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A Single-Day Avifaunal Survey Reveals 132 Species and the First Record of the Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* in Gujarat

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1. Introduction

Gujarat, located on the western coast of India, constitutes an important nexus for various migratory flyways, notably for species employing the Central Asian Flyway (Ali & Ripley, 1987). Despite substantial ornithological study in the state, numerous ecological niches remain underexplored—notably smaller, non-protected wetland complexes and adjacent terrestrial habitats. The current research focused on three distinct locations—Bherai, Pariej, and Gobhlaj—recognized locally for their avian abundance yet lacking recent, comprehensive surveys. Given the rising threat from habitat fragmentation and land-use change, a rapid assessment was essential to establish a baseline inventory of bird species diversity (Sekercioglu et al., 2004). A primary objective of this

investigation was to document any species not previously recorded within the state's geographical boundaries.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Sites and Duration

The survey was performed during an intensive single-day field effort on 22 November 2025 across the three specified sites: Bherai (22°46'20.6"N, 72°35'56.6"E), Pariej (22°32'56.8"N, 72°37'28.1"E), and Gobhlaj (22°47'40.4"N, 72°36'50.0"E). These locations comprise a mix of ecosystems, including shallow wetlands, agricultural fields, and degraded scrubland/forest. The complete checklist was submitted to the eBird database under Trip Report 434416 (eBird, 2025).

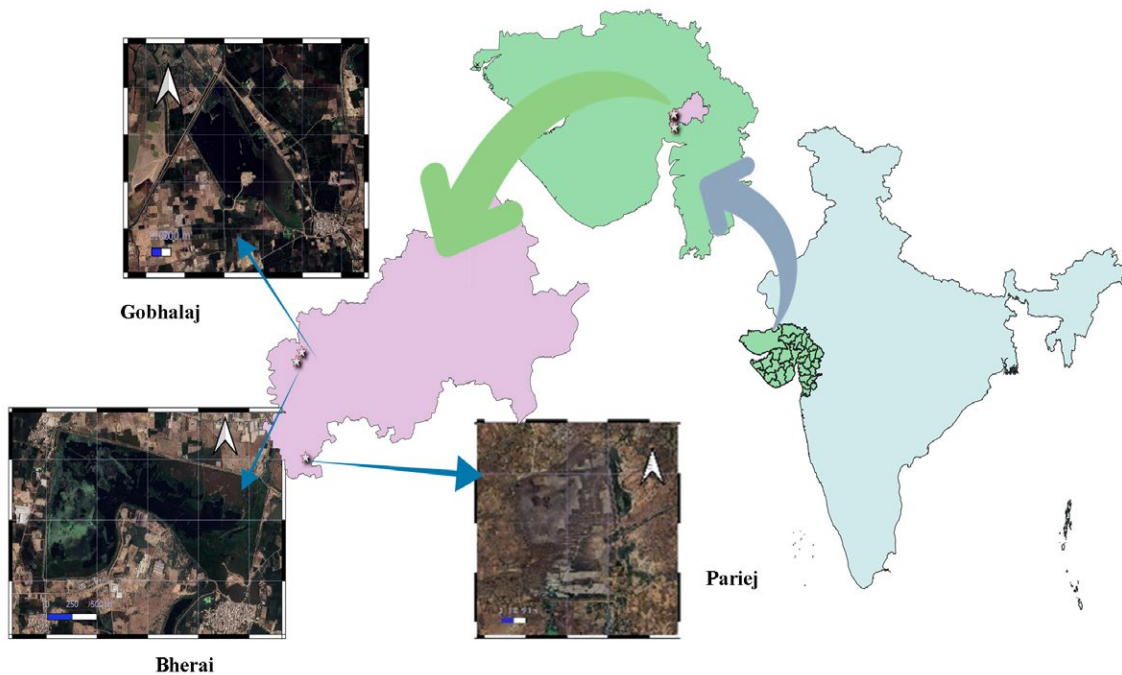


Figure 1: Study site

2.2 Survey Techniques

The study was conducted by a team of 19 observers from the LBALAB Association. The primary methodological approach was point counts, supplemented by opportunistic ad-hoc transect counts along predefined routes:

Point Counts: Fixed observation points (n=10 per site) were deployed, with counts recorded over 15-minute intervals during early morning and late afternoon periods.

Ad-Hoc Surveys: Walking transects were covered across diverse habitat types to maximize spatial coverage, documenting all visual and auditory encounters.

Identification: Species were identified using high-power binoculars and standard field guides, augmented by vocalizations. All species identifications were verified independently by at least two experienced observers.

2.3 Documentation of Rare Species

Any potential first state record was thoroughly documented using high-resolution photography, detailed field notes, and geographic coordinates. This evidence was subsequently cross-referenced with authoritative state and national checklists prior to confirmation (Rasmussen & Anderton, 2012).

3. Results

The single-day survey recorded a total of 132 bird species across the three study sites. This high species richness highlights the combined ecological significance of the Bherai, Pariej, and Gobhlaj wetland-terrestrial complex. The majority of recorded species comprised Palearctic winter migrants and widespread resident species.

3.1 Record: Blue-and-white Flycatcher (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*)

The most notable finding was the unequivocal sighting and photographic documentation of a female/immature Blue-and-white Flycatcher (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*) near Pariej. This species is an East Asian migrant that breeds primarily in Northeast Asia and winters in Southeast Asia (Cramp, 1992). This sighting represents the first documented record of *C. cyanomelana* in the state of Gujarat, indicating an extreme extralimital vagrancy event or a notable expansion of its known passage range.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The documentation of 132 species, along with the first state record of the Blue-and-white Flycatcher, underscores the Pariej region as a critical hotspot for avian biodiversity in Gujarat. The high diversity observed during a rapid single-day survey demonstrates the presence of varied microhabitats capable of supporting both resident birds and diverse migratory populations.



Figure 2: Blue-and-white Flycatcher (*Cyanoptila cyanomelana*)

4.1 Identification Rationale and Confirmation

The individual observed during the survey was identified as a non-adult (female or first-winter male) of the genus *Cyanoptila*. The assignment to Blue-and-white Flycatcher (*C. cyanomelana*) rather than the morphologically similar

Zaprey's Flycatcher (*C. cumatilis*) relies on a conservative application of biogeographical probability, as females and immatures of these two taxa are virtually indistinguishable in the field (Leader & Carey, 2012).

