



Sighting of Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura* near Blackbuck National Park

I work as a naturalist at Blackbuck Safari Lodge in Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar in Bhavnagar district. On 26th May 2024, after completing the morning safari at the park, I returned to the resort at around 09:00 hours, where I heard a distinctive call of a bird near the lakeside of the resort. Upon further observation, I saw two Indian Pittas *Pitta brachyura* calling from a tree. They remained there for a while before flying away. After a few minutes, they returned to the ground to feed. I also observed Red-vented Bulbuls *Pycnonotus jocosus* teasing them. The Indian Pittas stayed in the area for a few days but were not sighted afterwards, possibly they might have moved elsewhere. The lodge's ample green trees possibly attracted the Indian Pittas to this area. I talked to Dr. Indrabhai Gadhvi, a senior birdwatcher of the region regarding any earlier sightings near the park. He mentioned about the sightings in Bhavnagar but none near or at Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar. Therefore, my sighting of the Indian Pitta near Velavadar could be the first recorded instance and is it might be significant for understanding its distribution.

Amit Vegad: Blackbuck Safari Lodge, Velavadar. Dist: Bhavnagar.
Email: vegadamit5@gmail.com



Sighting of Indian Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonota* at Jasara, Banaskantha

On May 5th, 2024, while exploring the deciduous forest of Jasara in Banaskantha, I heard an unfamiliar yet melodious call that piqued my curiosity. Following the sound, I spotted a bird climbing the trees of *Capparis decidua* from bottom to top. The bird swiftly moved between trees with each flight and eventually perched on a khejri tree *Prosopis cineraria*, revealing itself as the Indian Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonota*. This marked my first sighting of the species, and I was enthralled by its behaviour, unable to take my eyes off it or lower my binoculars. After capturing several photographs and documenting my observation on eBird, I felt a sense of awe at this remarkable sighting. According to its status and distribution, the Indian Spotted Creeper is listed as Rare, resident in south Gujarat and central Gujarat, with isolated records from Saurashtra (Ganpule 2022). Searching eBird records for Indian Spotted Creepers revealed only two entries from the Dahod district (Jani, 2016) and (Munshi, 2016). The first and only record from Saurashtra dates back to 2005, observed in Gir Forest by Shri P. S. Thakkar (Thakkar, 2005). Therefore, my sighting from Banaskantha marks the first recorded instance in this region, highlighting its significance.

Sachin Prajapati: 156/6/36 Chhaganji ni Wadi, Laxmi Nagar, Meghaninagar, Ahmedabad, 380016. sachin851168@gmail.com



Sighting of Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* in Bharuch

On 5th May 2024, Vishal Makwana and I visited Shuklatirtha along the banks of the Narmada river in Bharuch district for birdwatching. As we walked ahead searching for waders, we spotted several species, including Small Pratincole *Glareola lacteal*, Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*, Indian Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*, Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*, and River Tern *Sterna aurantia*. Suddenly, I noticed a bird of prey hovering in the sky. Initially, we thought it might be a Shikra *Accipiter bandius*. However, upon taking a photo and zooming in, I noticed an orange hue near its vent, leading me to believe it was an Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*. I proceeded to take more photographs. Within moments, the River Tern began mobbing the falcon, causing it to fly away. I immediately shared the photos with Jugal Patel and Bhavik Dutt for confirmation. Bhavik Dutt confirmed it was indeed Amur Falcon. Previously, Jugal Patel had observed an Amur Falcon in Hansot on 5th December 2021, marking this a second confirmed sighting in Bharuch district. The Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat, conducted a special program on Amur Falcon monitoring at Mahuva in April 2024. This observation contributes to understanding the species' return migration routes through Gujarat.

Khushi Patel: 64, Shree Darshan society, Diva road, Ankleshwar.
Email: khushipatel4602@gmail.com