed write up from him and friends from the forest department who recorded detailed observations.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

1. The waterbird count forms have been received and we made a start with the small water bodies near Bhuj on the 11th January. Varu and others went to the Kandla Port area yesterday where in the salt pans they counted a good number of both the flamingos. You have rightly mentioned the gathering of information on the population size of these birds.

According to the estimate of Dr. Tadj Mundkur there were about 25000-30000 Lesser Flamingo present on the Gujarat coast and to my mind this figure is more or less correct. Their original breeding area was in the Surajbari creek but it was abandoned after the development of prawn fishing and saltworks. Next time when they breed in the Little Rann of Kutch, an attempt should be made to ring the young ones. As far as Greater Flamingo are concerned, they disperse so far and wide, it would not be possible to reach any satisfactory estimate. Ringing their young ones also in the Great Rann could provide very interesting data on their overall movement about which so little is known. **M. K. Himmatsinhji, Bhuj.**

2. Thanks for sending me copies of FLAMINGO. Its a wonderful effort and fulfills a long-felt need. I wish you and your team all the best for it. I will be sending you my life membership in a couple of days.

I request you to kindly put the BSAP on your mailing list on an exchange basis for our PITTA. A line in confirmation would be greatly appreciated so I can make the necessary addition to our mailing list. **Aasheesh Pittie, BSAP, P.O. Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500034.**

3. We have *Pitta* (Newsletter of the Birdwatchers Society of Andhra Pradesh), *Blackbuck* (of the Madras Naturalist Society), *Hornbill* of the BNHS, *Sansad News* from West Bengal, to name just a few and now we have '*Flamingo*' (Newsletter of the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat) and fresh from the oven, North Karnataka Birders' Network. This is a happy development, because activities at the LOCAL level, where we can see, and monitor the landscape from day to day that is likely to be of lasting value. Already the members of '*Flamingo*' in association with SACON, have organized a training workshop on 'Inland Wetlands of Gujarat'. **Zafar Futehally, Editor- Newsletter for Birdwatchers, In: Editorial. NLBW 43(4): 46, 2003.**
4. One year's incubation must be a record. Anyway, it is very nice to receive society's newsletter. I hope that now onwards the '*Flamingo*' will migrate regularly to the members.

With due respect to Anika, the figure of 3850 Glossy Ibis (*Flamingo* 1(1): 3-4, 2003 on one pond only seems somehow indigestible. It must be checked

with the data collected by the bird counts done so far. We all must be very careful with this number game - **Jaydev Dhadhal, Mahuva.**

(Anika and myself are monitoring bird number on Lambhvel sewage pond every month since June 2002. I was also involved in count of Glossy Ibis and other birds, which Anika has reported. The figure is actually a minimum estimate of number. Since the concentration was unusual, it was reported and the comparison was made with the count made in Gujarat and India during AWC. Unless a number game is played carefully and correctly, we cannot identify important bird areas nor we can do anything about the prevention of habitat destruction. - **B M Parasharya**).

5. I've gone through '*Flamingo*'. I hope, from next issue we'll get some bits of information on one bird species or a location where beginner's can go for birdwatching. This is just my suggestion. **Kshitij Pandya, Ahmedabad**

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON GUJARAT

1. Vyas, Raju. 2002. Breeding of Oriental Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*) in captivity at Sayaji Baug Zoo, Vadodara, Gujarat. *Zoos' Print Journal* 17(9): 871-874.
2. Gadhavi, Indra, R. 2003. Monitoring nesting sites of Lesser Floricans (*Sypheotides indica*) in and around Blackbuck National Park, Gujarat. *Zoos' Print Journal* 18(7): 1135-1142.
3. Anika Jadhav and B. M. Parasharya 2003. Some observations on the nesting behaviour and food of the Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*. *Zoos' Print Journal* 18(8): 1163-1165.
4. Aeshita Mukherjee, C. K. Borad and B. M. Parasharya 2002. Comparative account of population and breeding pair density of the Indian Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone antigone*) in Kheda district, Gujarat. *Zoos' Print Journal* 17(8): 839-843.
5. Himmatsinhji, M. K. 2002. Observations on squatting posture adopted by *Chlamydotis undulata* (Jaquin). *JBNHS* 99(3): 522.
6. Patel Piyush 2002. Possible new record of *Sturnus malabaricus blythii* in Valsad district, Gujarat. *JBNHS* 99(3): 531.