Visually, the bird exhibited greyish-brown upperparts, a light olive-grey wash across the breast contrasting with a paler throat, and a whitish abdomen. Without in-hand biometric measurements (such as wing formula) or genetic samples, field separation between female-type *C. cyanomelana* and *C. cumatilis* is not possible with complete certainty. However, assigning the record to *C. cyanomelana* is justified by established patterns of vagrancy in the Indian Subcontinent: all previous, definitively confirmed male records of *Cyanoptila* in mainland India belong to *C. cyanomelana* (Vittapu & Dey, 2021), whereas Zappey's Flycatcher (*C. cumatilis*) lacks any confirmed record in India (Dharwadkar & Fonseca, 2024). Therefore, following the standard conservative convention, the record is attributed to *C. cyanomelana*.

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Annexure 1: Species Checklist (Observed Avifauna)

Common Name	Scientific Name
Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix griseus</i>
Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
Asian Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Blue-and-white Flycatcher	<i>Cyanoptila cyanomelana</i>
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
Common Babbler	<i>Argya caudata</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>
Diurnal Raptor sp.	Accipitriformes / Falconiformes sp.
Duck sp.	Anatidae sp.
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>
Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Eurasian Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Grey Francolin	<i>Ortygornis pondicerianus</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Grey-headed Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i>
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga clanga</i>
Green Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Hume's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>
Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>
Indian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Indian Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
Indian Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga hastata</i>
Indian White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
Jungle Babbler	<i>Argya striata</i>
Kentish Plover	<i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus</i>
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Large Grey Babbler	<i>Argya malcolmi</i>
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>
Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma zeylonica</i>
Red Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>
Rock Pigeon (Feral)	<i>Columba livia</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
Sarus Crane	<i>Antigone antigone</i>
Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
Shorebird sp.	<i>Charadriiformes sp.</i>
Siberian Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>
Small Pratincole	<i>Glareola lactea</i>
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
Streak-throated Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon fluvicola</i>
Sykes's Warbler	<i>Iduna rama</i>
Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>
Tricolored Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>
Western Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caeruleus</i>
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
White-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>
White-tailed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus leucurus</i>
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>



Occurrence of Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* in Gandhinagar, Gujarat

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Introduction

The adult Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) in breeding plumage is characterized by a reddish throat and upper breast, with females typically displaying a paler coloration. In its non-breeding or first-winter plumage, distinguishing features include a yellowish base on the lower mandible, a heavily marked back and crown, a pronounced dark malar patch, boldly streaked breast and flanks, and buff-coloured edges on the primary and secondary feathers. The species primarily forages on the ground, often in muddy or marshy habitats. It moves with a quick, deliberate walk, frequently wags its tail, and maintains a horizontal posture. Its diet consists mainly of invertebrates, supplemented by some vegetable matter (Tyler, S., 2020). When in flight, it frequently utters a thin, high-pitched, distinctive "pssseeii" call.

The Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) is a Palearctic species that breeds from Scandinavia eastward to Siberia (Dementiev & Gladkov, 1954; Glutz von Blotzheim & Bauer, 1985), with a small breeding population in northwestern Alaska (Kessel & Gibson, 1978). It is a long-distance migrant, wintering primarily south of the Sahara in Africa and in Southeast Asia. Eastern populations mainly migrate to Southeast Asia, southeastern China, and Taiwan, with smaller numbers

reaching the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. The return migration occurs from March to April in Kenya and the Middle East, and in early May in Central Europe, with birds reaching their breeding areas from late May (Tyler, S., 2020). In the Indian subcontinent, the Red-throated Pipit is a scarce passage and winter migrant (Ali & Ripley, 1998; Kazmierczak, 2000). According to Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), it is a passage migrant in northeastern Afghanistan, the Indus Valley (Pakistan), and occasionally through the Himalayas and northeastern India. It winters in the Maldives, the Andaman Islands, and possibly the Nicobar Islands, with an old sighting reported from Camorta, Nicobar Island. In India, it is considered a rare winter migrant, with scattered records across the country, except for the Andaman Islands, where it is known to winter (Rasmussen & Anderton, 2012). In Gujarat, the Red-throated Pipit is an exceptionally rare migrant. Its status and distribution in the state are categorized as "vagrant," with only isolated winter records from various parts of Gujarat (Ganpule et al., 2022).

Observation

The Sabarmati Riverbank between Juna Koba, Nabhoi village, and the Karai Police Training Centre exhibits a distinct habitat compared to other parts of the river. While much of the

Sabarmati consists of loose, flooded, and unsettled sand deposits, this stretch—spanning approximately 3–4 km—features extensive grass cover interspersed with small, undulating sand mounds. These grass-covered mounds trap shallow mud and water, forming small to large pools that create diverse microhabitats attracting a variety of aquatic and terrestrial bird species. Additionally, the area's relative isolation shields it from disturbances such as sand mining and heavy human activity. Notably, this region contains a siphon structure where the Narmada Main Canal crosses above the Sabarmati



Red-throated Pipit....

River, alongside a nearby barrage that regulates the discharge of Narmada water into the riverbed.

On January 9, 2025, the first author, accompanied by Pratik A. Bhatt, Ravi K. Patel, and Sunny J. Vaghadiya, went birdwatching along the Sabarmati Riverbank behind Juna Koba village (23°8'20.97"N, 72°38'45.78"E) in Gandhinagar. While observing and photographing various waterfowl species—including the Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), Knob-billed Duck (*Sarkidiornis melanotos*), and Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)—as well as raptors such as the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), the first author noticed a pipit foraging alongside Western Yellow Wagtails (*Motacilla flava*). Initially presumed to be a Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), the bird was later confirmed to be a Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) upon closer examination of its diagnostic plumage features in photographs.

The solitary Red-throated Pipit, in non-breeding plumage, was actively foraging on damp ground within the muddy, marshy habitat. It appeared relatively tolerant of human presence but was observed being chased by other resident and migratory pipits, including the Paddyfield Pipit (*Anthus rufulus*) and Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*). This sighting represents the first photographically documented occurrence of the Red-throated Pipit in Gandhinagar district. The bird remained at the site for at least 18–20 consecutive days and was subsequently observed and documented by the authors alongside several local birdwatchers and photographers.

