

# First Sighting Record of Yellow-legged Buttonquail *Turnix tanki* in Vansda National Park, Gujarat, India

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Photo: Raj Desai & Jayendrasinh Rathod

may associate with the Barred Buttonquail and display nocturnal migratory behaviour, being attracted to bright lights at night. When alarmed in open areas, they adopt a unique slow, wavering walk until finding cover (Ali & Ripley 1980 ; Eaton 2014). Breeding of the species occurs from March to November, with nests consisting of scantily lined scrapes partially covered by bent-over grass stems or other vegetation. The male takes responsibility for caring for the eggs and young (Baker 1928).



Map of Vansda National Park

The Yellow-legged Buttonquail, (YLB hereafter) possesses specific physical characteristics such as a dark crown with a pale median stripe or white stippling, greyish upper plumage with blackish and/or rufous blotches and scattered pale streaks, and whitish to pale buff underparts (Ali & Ripley 1980; Chandrakala et al. 2021). Female YLBs typically have a prominent rufous hind collar, absent in males, while juvenile YLBs may have fewer bars on their sides and more buffy spots above (Artuso 2005). During the flight, the species exhibits a stronger contrast between the wing coverts and flight feathers compared to other members of its family. Variations in subspecies have been observed in the Nicobar Islands, Assam hills, and the Andamans (Chandrakala et al. 2021).

The YLB is a summer visitor to the northern and central subcontinent, including regions like Pakistan (Sind and Punjab) and northwest India (Baker 1928). It is a resident species in southwest Gujarat, extending through the Gangetic Plain and Nepal terai, with a potential eastward extension to Bihar, Orissa, and the Nicobar Islands (Ali & Ripley 1980). In winter, the YLB migrates to the majority of the Indian Peninsula, the Assam Valley, lower parts of the Assam hills, and the Andamans. The species primarily inhabits areas below 1200 meters but can occasionally be found at altitudes of up to 2000 meters (Ali & Ripley 1980). YLBs are commonly found in cultivation areas, grasslands, bamboo forests, scrublands, and other open habitats, often in disturbed environments. They

On the evening of June 15, 2023, the elusive Yellow-legged Buttonquail (*Turnix tanki*) was sighted for the first time in Vansda National Park, Gujarat, India. The last recorded sighting was by Urvashi Ravani in Rajkot, Gujarat, in 2020. A team of wildlife enthusiasts explored the park on June 15, 2023, and successfully located an adult YLB by following its distinct call a series of short, melodious whistles followed by a soft trill. This sighting holds great significance for the scientific community and conservationists as it confirms the effectiveness of the park's conservation efforts. The park's protected status and habitat management practices have created a favourable environment for the YLB to thrive. This remarkable sighting highlights the importance of preserving the park's unique habitat and showcases successful avian conservation efforts. This record captures the excitement and wonder of this ground-breaking discovery, inspiring hope for preserving endangered and threatened species and reaffirming the value of protecting our natural heritage.

## Conclusion

The first sighting of the Yellow-legged Buttonquail in Vansda National Park represents a significant milestone for avian conservation. This discovery highlights the importance of

preserving unique habitats and reinforces the positive outcomes achievable through dedicated conservation efforts and scientific research. The presence of the Yellow-legged Buttonquail serves as an inspiration for all those committed to safeguarding our natural heritage and underscores the need to protect endangered and threatened species.

### References

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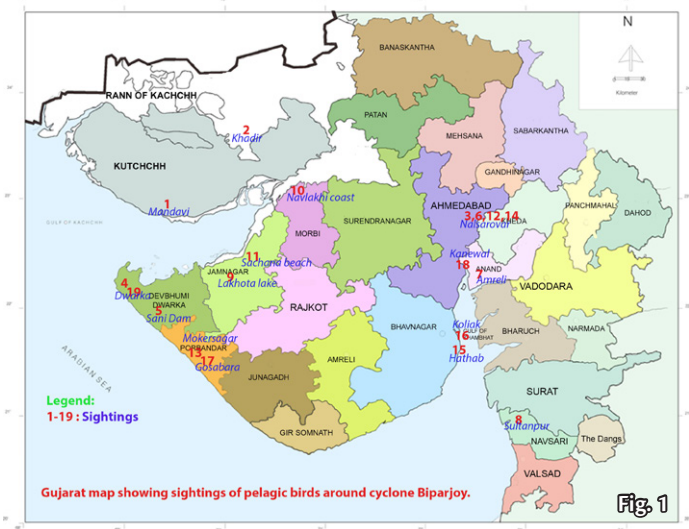
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## Sightings of Pelagic birds in Gujarat around Cyclone Biparjoy, June 2023

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On 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 very severe strong cyclone called Biparjoy, landed at Naliya, Kachchh, Gujarat. Due to very high wind speed, it's affected so many birds. Pelagic birds from the Arabian Sea blown by this cyclone diverted from their regular flying path had to travel to the Gujarat coast and landed there. There were 19 sightings of 7 pelagic bird species on the coastline and some at inland lakes. They were in the form of observation by birdwatchers or rescue by local people. These 7 species were previously sighted in Gujarat as vagrant visitors due to pre-monsoon winds, cyclones, and offshore trips by birdwatchers in the Gujarat Sea limit (See: Ganpule et al. 2022). I have collected details of sightings by different birdwatchers. The data was collected from various sources like newspapers, ebird websites, Pers. communication, and social media. Sighting details of all these pelagic birds recorded during the cyclone are mentioned in table (Fig. 1).

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* (Photo 1), Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* (Photo 2), Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* (Photo 3), Parasitic Jaeger *Sercorarius parasiticus*, Persian Shearwater *Puffinus persicus* and Masked Booby *Anous stolidus* (Photo 4) had stayed on shore some days. They have foraged in respective water bodies where observed. Subsequently, they might return to the native sea after the appropriate favorite climate. Many birdwatchers from Gujarat and India have visited places and took a chance to see these rarities as they stayed near land longer. I was one of them to observe Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* at Porbandar, Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) at Jamnagar & Nalsarovar, and Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) at Nalsarovar. The recent sighting of Bridled Tern on 23 August 2023 by Mr. Ashvin Trivedi at Lakhota Lake at mid of the city of Jamnagar is very surprising. This compilation of data will be helpful in the study of future cyclone-diverted pelagic birds.