

Short Birding Notes



Forest Owlet *Heteroglaux blewitti* preying on Garden Lizard *Calotes* sp.

On 29th January 2023, we observed a pair of Forest Owlets (*Heteroglaux blewitti*) in their usual habitat. The pair was vocalizing the whole evening, but we could not get any visual on them; we waited at a distance, observing the valley for any movement. After a few minutes, I heard one individual close by and followed a trail leading downhill of the same valley. We followed the duetting calls of this pair and saw one individual flying to a tree. When we approached a bit closer, we were surprised to witness a forest owl catching a garden lizard (*Calotes* sp.) And feeding on the lizard. By the time we reached the Owllet had eaten almost the whole lizard, and the remains, including its tail, were visible, which was later also photographed for evidence of the hunting behaviour of this pair. I have been observing this pair for two years now, and they have successfully multiplied in numbers and established new territories around the same valley.

Saswat Mishra, Feneel Patel: Dadra and Nagar Haveli (Union Territory of India)



Sighting of Sirkeer Malkoha *Taccocua leschenaultii* at Jambughoda WLS

On the morning of 1st April 2023, Parag Parikh, Vatsal Patel and I decided to go towards Pavagadh and Jambughoda. First, we went to Bhat eco campsite and clicked on common birds found there for around half an hour. Then we drove around Jambughoda randomly clicking the birds and enjoying nature. Suddenly, while driving around (towards Hathini Mata road), Parag Parikh spotted a bird in the grass by the road and drew my attention to it. I immediately focused my camera on it and identified it as a Sirkeer Malkoha (*Taccocua leschenaultii*) that was busy eating insects. We quietly got out of the car and clicked a few pictures but noticing us, the bird flew to a nearby tree. We followed it and clicked a few more shots. Then we retreated back to the car to see if it came out in the open again and it indeed did — oblivious to our presence and snacking on insects in peace. I could not believe my eyes when I saw it because it is a lifer for me and to find it here so unexpectedly was truly breathtaking. The Sirkeer Malkoha has been generally spotted in Dahod, Rajkot and Nalsarovar, however as per my knowledge it was last spotted in Jambughoda in 2015-16. No records of this bird have been made since then in Jambughoda and hence my sighting is a noticeable find. Editor Note – The Sirkeer Malkoha is an uncommon bird and is found in many parts of Gujarat.

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Ringed Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo* near Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

While photographing the birds at Wadala dam, Nalsarovar, we saw a big flock of about 5000+ Demoiselle Cranes (*Grus virgo*) in the evening. All the birds may be there for roosting, small groups were coming and joining the flock one by one. I knew that there could be tagged birds as nowadays more bird tagging is done, and I have heard about tagged Demoiselle Cranes in Gujarat. While checking the first day's evening photos, I could not find such a picture, but the next evening, we went there and clicked so many photographs. I saw one bird that may have a tag on its leg, and we tried to click as many pictures as we could because the birds were moving slowly. It was a very tough job that needed extreme luck to see or click a bird's leg in a flock of thousands of birds.

Finally, we found Demoiselle Crane with a Green colour tag on the right thigh with mark H 87. The next day, I searched for the ringer of that Demoiselle Crane with some friends, including Mr Bohra of Rajasthan, and on the Internet. After some hard work in search, I finally found the details and got a reply from the ringer, Nyambayar Batbayar. This demoiselle crane was ringed by my team on 22 July 2021 in Khuiten Valley (N48.24453, E110.7648). Thank you very much for sharing this wonderful observation and photos. Demoiselle Crane was tagged in Mongolia at Khurkh Valley, which is on the China-Mongolia border.

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