Previous sightings from Gujarat

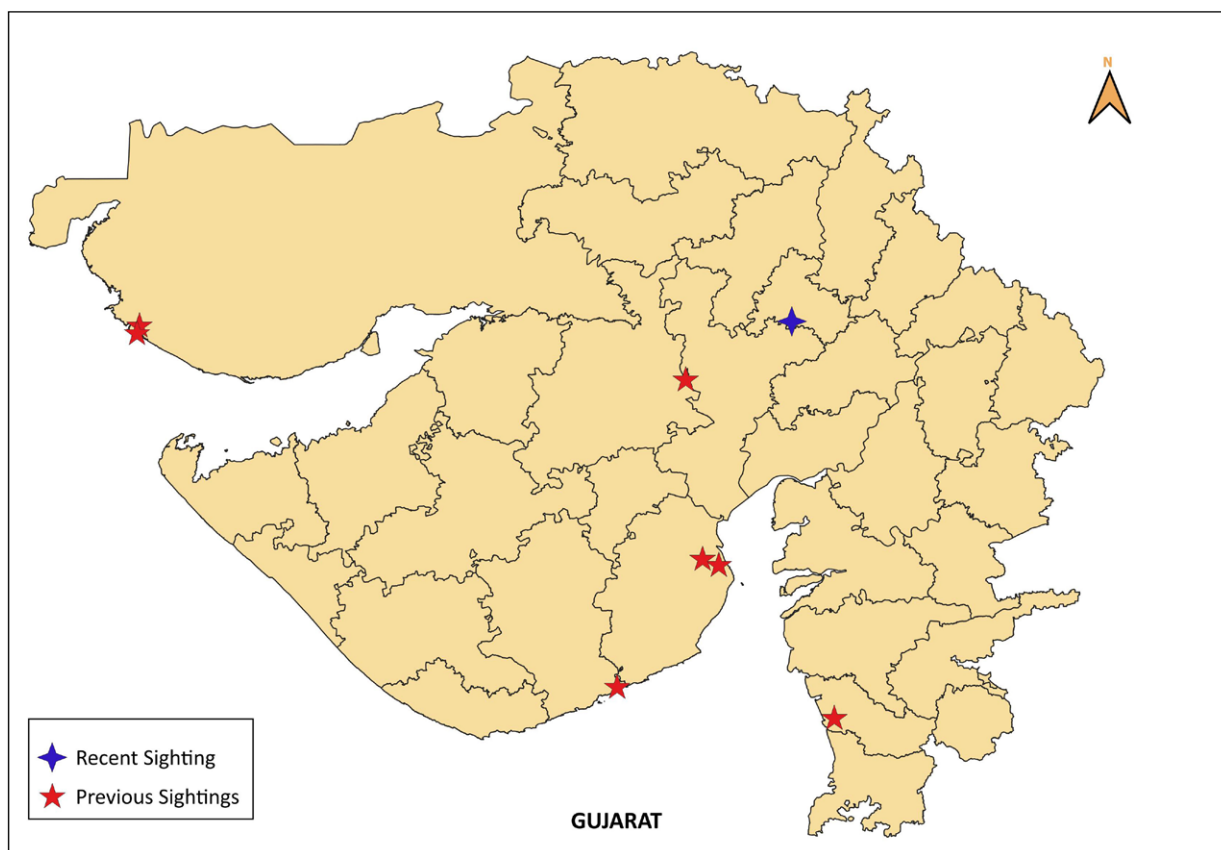
All the previous sightings records from eBird which are confirmed and having a photograph attached are considered for this note along with other published sightings till February-2025.

List of eBird and published sightings of Red-throated Pipit from Gujarat

Sr. No.	Date	Location	District	References
1	19-11-2007	Jakahu Salt Pans	Kutch	https://ebird.org/checklist/S96340648
2	25-10-2016	Naliya Outskirts	Kutch	https://ebird.org/checklist/S32350674
3	26-02-2021	Avania Lake	Bhavnagar	Andharia, K. & Upadhyay, V., 2024
4	12-04-2021	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S85395015
5	06-02-2022	Samdhiyala Bandhara wetland	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S102432515
6	08-01-2023	Samdhiyala Bandhara wetland	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S125681696
7	30-12-2023	Vadi lake	Navsari	Shah, K. et al., 2024
8	07-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	Alvani, K. et al., 2024
9	08-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158425282
10	08-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158426693
11	08-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158425302
12	08-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158418146
13	09-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158493078
14	10-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158555766
15	11-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158626130
16	11-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S158610883
17	13-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S170667766
18	14-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S170667325
19	20-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S159326150
20	24-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S159666135
21	27-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160347146
22	28-01-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160089619

Sr. No.	Date	Location	District	References
23	28-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160096648
24	29-01-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160099143
25	30-01-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160162998
26	31-01-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160237877
27	02-02-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160390193
28	03-02-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160480045
29	04-02-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160771522
30	04-02-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160604081
31	07-02-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160832981
32	07-02-2024	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Ahmedabad & Surendranagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S160840137
33	21-02-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S162421909
34	24-02-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S162957483
35	16-03-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S162421909
36	26-03-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S166233049
37	29-03-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S166307485
38	21-12-2024	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S206054135
39	12-01-2025	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S209597189
40	12-01-2025	Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake)	Bhavnagar	https://ebird.org/checklist/S208992002

Showing locations of recent and previous sightings of Red-throated Pipit



Red-throated Pipit....

The first eBird checklist documenting the Red-throated Pipit in Gujarat was submitted from the salt pans of Jakhau, Kutch, on 19 November 2007. Nearly a decade later, on 25 October 2016, another individual was reported from the outskirts of Naliya, Kutch. More recently, on 26 February 2021, the species was recorded at Avania Lake, Bhavnagar, with sightings subsequently published on eBird and in the *Flamingo* newsletter by Andharia & Upadhyay (2024). Following this, additional eBird records emerged from Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake) and the Samdhiyala Bandhara wetlands in Bhavnagar district between 2021 and 2023. In December 2023, a single individual was sighted at Vadi Lake in Navsari district (Shah et al., 2024). On 7 January 2024, Alvani et al. (2024) reported the occurrence of the species from Ranagadh village—part of the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary—on eBird and in the *Flamingo* newsletter. Numerous sightings of 1–2 individuals followed from the same area, continuing until 7 February 2024. During this period, between 28 January and 29 March 2024, multiple eBird checklists recorded 1–4 individuals at Bor Talav. Additionally, further sightings at Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake) were reported on 21 December 2024 and 12 January 2025.