7. Parasharya, B. M., S. N. Varu, C. K. Borad and Aeshita Mukherjee 2002. *Sturnus malabaricus blythii* in Gujarat state. *JBNHS* 99(3): 531-532.
8. Sanghani, Tushar M. 2003. Variations recorded in the iris, bill, leg and foot colouration in Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*. *JBNHS* 100(1): 109.
9. Urfi, Abdul Jamil 2003. Record of a nesting colony of Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* at Man-Marodi Island in the Gulf of Kutch. *JBNHS* 100(1): 109-110.
10. Pati B. P. Sighting of the Lesser Florican *Sypheotides indica* in Gir interpretation zone, Devaliya, Gir Sanctuary. *JBNHS* 100(1): 122.
11. Aeshita Mukherjee, C. K. Borad and B. M. Parasharya 2003. Range extension of Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* in Gujarat. *JBNHS* 100(1): 135-136.
12. Parasharya, B. M. and Raju Vyas 2003. Status of Brown Rock Chat *Cercomela fusca* in Gujarat. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 43(3): 37-38.
13. Tiwari, J.K., Alain J. Crivelli and S. N. Varu 2003. Status and distribution of pelicans in Kutch district of Gujarat. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 43(3): 38.
14. Parasharya B.M., C. K. Borad and N. A. Thakor 2003. The Large Crested Tern and Eurasian Curlew at Dhuvaran, Gulf of Khambhat. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 43(3): 39-40.
15. Nirmala Snehal 2003. Indian Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*). *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 43(3): 43.

LETTER FROM LAVKUMAR KHACHER

For some time now, Bakulbhai and through his writings in VIHANG, Himmatsinhji have urged me to write about recognition within groups of related birds. I appreciate the urgency they feel, and perhaps I could indeed make a very useful contribution. Notes on closely related birds have their value considerably enhanced if they are accompanied by good illustrations. In this, I have been greatly missing the ready talents of K. P. Jadav of Rajkot, but Bakulbhai, our dedicated honorary co-editor assured me that he could provide the line drawings. So, what is the hesitation to launch a useful series?

For quite a good many years, now I have stopped being an aggressive birder. I now enjoy the birds in my

immediate surroundings and frankly, I do not have the confidence to make quick identifications of the several groups of very similar looking species. There was a time I practiced identifying ducks flying overhead by their sound of wings, or tell apart the several small waders in mixed flocks by their rather distinguishing manner of walking, running or probing the mud. I recollect spending winter mornings separating the juvenile wagtails. The example was shown to me by two of the finest field birdwatchers, I have had the good fortune of having as mentors, when I was in my teens in distant 1940s-Uncle Bapa (Late Dharmakumarsinhji) and Horace Alexander. By the way a small bird flew out of a shrub, Bapasaheb would indicate whether the bird had a nest there or not and what excited me was his saying the bird had flown off eggs it was incubating or had just fed nestlings and was learning. His identification of birds of prey was legendry. Horace Alexander had the amazing ability to tell one Warbler from the other. To my delight, I realised even I was growing considerably adept with each field trip. The "blind identifications" came several years later. One was young and enthusiastic, birds were plentiful to practice on and above all, there were the "gurus" to impress.

Both Dharmakumarsinhji and Horace Alexander- and for that matter even Salim Ali never made any identification without prefacing it with "Probably....", "Looks to me to be....", "It seems to be..", or "I think it is....". At that time I used to wonder why these elders never had a definite recognition. But, with passage of time I started realizing the need for caution. My day was made when my first full paper on the birds of Gharwal was accepted immediately for the BNHS Journal in 1954, followed in quick succession by another on the birds of S. W. Tibet in which I added a new Redstart to the Tibet checklist of Salim Ali's. No queries were made!

By very regularly looking at our everyday birds, the ability to recognize certain very distinctive traits in each species increases. In addition, one very soon comes to recognise the habitat preferences of otherwise very similar looking species. In the world of the familiar, intrusion by a new comer is quickly noticed. The calls of very confusingly "look-alikes" are of considerable assistance in confirming identities. Getting familiar with birdcalls can vastly improve ones capabilities. Even the most mimetic of vocalization has sufficient nuances that are recognizable. I always have considered birds as audio-

visual organisms and I think instead of "birdwatching", we should use "bird familiarizing" to describe our hobby. It is when a birdwatcher develops a familiarity with bird vocalization that "blind identifications" become possible. At this stage one ceases to pursue birds in the manner of the continual mobile harriers and instead, sits quietly listening to sounds- rustling among leaf litter or a soft

contact call between a pair- as indeed would a Shikra or an Owl do. It must be kept in mind that birds have to keep in contact of others of their flock even as they need to remain unseen among dense foliage or by their cryptic colours. It is only the territorial males who flaunt their presences by displaying or singing form vantages points..... (to be continued)

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

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