Sighting of Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* in Gujarat, India, with notes on identification of marsh terns occurring in western India

Nirav Bhatt, Prasad Ganpule & Gulamahmad Vora

Bhatt, N., Ganpule, P., & Vora, G., 2014. Sighting of Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* in Gujarat, India, with notes on identification of marsh terns occurring in western India. *Indian BIRDS* 9 (5&6): 142–146.
Nirav Bhatt, H-52, GIDC Residential Plots, Wadhwan 363035, Gujarat, India. Email: *birdwatchernrb@gmail.com* [NB]
Prasad Ganpule, C/o Parshuram Pottery Works, Nazarbaug, Morbi 363642. Gujarat, India. Email: *prasadganpule@gmail.com* [PG]
Gulamahmad Vora, Laxmipara, Surendranagar 363001, Gujarat, India. Email: *gavora71@gmail.com* [GV]
Manuscript received on 16 July 2014.

Introduction

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* is one among the four species of 'marsh terns' of the genus *Chlidonias*. It has a Holarctic breeding distribution, with the nominate race occurring from southern Scandinavia south to southern Spain, and east through eastern Europe and western Asia to Lake Balkhash and the Altai Republic; it winters in Africa (Gochfeld & Burger 1996).

Its status in India is unclear, being treated variously as a 'rare visitor' (Grimmett *et al.* 1998), a 'vagrant' (Ali & Ripley 1981; Kazmierczak 2000; Grimmett *et al*. 2011), or considered 'hypothetical' (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

We report here the sighting of a first summer Black Tern from Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, Gujarat.

Observation

On 17 May 2014, two of us (NB, GV), with a few friends, went birding at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary (22°49'N 72°02'E; Gujarat, India) to observe and photograph White-winged Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus* in breeding plumage. Within the first few minutes, we photographed four White-winged Terns in breeding plumage. Then we moved to a different location in the sanctuary where we had previously noticed roosting Whiskered Terns *C. hybrida*. As we began photographing a group of Whiskered Terns in breeding plumage, we noticed a different tern roosting with the group, which was relatively smaller than them, and with a finer bill. We managed to take some photographs of this bird, roosting **[164, 165]**, as well as in flight **[166, 167]**.

165. First summer Black Tern showing grayish upperparts.

166. First summer Black Tern in flight showing dark, large breast patch and typical head pattern.

Photos: N. Bhatt

164. Black Tern. First summer bird showing typical head pattern, slender bill and grayish mantle with dark wing-bar.

167. First summer Black Tern in flight showing dark wing bar, different generation of feathers, slender bill and grayish rump.

Description

The bird in question seemed rather short-legged. Its head had extensive dark markings with a dark crown and nape.It had dark ear coverts contiguous with the crown and nape, with black on ear coverts extending below its eyes. Its mantle was grayish. Some brownish feathers, indicative of a juvenile bird, were seen in its wing coverts and scapulars. A dark bar was visible on its wing. Its bill was black, long and slender. In flight, a prominent black shoulder patch was seen on the side of its breast. It had a grey rump, and a squarish tail. Its legs were black. When compared with Whiskered Terns, its finer bill, shorter legs, head pattern, and very dark shoulder patch became apparent. The bird had moulted its primaries, while the moult of its secondaries had just begun **[167]**.

We (NB,GV) initially suspected that the bird was a White-winged Tern in non-breeding plumage, but were puzzled by the prominent black 'patch' on the shoulder. We sent the images to PG for identification. PG suspected it to be a Black Tern in first summer plumage, as he had prior experience of different plumages of Whiskered Terns and White-winged Terns in Gujarat. PG had also studied cases where Whiskered Terns sport a shoulder patch akin to a Black Tern, though much fainter. After checking further references (Olsen & Larsen 1995; van Duivendijk 2011), it became apparent that the bird indeed was a Black Tern. The head pattern of a White-winged Tern or a Whiskered Tern is quite different from that on the bird in question, with both of the former birds never showing such dark, prominent, shoulder patches. The slimmer bill and shorter legs were typical of a Black Tern. The dark and uniform upperparts fit Black Tern as both Whiskered- and White-winged Terns have much paler grayish upperparts.PG sent the images to Klaus Malling Olsen, Norman Deans van Swelm, Ian Mckerchar, and Bill Harvey for their opinions. They confirmed it to be a Black Tern in first-summer plumage, based on the dark wing-bar, status of primary moult, different generation of feathers on wings and mantle, and other plumage features like dark, uniform upperparts.