The distribution map of past and recent Red-throated Pipit sightings in Gujarat reveals a distinct concentration around

the Gulf of Khambhat, with only two records from Kutch. Although the species is classified as a "vagrant" in the state and no empirical evidence yet confirms a specific migratory corridor through this region, the observed spatial pattern suggests that certain individuals may follow a repeated route. However, given the limited sample size of records, this hypothesis remains speculative.

The recent sighting along the Sabarmati Riverbank in Gandhinagar (marked in blue) is farther inland than all previous state records, suggesting an occasional stopover by a vagrant individual rather than a regular passage route. Similarly, recurring observations at Bor Talav (Gaurishankar Lake) indicate that it could serve as a temporary wintering or stopover site, though additional systematic surveys are needed to confirm this pattern across central and northern Gujarat.

Conclusion

The Red-throated Pipit remains an exceptionally rare vagrant in Gujarat, with only a few confirmed records documented over the past two decades. The recent record in Gandhinagar marks the first documented occurrence for the district, expanding the known distribution of the species within the



state. While the spatial concentration of records around the Gulf of Khambhat suggests a potential flyway or stopover cluster, empirical evidence remains insufficient to confirm a regular migratory corridor. Instead, these observations highlight the ecological significance of inland riverine, wetland, and coastal habitats as potential stopover sites for vagrant passerines. The species' overall scarcity indicates that it remains an irregular—and likely under-reported—visitor to Gujarat. Continued field surveys, particularly in under-explored inland wetlands, are essential to determine whether these records represent an overlooked regular migration pattern or isolated vagrancy events.

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Occurrence of White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus* in Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, India

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The avifaunal diversity of Gujarat continues to reveal important additions through regular field observations and systematic monitoring (Parasharya et al., 2004; Ganpule, 2025). During a recent bird survey conducted in Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, two individuals of the White-browed Bulbul (*Pycnonotus luteolus*) were recorded. Based on available literature and published regional bird checklists, this observation constitutes the first documented record of the species from Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary.

The White-browed Bulbul is a resident passerine belonging to the family Pycnonotidae. Endemic to peninsular India and Sri Lanka, the species is generally associated with dry scrub forests, thorny thickets, woodland edges, agricultural landscapes, and shrubby habitats (Ali & Ripley, 2001; Grimmett et al., 2011). It is known for its preference for dense undergrowth, where it frequently remains concealed within thick vegetation (Rasmussen & Anderton, 2012).

The individuals were observed in a scrub-dominated habitat within Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary. A total of two birds were recorded during the survey period, both frequently seen visiting and foraging on *Cordia sinensis* Lam. (locally known

as Nani Gundi), a characteristic fruiting shrub species of the area. Other bird species observed in mixed association within the same micro-habitat included the Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*), White-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus leucotis*), and Asian Koel (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*).

The White-browed Bulbul is relatively common in southern and central parts of Gujarat (Grimmett et al., 2011; Bhatt & Trivedi, 2016). Historically, the species was considered absent from much of the Saurashtra peninsula (Dharmakumarsinhji, 1955; Ali, 1955; Raol, 1998). However, recent observations and published records have documented its occurrence in several localities within Saurashtra, including Rajkot (Bhatt & Trivedi, 2016), alongside reports from the Little Rann of Kachchh and Jamnagar (eBird, 2024). Despite these expanding records across Saurashtra, the species has not previously been documented from Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary. The absence of earlier records from the sanctuary may simply be due to under-exploration and limited systematic avifaunal surveys rather than a recent range expansion. Nevertheless, long-term monitoring will help clarify whether this record represents a genuine range shift or an overlooked resident population.





The present observation is noteworthy as it adds a new species to the avifaunal checklist of Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary and further strengthens evidence regarding the establishment and spread of the White-browed Bulbul in Saurashtra, Gujarat.

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Breeding Record of Mottled Wood Owl *Strix ocellata* near Dholka Taluka, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

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On 19 March 2026 at 08:45 h, we recorded a breeding group of Mottled Wood Owl (*Strix ocellata*) roosting on a roadside Siris tree (*Albizia lebbeck*) near Ambareli village (22°38'12.4"N, 72°24'46.6"E), Dholka taluka, Ahmedabad district, Gujarat (Fig. 1). The group comprised a recently fledged juvenile and an adult female perched together, while the male remained nearby. All three individuals were observed for over an hour. Identification was based on characteristic features including large size, a rounded head without ear tufts, a pale facial disc with fine barring, dark eyes, and mottled reddish-brown upperparts. The juvenile was smaller, with a less-defined facial disc and retained downy plumage, indicating recent fledging. Notably, the birds exhibited calm behaviour and effective camouflage within the dense canopy, despite the proximity to human activity. This observation provides clear evidence of breeding in a roadside tree habitat, an uncommon context for the species. Photographic documentation was obtained (Fig. 2).

The habitat around Ambareli comprised a mosaic of rose and marigold cultivation interspersed with roadside Siris Trees and adjoining farmland, supporting abundant prey such as rodents

and snakes (Fig. 1). During the same visit (19 March 2026), the site supported a diverse bird assemblage, including Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*), Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros birostris*), Yellow-throated Sparrow (*Gymnoris xanthocolis*), Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), Asian Green Bee-eater (*Merops orientalis*), Long-tailed Shrike (*Lanius schach*), and Oriental Honey Buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*). This diversity highlights the structural complexity, prey richness, and overlooked ornithological value of the Dholka region.

