

Sighting of  
**Laggar Falcon** *Falco jugger*  
in South Gujarat



**Krunal Trivedi:** Nature Club Surat, 81- Sarjan Society, Parle Point, Surat 395007, Gujarat, India.  
krunal.trivedi.7567@gmail.com

**Jagdish Parmar:** Nature Club Surat, 81- Sarjan Society, Parle Point, Surat 395007, Gujarat, India.  
jagdish@jagdishparmar.com

## Introduction

The Laggar Falcon (*Falco jugger*) is a resident species in the Indian Subcontinent. Widespread across India with exception of certain parts of North-east India and East India (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It was once a common falcon in India, but because of a rapid decline in population recently, the bird is now rare. It is believed that habitat degradation, pesticide use in food sources, and capture for falconry seem to be responsible for the moderately rapid and ongoing population fall (Naoroji 2007; Birdlife International 2020). It is classified as a "Near Threatened" species under IUCN Red List (2020). It is a medium-sized bird of prey, around 43-46 cm. According to studies, it is 'particularly common' in the country's desert and semi-arid regions and is rare in southern India (Naoroji 2006). In Gujarat, the Laggar Falcon is distributed from Western parts to Eastern border of Gujarat (Bhatt *et al.* 2018). It is reported as a "rare resident & winter visitor" by Ganpule (2016). The breeding ecology and local migration of the Laggar Falcon have not been studied yet in Gujarat.

## Observation

On 19<sup>th</sup> June 2022, during our trip to Dang forest, we sighted a medium-sized bird of prey perching on a Kumbhi tree (*Careya arborea*) near Kodmal village (20°45'21.73"N, 73°48'59.97"E) of Dang District. The bird was very far from us not clearly visible to identify it properly. We took some photos for identification of the species. After a few minutes, the bird took a low flight toward the nearby hills. The bird had dark chocolatey brown plumage on the back with a plain whitish/creamish throat and streaks on the chest. Later, we identified the bird as Laggar Falcon using Grimmett *et al.* (2011) as a reference. This is probably the first record of this species from Dang District of South Gujarat. The nearest sighting of this species was from Dhudhkhed, Maharashtra in July 2021 (eBird). Multiple sighting of this species is reported from Anjaneri Hill of Nashik District and nearby areas of Maharashtra during the winter

season. We believe the population of Anjaneri Hill is a resident population and migrate towards South Gujarat during the Monsoon season due to the high abundance of prey availability. We recommend carrying out a detailed study in South Gujarat to understand the distribution, population trend and migration pattern of this less-studied species.

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## Reference

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