NB and PG re-visited the area on 07 June 2014, but despite an extensive search, were unable to locate the bird. However it was seen again on 14 June 2014 by NB and on 21 June 2014 by PG at the same location. A sighting of this tern was also reported on 25 May 2014 (S. Bramhankar, *in litt.,* email dated 02 July 2014). NB visited the same area on 10 July 2014 but could not locate the bird and it was reported that the bird was not seen subsequently (Kasam Sama, *pers.comm.*, verbally). Thus this individual was seen for duration of more than one month at this location.

We also saw and photographed several first summer, and adult, White-winged Terns and Whiskered Terns in various plumages during our visits. A first-summer White-winged Tern was photographed here on 07 June 2014 **[168]**, and the differences between first summer plumages of Black Tern and White-winged Tern became quite clear when these images were seen and compared. The White-winged Tern had a different head pattern, shorter bill and longer legs, grayish plumage, and lack of visible dark shoulder patch in flight. A White-winged Tern in breeding plumage **[169]**, photographed on 17 May 2014, is also quite distinct from a Black Tern in similar condition. It shows a 'jet-black' body contrasting strongly with white shoulders and wing coverts. In flight, black underwing coverts are distinctive. A Black Tern has a grayish-black body, and in flight, gray underwings.

Photos: N. Bhatt

168. First summer White-winged Tern (with Whiskered Terns). Note typical head pattern, long legs, short bill and dark wing bar and compare with First summer Black Tern.

169. Adult breeding White-winged Tern showing 'jet black' head and body with white lesser coverts.

Detailed identification features of Black-, White-winged-, and Whiskered Terns are given in Alström (1989), Olsen & Larrson (1995), van Duivendijk (2011), and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). These works cover aspects of field identification of all three species in their various plumages.

However, based on our observations of Whiskered Terns and White-winged Terns in Gujarat, we present here some additional characters that may prove useful in their field identification.

Whiskered Tern: Our observations of this bird indicate that the dark grayish shoulder patch is often present in many individuals, both first-winter and adults, which is congruent with Olsen & Larsson (1995). Though these patches are generally grayer and weaker than those on Black Terns, some birds have patches prominent enough to be easily discernible in flight. One such individual was photographed by PG in the Little Rann of Kachchh on 09 January 2011**[170]**. In such instances, confusion with Black Tern is possible. For Whiskered Tern, the shoulder patch is said to be 'grayish, but more diffuse, paler and weaker than on Black Tern' (Olsen & Larsson 1995), and, 'usually not so large and distinct, and probably never so dark as on Black Tern' (Alström 1989). Thus it is possible that some Whiskered Terns may show a fairly prominent, but smaller dark shoulder patch. Identification in such cases would require a detailed scrutiny of other features like head pattern, bill, and overall plumage.

White-winged Tern: Though our observations of White-winged Tern are limited since they are uncommon in Gujarat, we have made detailed notes of more than 20 individuals in various plumages over the past three years. Of particular interest were three birds, noted by NB, with prominent dark shoulder patches on 14 June 2014 at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary **[171, 172,**

Photo: P. Ganpule

170. Adult Whiskered Tern in winter showing grayish 'black tern like' patch but note different head pattern and thicker bill.

173). As can be seen from the images, the shoulder patch is large, dark, and prominent in two of these birds. This kind of plumage can lead to confusion with the Black Tern. The birds in the photographs are beginning to moult into breeding plumage, with the moult starting from the head, shoulder patches, and underwing coverts. However the black on the underwing coverts is diagnostic for White-winged Terns, making identification easy. For the third bird, as can be seen from **[171,172]** for the bird in front, the shoulder patch looks dark when seen at certain angles and the underwing coverts are white. The head pattern is characteristic for White-winged Tern and this seems to be a first-summer bird based on the dark lesser covert wing-bar. For first-summer birds 'elements of black may be present on body and under-wing coverts' (Olsen & Larsson 1995); however, the illustrations in this work (Pl. 40, fig. 6) do not show dark patches on side of breast for first-summer birds. Hence this could lead to confusion with Black Tern, but other features like head pattern, white rump, grayer upperparts, and shorter bill are useful for identification. First winter White-winged Tern is said to normally stay in its winter range in summer (van Duivendijk 2011), and it is possible that these birds may spend the summer here. Sightings in June are indicative of this and further observations would confirm whether these birds do stay back.