The presence of a juvenile alongside the adult pair is particularly noteworthy. The breeding season of the Mottled Wood Owl is generally reported to occur from February to April, with nesting in natural tree hollows (Lewis, 2020). The observation of a recently fledged juvenile during this period strongly suggests that breeding occurred in or near the locality, representing one of the first confirmed indications of local breeding of this species in Dholka taluka and the broader central Gujarat region. The subspecies *S. o. grandis* (Koelz, 1950) is endemic to the Saurashtra Peninsula in southern Gujarat and is the largest of the three recognised subspecies (Rasmussen and Anderton, 2012). Records from central

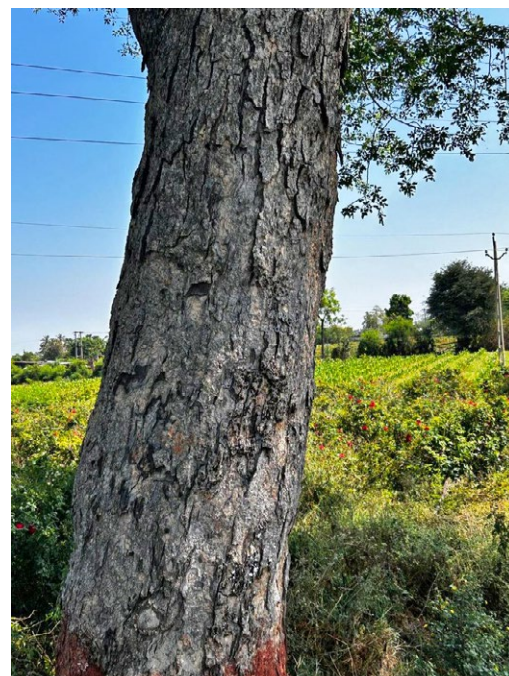


Fig. 1. The Siris tree (*Albizia lebbeck*) on the roadside near Ambareli village, Dholka, in which the family group of Mottled Wood Owl was observed roosting, with rose cultivation visible in the background. 19 March 2026. Photo: Faisal Ghanchi



Fig. 2. Family of Mottled Wood Owl (*Strix ocellata*) on a Siris tree near Ambareli village, Dholka taluka, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. 19 March 2026. Photo: Umang Nayi and Faisal Ghanchi

Gujarat - particularly from Ahmedabad district - remain poorly documented.

A review of available eBird data did not reveal any prior records of this species from the Dholka region, making this a locally significant observation. According to Ganpule et al., (2022), the species is primarily associated with the Saurashtra region in Gujarat, and records from the central and northern parts of the state remain sparse. The rich avifauna recorded at this site, together with the presence of a breeding family group of Mottled Wood Owl, highlights the conservation importance of agricultural grove habitats in Dholka taluka and underscores the need for systematic bird surveys across this under-documented region of central Gujarat.

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First photographic record of Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides* from Dang District, Gujarat

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The Slaty-legged Crake (*Rallina eurizonoides*) is a secretive, forest-dwelling rail distributed across South and Southeast Asia. In India, it is primarily known from the Himalayan foothills, northeastern India, central India, and the Western Ghats. Due to its elusive behavior and preference for dense undergrowth in moist forests, the species is rarely encountered and remains poorly documented across many parts of its range. The species was not included in the original baseline checklists of Gujarat avifauna and remained unrecorded from the state until 2017.

On 18 June 2026, during a birding survey in the Dang district, Gujarat, we observed and photographed a single Slaty-legged Crake in dense undergrowth within a moist deciduous forest habitat. The bird was detected while moving quietly through thick vegetation adjacent to a seasonal forest stream. It remained visible for several minutes, allowing detailed observation and photographic documentation.

The bird was identified by its distinctive combination of a rich chestnut-rufous head, neck, and upper breast, contrasting white throat, dark brown upperparts, bold black-and-white barring on the flanks and vent, and greyish-green legs. These diagnostic features clearly separated it from other rallids

known from Gujarat, including the Brown Crake (*Zapornia akool*), Ruddy-breasted Crake (*Zapornia fusca*), White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), and Slaty-breasted Rail (*Lewinia striata*).

The present record is significant within the context of the species' status in Gujarat and adjoining regions. The first documented occurrence from the region was reported by Saswat Mishra on 26 August 2017 from Madhuban Dam Forest, Dadra & Nagar Haveli. An adult bird accompanied by two juveniles was photographed, suggesting local breeding and constituting a new addition to the regional avifauna (Ganpule, 2020). The second documented record originated from Madhavpur-Ghed, Porbandar District, and was published as a rescue and sighting record in 2020.

Subsequently, a Slaty-legged Crake photographed by Mitul Desai in Vansda National Park, Navsari District, on 12 June 2020 was reviewed in the Third Update to the Gujarat Checklist. Ganpule (2021) noted that only two previous records existed—Madhuban Dam and Madhavpur-Ghed—and considered the Vansda observation as the third record for Gujarat.



The present record from Dang District therefore constitutes the fourth documented record of the Slaty-legged Crane for the state/region and the first photographic record specifically from Dang District. It further extends the known occurrence of the species within the forested landscape of southern Gujarat and strengthens evidence that the species regularly occurs in the northern extension of the Western Ghats biogeographic zone.

Interestingly, three of the four known records from Gujarat and adjoining Dadra & Nagar Haveli have originated from the moist forest belt of southern Gujarat—namely Madhuban Dam, Vansda National Park, and Dang District. These areas are characterized by high rainfall, dense undergrowth, seasonal streams, and moist deciduous to semi-evergreen forests—habitats closely matching those occupied by the species elsewhere in the Western Ghats. The concentration of records in this region suggests that the Slaty-legged Crane may be a scarce resident or an overlooked monsoon breeding visitor rather than a true vagrant.

The species is currently included in the Gujarat bird checklist with the status code "V, MB" (Vagrant, Monsoon Breeder; Ganpule, 2020). However, the growing number of records from southern Gujarat, including direct evidence of breeding near Madhuban Dam and repeated observations from the contiguous forested districts of Navsari and Dang, indicate that targeted surveys during the southwest monsoon may reveal a wider distribution than presently understood.

This observation highlights the ornithological importance of the forests of Dang District and underscores the need for systematic, targeted monitoring of secretive rallids across southern Gujarat.

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Date	Location	Remarks
26 August 2017	Madhuban Dam Forest, Dadra & Nagar Haveli	First record for Gujarat region; adult with two juveniles photographed Saswat Mishra 2017
17 October 2020	Madhavpur-Ghed, Porbandar District	Second documented record from Gujarat -Niranjani 2020
12 June 2020	Vansda National Park, Navsari District	Third documented Gujarat record; photographed by Mitul Desai 2021
18 June 2026	Dang District, Gujarat	First photographic record for Dang District; fourth documented record for Gujarat

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Notes on the nesting of Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides* from the Dangs, South Gujarat

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Introduction

The Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides* is a monsoon migrant in the northernmost part of the Western Ghats in Gujarat. Elsewhere in India it is described as a resident and local migrant of well-wooded, well-watered country, most often seen during the monsoon (Sonawane & Sonawane 2022). Previous sightings in the region include one at Silvassa in August 2017 (S. Mishra) and one in Vandsa National Park in June 2020 (M. Desai). More recently, a pair was recorded in July 2026 at Mahal Campsite, Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, by A. Parikh (eBird checklist, 4 July 2026), and J. Patel photographed the species with chicks at Mahal Campsite on 3 September 2026.

