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Rescue of Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* at Porbandar: Adding to Gujarat Avifauna

Modhwadiya Nagajan Chana: Marutinagar, Navapara. Chhaya, Porbandar.



Photo: Modhwadiya Nagajan Chana

My work in the Porbandar area is the rescue of snakes, birds, and other wildlife, too. I have been doing this work for many years, so I received a call on 16th April 2023 from an unknown person for rescue from Javar village, near Porbandar city, that some injured bird is near the coast. I visited the place immediately around 10.30 am. I had rescued the unknown whitish bird from there. After necessary primary treatment, the bird was improving. I took some photographs from my mobile. After 4 days, on date 20/04/23, the bird looked perfectly cured, so I released the bird at the same place on the coast.

I posted an image of the bird in a social media group for identification. There was discussion about identifying birds, either Red-billed tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* or Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* (Billerman et al. 2022). Some birdwatchers in the group identified as Red-tailed Tropicbird because of their dark beak. Mr. Ashok Mashru, a birdwatcher, contacted me for details and sent the photo to Prasad Ganpule (Editor, Flamingo Gujarat) for further identification. He also agreed to identification as a Red-tailed tropicbird based on a completely dark blackish beak. Mr. Prasad Ganpule sent a

photograph to Mr. Dipu K, a seabird expert in South India, to confirm identification. Mr. Dipu K opined and replied that the White-tailed Tropicbird Juvenile may show some dark on the beak, but here beak is entirely dark, so this is a juvenile of the Red-tailed Tropicbird.

Red-tailed Tropicbird (Family: Phaethontidae) is the rarest of all three Tropicbirds in North America, nesting in the Hawaiian islands and dispersing widely across the central and south Pacific Ocean during the non-breeding season (Schreiber & Schreiber 2020). It looks like it may be diverted here as a vagrant due to bad sea weather. There are few records of the Red-billed Tropicbird from Gujarat, but finding this rare vagrant Red-tailed Tropicbird is the first time in Gujarat. It is a very important record through rescue and a new add-on to the Gujarat bird list

Reference

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