Photos: N. Bhatt

171. First summer and adult White-winged Tern showing 'black tern like' patches (with Whiskered Terns). Head pattern and bill typical of White-winged Tern, adult bird in moult with moult starting from head, shoulder patches and underwing coverts. First-summer bird with dark wing bar.

172. Same birds as **171**. Note diagnostic black underwing coverts for the adult White-winged Tern. For first-summer bird, shoulder patch looks fainter, head pattern and bill typical of White-winged Tern.

173. Adult White-winged Tern in moult with extensive dark shoulder patch and black underwing coverts.

Discussion

The Black Tern has been widely recorded in India, but every record has been contested. It was first recorded from Delhi in 1949 (Alexander 1950) but was discounted by Ganguli (1975). A set of unverified ringing and sight records exist from the south-eastern coast of India: Abdulali & Ambedkar (1984), Natarajan & Balasubramanian (1991), Menon (1992), Balachandran (1994), Sangha (1994), Mohapatra & Rao (1994), Sangha (1999), and Kannan *et al*. (2009); however, Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) have rejected all the records of the species from South Asian limits as unsubstantiated claims on grounds of misidentification. In fact, Rasmussen discounts the Black Tern skin in the BNHS collection as being misidentified (*ibid*.). Robson (1996) lists a sight record from Harike by Per Undeland but Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) treat this as 'best considered hypothetical until proven'. Other Indian records from Gujarat (Anonymous 1991; Tatu 1992), Goa (Lainer 2004; Robson 2004), Mysore (Thejaswi 2005), and Delhi (Vyas 2002) receive no specific mention in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), who treat this species as hypothetical for South Asia. A recent photographic record of three–four birds from Gujarat (Tatu 2010) was challenged by Harvey (2013), but Tatu (2013) stands by his identification of three individuals as Black Terns (including the one reported subsequently by Varu 2012), though he agrees that one bird may have been misidentified. In summary, the status of this species is still uncertain and contentious with most authorities, including Harvey (2013), preferring to exclude the species from the South Asian list. Hence, this record comes at the right time to remove the long-standing ambiguity over the occurrence of the species in India.

This sighting from the third week of May till June end suggests either a first summer bird spending the summer months here, or a bird in an extended spring passage migration. Almost all the previous (contested) records have been during autumn or winter months. It is thought that most first winter birds remain in western African waters in summer (Cramp 1985; van Duivendijk 2011). The nominate race of *C. niger* often disperses north after breeding, with sometimes very large concentrations e.g., in the southern parts of North Sea, migrating in huge numbers through the Mediterranean, and also across northern Africa (even over deserts), to its main wintering grounds on the tropical coasts of western African, from Mauritania to Namibia, some reaching South Africa, while some winter in the Nile Valley; adults begin their southward migration by August, juveniles about a month later (Gochfeld & Burger 1996). Harrison (1983) states that post-breeding migration is through the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, to the Atlantic Ocean, with peak passage through the Straits of Gibraltar in August–September to the main non-breeding area off West Africa; the northward departure from its wintering grounds is along the same route beginning in March for spring migration. The Black Tern is considered a vagrant even to eastern Africa (Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002), and only a single record exists, in 14 years, from Ethopia and Eritrea (Ash & Atkins 2009).Thus India, and South Asia, is not in its known migratory path, both during spring and autumn migration.

However, vagrancy has been recorded for the nominate *C. niger* (Cramp 1985). There is a record of Black Tern from the Chagos Islands in late July (Carr 2013) despite the Indian Ocean being outside its normal migration route. Though it is premature to discuss the status of Black Tern in Gujarat, it is worthwhile investigating the possibilities for its occurrence, particularly when the argument lingers that some of the prior records, though ill-documented and questionable, may have indeed been Black Terns.