Breeding of the species has been described from Nilambur, Kerala (Murukesh & Balakrishnan 2015), from Bison Valley, Idukki, Kerala (Bison Valley report 2015) and from the Philippines (Kaufman 2011). Here we report an active nest found in August 2026 near Uga Rambhas, Dang district, South Gujarat, and describe the nest, its habitat and the incubation behaviour of the pair. To our knowledge, this is the first nest of the species documented in Gujarat.

Nesting area and habitat

The nest was found near Uga Rambhas, a small village in Dang district, Gujarat (approximately 20.73°N, 73.48°E), on the road near Chichpada village on the outskirts of Waghai. It was a shaded area where light barely reached the ground even when it was raining. The nest was in a bifurcation of the twigs of a teak tree (*Tectona grandis*) at a height of 86 cm, 6 cm deep and 23 × 24 cm wide (Table 1). A water stream was 20 m away, the main road was around 100 m away, and the nearest village houses were about 500 m away. The nesting area was surrounded by broad-leaved vegetation in which the birds roamed. The forest floor was made of decomposed leaves, with many insects (Figures 1, 2). The trees and plants in the area included teak, umro (*Ficus racemosa*), kesudo (*Butea monosperma*), aavdi, bili, dhamani (local names; scientific names to be confirmed) and bamboo.

Methods and materials

Observations were made by DP between 29 June and 22 August 2026, and DBP joined him on 3 August (Table 2). From 2 August, the nest was observed from an elevated position on the slope, which gave a direct view of the nest from a distance.

We used a Nikon P1000, a Canon R6 with an RF 200–800 mm lens, 10 × 52 binoculars, a smartphone camera with a telephoto lens, and a Solognac photo-blind hide. We took care not to disturb the birds while observing. The observers went to the nest tree only on 2 August, when the nest was found, and on 19 August, when it was found empty.

We did not see nest building, pairing or courtship behaviour, and we do not know since when the bird had been incubating. The nest was observed from 2 to 16 August 2026 (15 days), and on 19 August the bird had left the nest. The sexes were assigned provisionally from head colour: the female has a less brownish-orange head and the male has a bright orange head (Figures 7, 8).

Observations and results

Sightings. On 29 June 2026, DP saw a reddish bird with a barred belly walking near a stream near Chichpada village and confirmed it as a Slaty-legged Crake (Figure 3). On 14 July he saw a pair at the same place at 17:00. After two weeks of heavy rain he returned on 2 August and found the nest (Table 2; Figure 4).

Nest. The nest was made of teak leaves, small twigs and grass or leaf particles, in a bifurcation of a small teak tree at a height of 86 cm (Figure 5, Table 1). The forest floor around the nest was made of decomposed leaves, and many insects were present.

Incubation behaviour. Both birds incubated (Table 3). Duty exchanges were mostly seen in the morning, between 07:30 and 07:57. In the evening the bird left the nest for a few minutes and returned after bathing in the nearby stream. Each time a bird left the nest, it carried small twigs or similar material back to the nest, throughout the incubation period (Figure 10). A bird was estimated to incubate for about 6 to 8 hours at a time. Whenever a bird returned to the nest, it used the same path and the same point to enter it. The birds foraged mostly in the nearby broad-leaved vegetation, where they were easily visible, and sometimes called. The male was quite bold: he came very close to the place where we sat and passed us without concern.

Tolerance to disturbance. On 3 August, a farmer with bullocks passed just 2 feet from the nest tree, which is a common trail for people, and the incubating bird sat quietly with no panic

movements. The birds therefore appeared to be habituated to people and cattle passing by.

Eggs and chicks. On 5 August, three eggs were visible through the feathers of the female, as the eggs were mostly hidden by the incubating bird (Table 2). On 14 August, the female left the nest for about 30 minutes, and seven white, oval eggs

were confirmed (Figure 6). On 19 August, the nest was empty, and about five small, black, downy chicks were seen moving with the female in the bushes, in low light and heavy rain. We could not photograph them.

Other birds and animals. The birds and other animals seen in the area are listed in Table 4.

Table 1. Details of the nest and nesting area

Parameter	Measurement
Nesting tree	Teak (<i>Tectona grandis</i>)
Nest position	Bifurcation of the branches
Nest material	Teak leaves, small twigs and grass or leaf particles
Height of the nest above ground	86 cm
Depth of the nest	6 cm
Width of the nest	23 × 24 cm
Eggs	7 white, oval eggs (Figure 6)
Distance to water stream	20 m
Distance to main road	c. 100 m
Distance to nearest village houses	c. 500 m

Table 2. Observations at the Uga Rambhas nest, Dang (29 June – 22 August 2026). [DP] = Divyesh Patel; [DBP] = Dharmesh B. Patel.

Date	Observer	Time	Description
29 June 2026	[DP]	evening	While passing along the Uga Rambhas road near Chichpada village, on the outskirts of Waghai, a single reddish bird with a barred belly was seen walking in vegetation near a stream. It vanished into a bush (Figure 3).
14 July 2026	[DP]	17:00	A pair (a male and a female) was seen in the same area. One bird was calling; the other walked to the stream, bathed and vanished into the bushes.
15–31 July 2026	–	–	No visit; heavy rain for two weeks.
2 August 2026	[DP]	10:30 to 11:42	After an hour of watching near the stream, a bird carrying small twigs in its bill was seen roaming near a bush. It stopped near a small teak tree, jumped into the bifurcation of the tree at about 1 m height and was then hidden among small branches. A few minutes later DP walked to the tree and saw a bird sitting quietly on a nest made of leaves and twigs. He withdrew immediately and watched from a distance; the other bird was not around. The bird on the nest was first photographed at 11:42 (Figure 4).
3 August 2026	[DP] & [DBP]	16:00 to 18:00	Observed for two hours. The bird was incubating, sitting quietly with small movements, adjusting its feathers and preening. A farmer with bullocks passed just 2 feet from the nest tree, a common trail for people, and the bird sat quietly with no panic movements. The eggs were not visible from a distance.
5 August 2026	[DP]	10:00 to 12:00	Observed for two hours. The female was on the nest and three eggs were visible from under the belly feathers. She continued to incubate.

