

Brown Crake's *Zapornia akool* diet menu includes Wafer: A opportunistic feeder

Ashok Mashru: A-7 Alap Heritage, Satya Sai Marg, Rajkot. mashruashok@gmail.com



Photo: Ashok Mashru



Photo: Dipen Tratia

On 1 July 2021, I was birding at Hanumandhara temple near Nyari 2 dam with co-birder Jignesh Rathod. I observed two Brown Crakes on the causeway made over the stream, of which one was foraging. Carrying the food in the bill, it went off the causeway down the stream. I had clicked few photographs and found that it has picked up potato chips. This area, being a picnic spot, is visited by many people and thus someone might have thrown the packet of chips on the road.

The diet of Brown Crake usually includes "Worms, Molluscs, adult and larval insects and seeds of marsh plants" (Taylor 2020). On further discussing this observation I came to know that a birder friend Mr. Dipen Tratia has recently observed and photographed Brown Crake eating Ganthiya at the same place. On 20th February 2012, I observed 5 Brown Crakes together collecting shells and feeding on residual meat in shells opened and discarded by an open-billed stork (Mashru 2013). Thus, it proves that Brown Crake is prone to adopt opportunistic feeding.

Reference

Mashru, Ashok 2013. Opportunistic feeding adaptation of Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool*. Indian BIRDS. 8: (4) 111.

Taylor, B. (2020). Brown Crake (*Zapornia akool*), 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.brocra1.01>. □

Sighting of Red-throated pipits *Anthus cervinus* near Bhavnagar city

Kandarp Andharia: Plot No. 55, Ishavashyam, Airport Road, Subhashmagar, Bhavnagar. kandarpandharia053@gmail.com

Vivek Upadhyay: "Tripura", Siddhivinayak Township, Near 150' Ring Road, Bhavnagar. viveku39@gmail.com



Photo: Kandarp Andharia

On the 26th of February 2021 afternoon the first author went birding at Avaniya Lake, about 10 km from Bhavnagar city.

He observed some common birds along with three Jack snipes. He also came across one pipit near the reed beds on the muddy area of the lake. The pipit was heavily streaked on the breasts till the flanks. It clearly looked different from tree pipit. After reaching home he forwarded the record shots of the pipit taken on the field to Mr. Prasad Ganpule. He confirmed it as a Red-throated Pipit. It was the first record of red-throated pipit in the Bhavnagar area. Later in the same season on date 12th April 2021, Dr P. P. Dodiya, Vishal Makwana and Aamir Matli recorded a single Red-throated Pipit at a different location at city pond Bortalav (Gaurishankar Lake).

On the morning of 28th January 2024, the second author and Jigar Vakani went for routine birdwatching at city pond Bortalav. They saw an unusual pipit foraging near Lake. He

Red-throated Pipit...

clicked some pics and realized that it was a Red-throated Pipit. He observed this beauty for 1.5 hours. Red-throated pipit is an unmistakable bird because of its red throat and rusty red face. The back is heavily streaked with black, white, and brown, and the rump is also streaked. Few days later both the authors along with Ashok Mashru, Prashant Andharia and Raj found three individuals at the same place. In these three individuals two pipits were in partial breeding plumage while the third individual was with a rusty face and a red throat. Also in the same season on 7th February 2024, the second author observed four individuals of Red throated pipits at the same place at Bortalav Lake.

Red-throated pipit is very rare in Gujarat. Its status and distribution is "Vagrant. Winter Isolated records from many parts of the State". (Ganpule et al, 2022).

On the ebird website, some previously isolated records exist in Kachchh and Amreli districts. But this year, single bird was first recorded at Nalsarovar on 7th January 2024 by Kamrudin Alvani, Taiyab Alvani, and Esha Munshi. See the bird link (<https://ebird.org/india/checklist/S158492957>). Two more individuals were sighted at Nalsarovar by other bird watchers few days later.

So this can be considered as a significant observation as it was the first time that three and four individuals of Red throated pipits were observed at their respective areas.

Reference

Ganpule, P., Varu, M., Trivedi, B., & Raina, A. D., 2022. A field guide to the birds of Gujarat. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat. Ahmedabad. i-viii 1-488. □

Sighting of Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary

Vyom Vyas: 8, Jayantilal Park, Ambli-Bopal Road, Ahmedabad. vyomvyas2004@gmail.com



Photo: Vyom Vyas

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* is an aquatic bird with a jet-black back, black cap, and crisp white forehead. The immatures are dark overall, with white spots on the wings and a white undertail. It is very similar to the Bridled Tern, but a few features, like a darker black back, darker underwing feathers, and narrow white edges to the tail, separate it from an adult Sooty Tern. [Fig:1]

On June 18, After the cyclone Biparjoy, We (Bhaarat Vyas, Kamrudin Alvani, Akshay Jethi, and Vyom Vyas) visited the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary in search for pelagics that might have blown inshore due to cyclone Biparjoy as we heard the news of the sightings of Brown Noddies at Jamnagar and Porbandar coasts. It was a cloudy morning with a lot of bird activity. We noted species like Little Tern, Kentish Plover, Graylag Goose and Collared Pratincole.

At around 9, while waiting for our boat to arrive, we observed a mixed flock of birds, primarily Terns, near the main boating point. Among them, we saw a bird of black and white color dart across the sky. Its flight pattern was quite elegant and distinct, unlike the Whiskered Terns which were chasing it. We were lucky to get some good images of the bird in flight. This was helpful in identifying its field marks. Later during the discussion, we confirmed that the bird was a Sooty Tern. The distinguishing features to confirm the identification were the jet-black back, black cap, crisp white forehead, and white undertail. We ruled out the Bridled Tern as it has the short supercilium and a more sooty-gray back. Furthermore, the distinct flight pattern and an elongated structure were accounted for confirming.

Our record is the first county and the fourth state record (Ebird, 2023) as of June 18, 2023.

Reference

Schreiber, E. A., C. J. Feare, B. A. Harrington, B. G. Murray Jr., W. B. Robertson Jr., M. J. Robertson, and G. E. Woolfenden (2020). Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (S. M. Billerman, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.sooter1.01> □