Inclement weather may force some birds to deviate from their normal migration route and is a cause for vagrancy. However, there appears to be no recent case of turbulence in the Indian Ocean to have enabled this bird to come up the wrong ocean from the South African coast. Having noted the presence of migrating White-winged Terns along with this bird, one possibility is that this Black Tern migrated south-eastward (instead of south/south-west) from its breeding grounds, along with White-winged Terns, and post winter, might return with the same group. If this were to be true, it would mean that observers need to closely watch flocks of migrating White-winged Tern for a possible disoriented Black Tern. However, if we receive more supporting records of adults and juveniles in subsequent years from careful observers, it could mean that such aberrant Black Terns in fact constitute a small easterly wintering population, migrating through South Asia. Alternatively, it could also be the case that some birds may be migrating in spring via an easterly route through eastern Africa and South Asia to return to their breeding grounds—a case of loop migration. Black Terns are known to breed as far east as Baikal Lake; it is unclear where these birds winter. If their wintering destination is in southern Africa, surely the shortest passage route must cross over north-western India. It could be argued that the tall Himalayan and Karakoram ranges will hinder this apparently short route, but it has also been recently suggested that the Himalayas are perceived as an exaggerated barrier to bird migration (Delany *et al.* 2014). However, the lack of records from eastern Africa is puzzling, since this route would be through eastern Africa. This would suggest that birds wintering in southern Africa may be migrating over the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. Whether Black Terns undertake such a migration is not known, though the Chagos Island record seems to support this. But that record was in July, which would indicate an early autumn migration by an easterly route, if it is the nominate *niger*. These hypotheses, if proven with more records, would bring up the obvious question that at least some of the past disputed records may have been correct. Lack of specimens during the nineteenth, and the early twentieth centuries may point to a fairly recent change in its migratory pattern, or lack of further records may prove that the Black Tern is a genuine vagrant to the Indian Subcontinent.

Conclusion

This record proves the occurrence of the Black Tern from India. Since the sighting was in May and June, it is possible that this particular bird was either in an extended spring passage migration, or was a summer migrant. As per the above discussion, the Black Tern is, at present, best considered a rare vagrant to India, but observers must keep a close watch during migration for this species, particularly along with White-winged Terns.

Acknowledgements

We thank Klaus Malling Olsen, Norman Deans van Swelm, Ian Mckerchar, and Bill Harvey for their help. We also thank Praveen J.,and R. Jayapal for reviewing an earlier draft of this manuscript. We thank Siddhesh Brahmankar for sharing his sighting and photographs, and local guide Kasam Sama for helping with the locations.

References

Abdulali, H., & Ambedkar, V. C., 1984. Occurrence of the Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (Linn.) in India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 80 (3): 640.

Alexander, H. G., 1950. Possible occurrence of the Black Tern [*Chlidonias niger* (L.)] near Delhi. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 49 (1): 120–121.

Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1981. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Ceylon. Stone Curlews to Owls.* 2nd ed. Delhi: (Sponsored by Bombay Natural History Society.) Oxford University Press. Vol. 3 of 10 vols. Pp. i–xvi, 1–327.

Alström, P., 1989. Identification of Marsh Terns in juvenile and winter plumages. *British Birds* 82 (7): 296–319.

Anonymous. 1991. The Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 31 (11-12): 2.

Ash, J., & Atkins, J., 2009. *Birds of Ethopia and Eritrea*. London: Christopher Helm and A & C Black.

Balachandran, S., 1994. Some interesting bird records from Kaliveli Lake near Pondicherry. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 91 (2): 317–318.

Carr, P., 2013. Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (Linnaeus 1758): a species new to the British Indian Ocean Territory. *Sea Swallow* 62: 110–111.

Cramp, S., 1985. *Handbook of the birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*: *The birds of the Western Palearctic.* Vol. 4. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Delany, S., Garbutt, D., Williams, C., Sulston, C., Norton, J., & Denby, C., 2014. The Southampton University Ladakh Expeditions 1976–1982: Full details of nine species previously unrecorded in India and four second records. *Indian BIRDS* 9 (1): 1–13.

Ganguli, U., 1975. *A guide to the birds of the Delhi area.* New Delhi: Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Pp. i–xv, 1–301.

Gochfeld, M., & Burger, J., 1996. Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*). In: delHoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. & de Juana, E. (eds.) (2013). *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (Website: http://www.hbw.com/node/54047; Accessed on 07 June 2014).

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent.* 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1–888.

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent.* 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–528.

Harrison, P., 1983. *Seabirds: An identification guide.* 1st ed. London & Wellington: Croom Helm Limited & A.H. and A.W. Reed Ltd. Pp. 1–448.

