

Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina citrina* at Ahmedabad: a first record for Gujarat

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Photo 1

Photo: Ishaan Lalbhai

Introduction

The Orange-headed Thrush (*Geokichla citrina*) is a polytypic species found widely in India (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The subspecies occurring in Gujarat is *G. c. cyanotus*, which is distinguished from the nominate *G. c. citrina* by vertical black stripes across the eye and the ear-coverts and has a white throat (Ganpule *et al.* 2022). The nominate *G. c. citrina* has an unmarked orange-rufous head and a broad white bar on the upper wing ('shoulder') (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The subspecies *G. c. cyanotus*, which occurs in Gujarat, is resident in the forest belt from north Gujarat to southern Gujarat, with scattered records from the forests and well-wooded areas of Saurashtra; it is a vagrant to Kachchh (Ganpule *et al.* 2022). However, there are no records of the subspecies *G. c. citrina* from Gujarat. This short note describes the sighting of *G. c. citrina* from Ahmedabad.

Observations

On March 24, 2023, at around 17:30 hrs., while on a regular birding trip at our garden area in Ahmedabad, I encountered a male Orange-headed Thrush (Photo 1). The bird was seen well, and it was noted that it moved on the dry

leaf bed and looked for insects. It was identified as an Orange-headed thrush, and photos were taken from a safe distance. Later, the photos were shared with Devvratsinh Mori, Prasad Ganpule, and Sunil Kini, and it was confirmed to be an Orange-headed Thrush of the nominate *G. c. citrina* subspecies. A brief description is as follows: The upperparts were slaty-blue and the underparts were rufous-orange. This bird lacked the vertical black stripes across the eye and ear-coverts and had a plain, unmarked head (Photo 2).



Photo 2

Photo: Ishaan Lalbhai

Orange-headed Thrush....

The throat was not distinctly white as in *G. c. cyanotus*. Hence, the identification was confirmed as a male *G. c. citrina* (Photo 3). Then, after a gap of about 16 days, the thrush was spotted again, very briefly, on April 9, 2023, at around 17:30 hrs. Punit Lalbhai, Sunil Kini, Ruchita Soni, and I were birding and saw it well. It was seen briefly, and after this sighting, it was not seen again. We tried to find it again at the same location but were unsuccessful.



Photo: Ishaan Lalbhai

Discussion

As per Ganpule *et al.* (2022), only *G. c. cyanotus* occurs in Gujarat; this subspecies is widespread in peninsular India,

mainly south of Gujarat and southern India. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) mentioned the range of *G. c. citrina* as a summer visitor to the Himalayas and winter visitor to the northern plains (with some individuals remaining at the base of hills), Ganges Delta, NE Peninsula, straggling further south, with a few reaching Sri Lanka'. As per data from 'eBird', there are no records of this subspecies from western India, and most records are from the Himalayas and the adjoining plains. There are records from the Eastern Ghats and South India. However, there is no record of this subspecies from Gujarat on 'eBird'.

The sightings from Ahmedabad were from March and April, which is indicative of a bird seen during spring migration. It is possible that a few individuals could be passing through Gujarat when going towards the Himalayas for breeding. This is the first record of the Orange-headed Thrush of the nominate *G. c. citrina* subspecies for Gujarat and is an important sighting for the state.

References

Ganpule, P., Varu, M., Trivedi, B., & Raina, A. D., 2022. *A field guide to the birds of Gujarat*. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat. Ahmedabad.

Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington D. C and Barcelona. □

Second sighting records of Green-crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus burkii* at Ratanmahal Sanctuary, Gujarat

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Photo: Murtuza Zabuawala

During the camp organised by BCSG and Nature Club, Dahod, on the morning of 25th February 2023, I was birding in and around the Campsites of Naldha, Ratanmahal Wildlife Sanctuary. I saw the bright yellow colour of a small bird moving fast among patches of bamboo. The bird was often seen moving from one trunk to another, which means the bird did not sit calmly for a long time in one place. I managed to click the bird in my camera. The bird was new to me and I could not identify it. I have contacted Mr. Ashok Mashru, a Senior birdwatcher who had been there in camp. He told me, instantly seeing the picture, that you have clicked Green-crowned Warbler (*Phylloscopus burkii*), a very important second record of Gujarat.

The Green-crowned Warbler breeds in the Himalayas and winters in the plains; winter records from Bihar and Bastar (Chhattisgarh) are known (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).