



Sighting of Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* at Nal Sarovar outskirts

On October 11th 2023, at around 4pm, during our routine birdwatching session with a target to find Common Whitethroat *Curruca communis* in the area, we were surprised to spot a bird about the size of a myna. It was yellow coloured with a black hood, perched on a neem tree *Azadirachta indica*. It did not stay much and though despite a brief sighting, we captured record shots from a considerable distance. After reviewing the photos, we confirmed it as a Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*. This species is common to uncommon and found in well-wooded regions of Gujarat, as stated by (Ganpule 2022). This sighting marks an important addition to the Nal Sarovar area checklist, while also enhancing the documentation of its rich avian biodiversity.

Kamrudin Alvani & Latif Alvani: Bird Guide at Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Gujarat.



House Crow *Corvus splendens* prey on a Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrines*

On Wednesday, June 5th, 2024, our birding team, Manoj Tank, Nirav Pomal and me, planned a visit to Chhari Dhandh in Kutch. While observing the courtship display of Greater flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus*, one of our team members suddenly sighted a House crow *Corvus splendens* trying to kill a Kentish plover *Anarhynchus alexandrines*. As the crow was aggressively attacking the plover, another crow came closer and tried to snatch the prey. Despite many attempts to escape, the plover was incapable to do so. Eventually, the first crow started eating the it while still alive. After a few minutes the crow flew away with the prey. Although we know that house crows are omnivorous and scavengers, this was the first time we observed one preying on a wader.

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Sighting of Forest wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* at Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

On November 20th 2023, at around 12pm, while birdwatching at check-post area of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary we were fortunate to spot a Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*. Motivated by this sighting, we revisited the same site in expectation to find the same bird again. As we were searching the flycatcher, our attention was diverted by a wagging tail of a wagtail. It was continuously of the move, characteristically wagging its tail sideways. Intrigued, we carefully approached closer to take few record shots. We identified it as a Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*. This sighting was particularly exciting for all of us, as this species was a lifer for our birdwatchers group. The serendipitous sighting of Forest Wagtail added a pleasant surprise to our birdwatching excursion, while emphasising the unpredictable and rewarding nature of birdwatching at Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary.

Kamrudin Alvani & Tayab Alvani: Bird Guide at Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary.



Sighting of Merlin *Falco columbarius* on the outskirts of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

On the evening of November 11th 2023, around 4.15 pm, I was birdwatching on the outskirts of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, searching for a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*. While exploring the area, I observed three individuals owl roosting on Khejri tree *Prosopis cineraria*. On moving further towards the grassy patch, I spotted an unidentified falcon resting on the ground. Initially, I assumed it was a Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, but on zooming the picture on the camera screen, I realized it to be a different species. I tried get closer to this smaller looking falcon, but unfortunately, it flew away before I could get close. Still, I managed to get one long-distance photograph. I sent the picture to senior birdwatcher Sunil Kini directly from the field, who confirmed it to be a Merlin *Falco columbarius*. This sighting might be the first photographic record of the species in this area.

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