

# Sighting of Red-naped Shaheen *Falco peregrinus babylonicus* in Little Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat

Prasad Ganpule

Ganpule, P., 2011. Sighting of Red-naped Shaheen *Falco peregrinus babylonicus* in Little Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (4): 109.  
Prasad Ganpule, C/o Parshuram Pottery Works, Opp. Nazarbaug Station, Morbi 363642, Gujarat, India. Email: [prasadganpule@yahoo.com](mailto:prasadganpule@yahoo.com)  
Manuscript received on 15 April 2009.

On 18 November 2008 I was on a short birdwatching trip to the western corner of the Little Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat, near the village of Venasar (23°08'58"N, 70°56'48"E). There is a freshwater lake in the western part of the area and water from a creek floods the area from the northern part making it an ideal bird watching site.

While scouting the landscape I noticed a pale falcon-like bird sitting near a small stream (a run-off from the lake), on the ground, at a distance of about 50 m. It was large in size (relative to a Red-headed Falcon *Falco chicquera*, or Merlin *F. columbarius*), had pale bluish-grey upperparts, whitish underparts, thin moustachial stripe, and barring on tail. I took a record photograph (Fig. 1) and referred to the field guide and identified the bird as a Red-naped Shaheen *F. peregrinus babylonicus*. Unfortunately it flew away on closer approach, as I was on foot. I then noticed another bird and the pair started hunting together. I could not follow, as the Rann was still wet. After coming home, I referred to the books and confirmed its identity.

A further visit to the site on 3 January 2009 was unsuccessful.

I revisited the site on 18 January 2009, early in the morning, and located the falcon almost immediately at the same place (Fig. 2). This time I could get much closer and obtained good photos including flight shots. The barring on the underparts, and the rufous-coloured nape and crown could be clearly seen.

The Red-naped Shaheen is known as an uncommon/rare winter visitor to our area with a possibility of its breeding in western Gujarat (Grimmett *et al.* 1998; Kazmierczak 2000; Naoroji 2006). I am not aware of recent records for Gujarat but as per my personal communication with senior birdwatchers here, it is very rare now with no records in the last few years.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank members of Bird Conservation Society of Gujarat (BCSG), and my brother Rohit for valuable support.



Fig. 1. Red-naped Shaheen *F. p. babylonicus* (18.11.2008).



Fig. 2. Red-naped Shaheen *F. p. babylonicus* (18.01.2009)

Photos: Prasad Ganpule

## References

- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black.
- Kazmierczak, K., 2000. *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. 1st ed. London: Pica Press / Christopher Helm.
- Naoroji, R., 2006. *Birds of prey of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Om Books International.

Search a literature database covering 300 years of South Asian Ornithology

at

Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology: [www.southasiaornith.in](http://www.southasiaornith.in)

Use 14,500+ keywords to glean 28,900+ references from 896 journals and over 2,000 books

Compiled by Aasheesh Pittie. Hosted at: [www.OpenEcology.in](http://www.OpenEcology.in)

### Initial reactions

Very, very impressive indeed. — *Edward C. Dickinson*

This will prove to be immensely useful for ornithologists interested in South Asian ornithology! — *Per Alström*

You may not have idea of how big this is... for people in remote locations who do not have access to libraries or books or have good contacts. — *Mohammed E. Dilawar*