

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
in Bopal, Ahmedabad





Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) is an elegant and long-winged Falcon with a range extending throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia. The adult has gray upper parts, boldly streaked and buffy underparts, and red thighs. The juveniles have a brownish body with pale-edged feathers, pale crown, and buff undertail-coverts. The *F. subbuteo* primarily spends the winter in Africa, and a significant amount of its population passes through the Indian Subcontinent. It prefers habitats in plains or foothills at lower altitudes but can also be encountered up to 4000m ASL in India (Orta et al. 2020). As per the available data (Ebird 2023), Eurasian Hobby is found in Gujarat from early September to February before migrating to Africa and from April to June for return migration to their breeding sites. The Eurasian Hobby is a regular migrant to Gujarat during migration and can be expected in scattered areas across the region.

On October 7, 2022, I saw a migrating adult Eurasian Hobby flying towards the North over the Bopal, Ahmedabad. The bird was observed at around half past three, flying over a region with intensive construction and without any suitable habitat for a considerable distance. The bird was distinct in the field due to its slender structure

and streamlined wings. It was later identified by its dark facial mask, bold streaks on the belly, rusty vent, and finely barred underwing lacking the black trailing edge (Photo 1). Two days later, on October 9, 2022, another Eurasian Hobby was observed flying with the same pattern. This individual was identified as a juvenile due to the duller coloration, extensively streaked body, and lack of a rusty tinge on the vent. (Photo 2)

Most records of Eurasian Hobby are concentrated around the Nalsarovar (Viramgam) area, while only two prior records exist near the metropolitan Ahmedabad, Gujarat (<https://ebird.org/checklist/S65205174>;

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S22165732>). This is the second photographic record from the region and the third overall record. (<https://ebird.org/species/eurhob/IN-GJ-AH>)

References

Orta, J., G. M. Kirwan, & Marks, J.S. 2020. Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, and E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.eurhob.01>