Date	Observer	Time	Description
7 August 2026	[DP]	07:00 to 07:45	The female was on the nest. After a few minutes a bird appeared from nearby broad-leaved bushes with small twigs in its bill, walked quietly to the tree and jumped to the nest. The female jumped down, walked into the bushes and vanished. The male then incubated (duty exchange at 07:45).
10 August 2026	[DP]	07:30	Duty exchange: the female came with twigs and the male left the nest to forage. The male was quite bold and not in panic, while the female was in a hurry.
12 August 2026	[DP]	07:15 to 07:57	The male was on the nest and calling. At 07:57 the female came to the nest and duty was exchanged.
14 August 2026	[DP]	07:15 to 07:43	The male was on the nest. At 07:43 the female came to the nest for the duty exchange.
14 August 2026	[DP]	15:25	The female was on the nest and quietly left it. The male was not there. She walked towards the stream, took a bath and came back to the nest, so the nest was left unattended for 30 minutes. Seven eggs, white and oval, were seen from afar (Figure 6). On the way back another pair was noticed about 1 km from the area, near the stream.
16 August 2026	[DP]	morning	The male was incubating. No duty exchange was observed.
19 August 2026	[DP]	07:30	No bird on the nest from afar. After 30 minutes of watching, DP walked to the nest tree and found the nest empty. He walked towards the stream and, after an hour, saw the male walking and calling. In the bushes the female was roaming with about five small, black, downy chicks were moving with her, but it was low light and raining heavily, and he left the place.
19 August 2026	[DP]	evening	Visited again, but no bird was in the area.
22 August 2026	[DP]	afternoon	The male was near the stream, but because of human activity nearby it ran into the bushes.

Table 3. Incubation duty exchanges observed at the nest

Date	Time	Bird arriving (took over)	Bird relieved	Remarks
7 August	07:45	Male	Female	Arriving bird carried twigs; female left into the bushes
10 August	07:30	Female	Male	Female came with twigs; male left to forage
12 August	07:57	Female	Male	Male was on the nest and calling from 07:15
14 August	07:43	Female	Male	Male was on the nest from 07:15

Table 4. Birds and other animals seen in the nesting area

Common name	Scientific name
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo	<i>Surniculus dicruroides</i>
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>

Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>
Shikra	<i>Tachyspiza badia</i>
Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>
Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>
Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (flying nearby)	<i>Ceyx erithaca</i>
Madras Treeshrew (mammal)	<i>Anathana ellioti</i>



Figure 1: Nesting tree in the centre of the frame
(Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 2: Forest floor made up of decomposed leaves, with many insects present (Photo: Dharmesh B. Patel)



Figure 3: First photograph of the bird, 29 June 2026
(Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 4: First photograph of the bird on the nest, 2 August 2026
(camera screen) (Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 5: Bird on the nest in the fork of the teak tree
(Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 6: Eggs in the nest (Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 7: Female, with a less brownish-orange head
(Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 8: Male, with a bright orange head
(Photo: Dharmesh B. Patel)



Figure 9: Female bird on the nest; an egg was visible while she dusted her feathers (Photo: Divyesh Patel)



Figure 10: Male carrying nesting material while returning to the nest after foraging (Photo: Dharmesh B. Patel)

Discussion

We found an active nest of the Slaty-legged Crake near Uga Rambhas, Dang, during the monsoon, and observed it from 2 to 16 August 2026. Both the male and the female incubated and exchanged duties mostly in the early morning, and about five chicks were seen with the female on 19 August after the nest was found empty. The clutch of seven eggs is similar to the seven eggs reported from Nilambur, Kerala (Murukesh & Balakrishnan 2015), and larger than the six eggs reported from Bison Valley (Bison Valley report 2015) and the four eggs reported from the Philippines (Kaufman 2011). The Bison Valley nest was on the ground, while the nest in the Philippines was about a metre above the ground (Kaufman 2011), similar to the height of 86 cm of our nest in a tree bifurcation.

Incubation periods of about 20 days have been reported from Kerala and the Philippines (Murukesh & Balakrishnan 2015;

Kaufman 2011). We did not see laying or hatching, so the incubation period of this nest is unknown. Kaufman (2011) was not sure whether both parents incubated; at our nest, both sexes were seen on the nest and exchanging duties.

The nest was close to a trail used by people and cattle, and the incubating birds were not disturbed by passing people and cattle. A second pair was also seen about 1 km from the nest, near the stream.

Our observations were limited to 15 days at the nest. We did not see nest building, pairing or courtship, and we do not know since when the bird had been incubating. To our knowledge, this is the first documented nest of the Slaty-legged Crake in Gujarat, and we hope that these notes will be useful for future studies of the breeding of this species in the State.

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Sighting Note – Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* with Chicks at Palanpur, Banaskantha

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On 17 August 2025, I, along with fellow birder Mr. Kailash Jani, observed a Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* with two chicks near the Gangasagar Dam wetlands, Palanpur, Banaskantha district, Gujarat.

The birds were found in *Typha* reeds at the wetland edge. The chicks stayed hidden most of the time but emerged when the adults arrived to feed them. The adults made several feeding trips, flying low over the grassland, and rested on Babul (Acacia) trees between trips. Other birds noted in the same habitat included Tricoloured Munias (busy nest-building), a White-breasted Waterhen with chicks, and several Pond Herons feeding along the water's edge.

