

Sighting of Lesser Frigatebird *Frigata ariel* near Porbandar

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Photo: R. B. Modhvia

On July 3, 2024, I was on patrol duty in Vishavada round, Porbandar, with my staff. We were walking along a sandy beach from Shikotar-mata temple to Ratdi. At around 6:30 pm, I saw a large bird flying overhead. I had never seen such a bird before; it looked different. A brief description of this bird is as follows: A large black-and-white bird with a longer tail, white belly, longer bill with a downcurved tip, a black head, and black underwings. It was hovering there for a few minutes. I did not have a camera at that time; however, I managed to record a decent photo with my iPhone. I shared the same with my birder friend, Ramde Bhatiya. He replied that this was a frigatebird species. I forwarded the photo to Prasad Ganpule for confirmation. He confirmed that this was a Lesser Frigatebird *Frigata ariel*.

This species is Vagrant in Gujarat with only two previous records (Ganpule 2022). One injured bird was recovered near Tapi river, South Gujarat and was reported in publication 'Chatak', a newsletter of WWF, Rajkot Div. (Ganpule 2016). A single bird was seen and photographed near Mahuva by Batuk Bhil and Mahendra Bhil (Bhil 2021). So this is the third sighting of this pelagic species from Gujarat.

References:

- Bhil, B. & Bhil, M., 2021. Sighting of Christmas Island Frigatebird *Fregata andrewsi* and Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* near Mahuva, Bhavnagar. *FLAMINGO Gujarat* 19 (2): 9-10
- Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo* 8 (3) -12(4): 2-40.
- Ganpule, P., Varu, M., Trivedi, B., & Raina, A.D., 2022. *A field guide of the birds of Gujarat*. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat. Ahmedabad. I-viii, 1-488.