

Sighting of Crested Tree-Swift *Hemiprocne coronata* in north Gujarat

Himani K.P. Kala, Justus Joshua¹ & S.F. Wesley Sunderraj

Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology, Post Box # 83, Opp. Changlesthar Temple, Mundra Road, Bhuj, Kachchh, Gujarat 370001, India.

¹Corresponding author: Email: justmonk@rediffmail.com

During a survey and sampling of the forests of Ambaji, Abakanta, Taranga and Vijaynagar, of the north Gujarat region, in May and June 2005, we heard a muted, shikra-like call on 18.v.2005 around 11:00 hrs. Walking towards the sound, we reached a check-dam across a small forest stream (24°18'N 72°51'E). This was in the dry deciduous forests of the southern Aravalli hills, near Pancha village, close to Ambaji (Banaskantha district) in northern Gujarat. The call led us to two Crested Tree-Swift *Hemiprocne coronata*, which were diving and drinking water, in mid-flight, from the surface of the dam. They flew off after drinking four more times.

We heard this species again, on another occasion, in the dry deciduous forests on some rocky and highly undulating hills, (24°18'N 72°50'E; 437 m asl), north-west of Kumbharia village, on the outskirts of Ambaji. Seven birds were gliding above the tree canopy on a hill top calling frequently and probably hawking insects. Two birds were also seen perched on a tertiary branch at the top of a 12 m tall *Lannea coromadelica* tree, growing on the sloping side of a hill.

Three more individuals of this species were sighted on two occasions. Once near

Naliavada village (23°55'N 73°18'E; 295 m), and the second time at Bhayala village (24°17'N 72°44'E; 410 m).

Crested Tree-Swift, is distributed practically across entire India, barring the north-west (Ali 1996). In Gujarat it has been reported from Gir forest in Saurashtra (Dharmakumarsinhji 1956), Juna Rajpipla, Songadh (Surat district) (Ali 1954) and Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary (Monga & Naoroji 1984). This species has not been reported from the forests of north Gujarat region by either Grimmett et al. (1999) or Kazmierczak (2000). Our observations extend the distribution range of this species.

Acknowledgements

We thank the EI Division of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, for funding the biodiversity study in this region, which enabled us to do the survey. The Gujarat State Forest Department is also acknowledged for permitting us to work in the forest area. Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology is acknowledged for facilitating this study.

References

- Ali, Salim. 1954. The birds of Gujarat. Part I. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 52 (2&3): 374-458.
Ali, S. 1996. *The book of Indian Bird*. Mumbai:

Bombay Natural History Society.

- Dharmakumarsinhji, K.S. 1956. *Birds of Saurashtra*. Bombay: Times of India Press.
Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp. 1999. *Pocket guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Monga, S.G. and R.K. Naoroji. 1984. Birds of the Rajpipla forests - South Gujarat. With notes on nests found and breeding recorded and some new observations. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 80 (3): 575-612.
Kazmierczak, K. 2000. *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. New Delhi: Om Book Service.

Himani K.P. Kala is an environmental science post-graduate, working as Research Fellow and presently doing her Ph.D. on bird communities in different forest types of the north Gujarat region. She is keen on studying bird calls and involved in wildlife conservation for the past five years.

Justus Joshua has a Ph.D. in wildlife and has been involved with wildlife, research and conservation, for the past 22 years.

S.F. Wesley Sunderraj holds a Ph.D. on the endangered Nilgiri Langur and has been involved with wildlife research and conservation for the past 22 years.

Bar-headed Geese *Anser indicus* at Walayar dam, Kerala, India

Praveen J¹ & Renju Jacob George²

¹14/779(2), AMBADI, Kunnathurmedu.P.O. Palakkad, Kerala

²Chakkilethu House, Vazhamuttom East PO, Pathanamthitta, Kerala

A small gaggle of Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* was sighted by one of us (RJG) at Walayar dam (10°85'N 76°85'E, c. 200 m above m.s.l.) on 25.xii.1999. These birds, numbering eight individuals, were also seen on 27.xii.1999 (RJG), 29.xii.1999 (RJG) and 1.i.2000 (RJG & PJ). They were rather confiding and allowed us close proximity. The birds were seen preening near the banks and later swam across to another shore. The same birds were later recorded during the Asian Wetland Census on 16.i.2000 by one of us (PJ) along with 26 Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala*.

Two years later, on 29.i.2002, one of us (PJ) saw four birds again at Walayar dam. K.V. Eldhose was also present at that time.

Sight records of Bar-headed Goose are

few from Kerala. Ali (1969) did not record this species in Kerala. In 1987 one bird was recorded from Kadalundi by D.N. Kurup (Neelakantan et al. 1993). In recent years, K.V. Eldhose (verbally, i.2006) informed one of us (PJ) that he spotted five Bar-headed Geese at Purathur, Bharathapuzha estuary, in December 2005. P.P. Sreenivasan (verbally, i.2006) also informed (PJ) that he spotted six birds at Kole Wetlands, Thrissur district.

References

- Ali, Salim. 1969. *Bird of Kerala*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Neelakantan, K.K., C. Sashikumar & R. Venugopal. 1993. *A book of Kerala birds*. Trivandrum: W.W.F., Kerala State Committee.

Praveen J. is an amateur bird watcher actively pursuing the hobby for the last fifteen years. He is interested in the distribution and movements of birds of the Western Ghats and South India. He is the moderator for the e-mail discussion groups for birds for Kerala (KeralaBirder) and north-east India (birdsofNEIndia).

Renju Jacob George is an amateur bird watcher who has been doing active birdwatching at Walayar dam and adjoining areas since 1992.

Renew subscriptions on time

See address label for due date