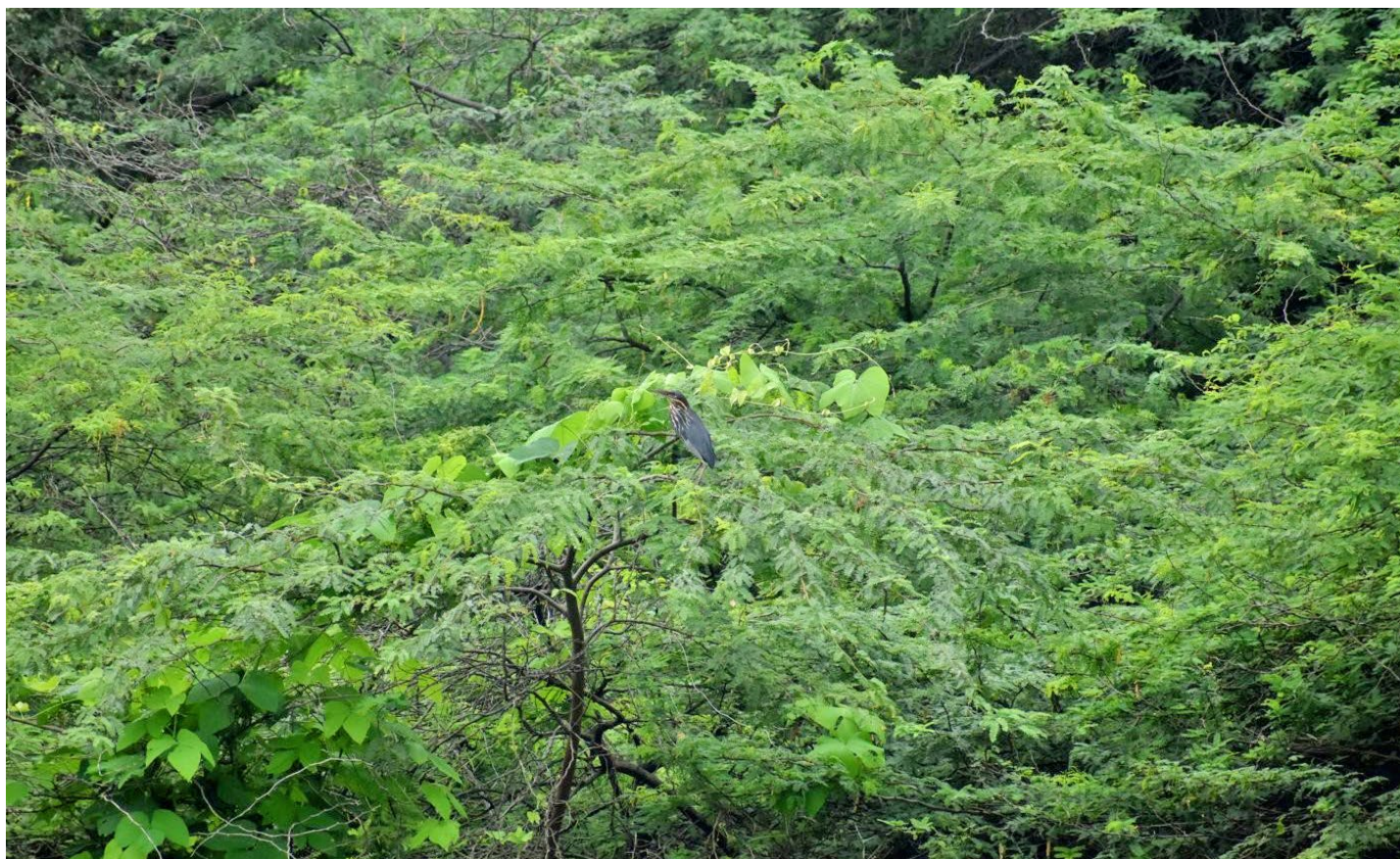
The Black Bittern is a secretive heron, rarely seen due to its habit of staying within thick vegetation. It is medium-sized,

dark brown to black, with a streaked yellowish neck and breast, and broad, rounded wings. In flight it appears heavy and slow, staying low over the grass. When disturbed, it often freezes in an upright "bittern posture," blending with the surrounding reeds. It feeds mainly on small fish, frogs, insects, and other aquatic prey.

Breeding records of the Black Bittern are uncommon in Gujarat, largely due to its shy, cryptic habits. This sighting indicates that the Gangasagar Dam wetland and adjoining grassland provide suitable nesting and feeding habitat for this and other waterbirds.



Black Bittern chicks in *Typha* cover, Gangasagar Dam wetlands, Palanpur. Photo: Tarun Sutaria



Adult Black Bittern perched in Babul (*Acacia*) between feeding trips. Photo: Tarun Sutaria



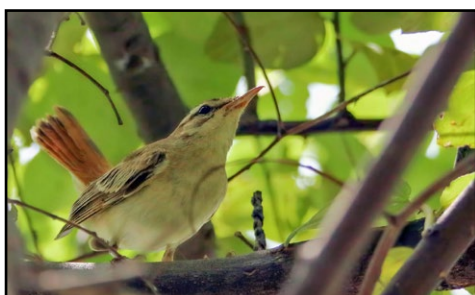
Short Birding Notes



First Nest building record of Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contopus* at Nal Sarovar

An Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contopus* was first spotted at Nal Sarovar in September 2025 and remained resident in the area throughout the year. On 24 March 2026, it built its first nest on a dry tree near the lake's edge. It subsequently constructed a second, notably larger nest on a *Prosopis Juliflora* tree at a different spot, followed by a third nest at yet another location along the lake's edge — each nest built in a distinct site. Little Cormorant and Indian Shag were also observed perching on the same dry trees used for nesting. This is the first recorded instance of the species nesting at Nal Sarovar, and of it remaining resident here through the year.

Ganibhai Rahimbhai Sama: Village - Vekariya, Nalsarovar



Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin Sighting in Vastral, Ahmedabad

On the morning of 23 August 2026, while searching for a Watercock in the Vastral area, Ahmedabad, Jay Patel, Pranav Chauhan, and Rian Patel had an unexpected and memorable sighting of a Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin.

The bird appeared beautifully among the foliage, offering us a wonderful opportunity to observe and photograph it in its natural habitat. What began as a search for a Watercock turned into a rewarding encounter with this striking and less commonly encountered bird.

Jay Patel, Pranav Chauhan & Rian Patel



Sighting of Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura* at Rajkot

On 22 April 2025, we visited the river near Nyara village, Rajkot, for birdwatching. We were observing a fight between a male and female Greater Painted-Snipe when we noticed a bird resembling a Common Snipe. We photographed it, and on closer view it was clear the bill was shorter than expected for a Common Snipe. The image was sent for confirmation to senior birder Shri Ashok Mashru, who confirmed it as a Pin-tailed Snipe rather than Common Snipe.

Referring to the field guide for its status and distribution: "Uncommon winter visitor in many parts of the state" (Ganpule et al. 2022). This is the second record for the Rajkot area — the first was by Rajubhai Karia in 2018, also published in Flamingo (Karia 2018).

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