Harvey, B., 2013. Claimed sighting of Black Terns *Chlidonias nigra* in Gujarat, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 139.
Kannan, V., Manakadan, R., Rao, P., Mohapatra, K. K., Sivakumar, S., & Santharam, V., 2009. The waterbirds of Pulicat Lake, Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu, India, including those of the adjoining wetlands and heronries. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 105 (2): 162–180 (2008).
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. Pp. 1–352.
Lainer, H., 2004. Additions to 'The birds of Goa' (Lainer 1999). *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 101 (1): 163–165.
Menon, V., 1992. On the Black Tern *Chlidonias niger niger* (Linn.). *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 89 (1): 120.
Mohapatra, K. K., & Rao, P., 1994. Further evidence on the occurrence of the Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (Linnaeus) on India's eastern coast. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 90 (3): 511.
Natarajan, V., & Balasubramanian, P., 1991. Additional notes on the occurrence of Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (Linn.) in India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 87 (3): 451–452.
Olsen, K. M., & Larsson, H., 1995. *Terns of Europe and North America.* 1st ed. London: Croom Helm. Pp. 1–176.
Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide.* 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378, 1–683.
Robson, C., 1996. India. *Oriental Bird Club Bulletin* 23: 50.
Robson, C., 2004. From the field: India. *BirdingASIA* 1: 79–80.
Sangha, H. S., 1994. Black Tern at Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 34 (2): 34.
Sangha, H. S., 1999. Records of significance from Pulicat, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 39 (2): 36–37.
Stevenson, T., & Fanshawe, J., 2002. *The birds of East Africa*: *Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi*. London: Helm Field Guides.
Tatu, K., 2010. First confirmed record of Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* in Gujarat, India. *Indian BIRDS* 6 (6): 165–166.
Tatu, K. 2013. Black Tern versus Whiskered Tern with "Black Tern Patches" in Gujarat, India. *Jalaplavit* 4 (3): 98–120. December 2013. [Website: http://www.youblisher.com/p/792163-jalaplavit-dec-2013/. Accessed on 07 June 2014.]
Tatu, K. S., 1992. Rosy Pelican, White Stork and Black Tern at Thol Wildlife Sanctuary, N. Gujarat. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 32 (5-6): 17–18.
Thejaswi, S., 2005. Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (Linn.) in Mysore, Karnataka: First record from inland southern India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 101 (3): 454–455 (2004).
van Duivendijk, N., 2011. *Advanced bird ID handbook: The Western Palearctic*. London: New Holland. Pp.1–416.
Varu, M. S., 2012. Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) in Bhavnagar–a second record from Gujarat. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 51 (4): 59 (2011).
Vyas, S., 2002. Some interesting bird records from the Delhi area. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 99 (2): 325–330.

The first breeding record of the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug milvipes* for the Indian Subcontinent in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir

Harkirat Singh Sangha, Sandeep S. Dhumal & Samir Ovalekar

Sangha, H. S., Dhumal, S. S., & Ovalekar, S., 2014. The first breeding record of the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug milvipes* for the Indian Subcontinent in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir. *Indian BIRDS* 9 (5&6): 146–148.
Harkirat Singh Sangha, B-27, Gautam Marg, Hanuman Nagar, Jaipur 302021, Rajasthan, India. Email *harkirat.sangha@gmail.com* [HSS]
Sandeep S. Dhumal, Sandeep Engineering, Shop No. 1/44, Mihir Apt., Udyamnagar, Pimpri, Pune 411018, Maharashtra, India. Email *sandeep.dhumal@rediffmail.com*
Samir Ovalekar, 3, Jayvant, 36 Mahant Road, Vile Parle (East), Mumbai 400057, Maharashtra, India. Email: *samir7399@gmail.com*

A great favourite with falconers, the Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* is a large, powerful bird of prey with an exceptionally broad wingspan for its size. It was used for hunting hare (*Lepus* species) and Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, and quite exceptionally flown at gazelle (*Gazella* species) and eagles (*Aquila* species) (Osman 2001).

Falco cherrug occurs in a wide range across the Palearctic region from eastern Europe to western China, breeding in Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Turkey, Iraq, Armenia, the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and China, and at least formerly in Turkmenistan and probably Afghanistan, possibly India (Ladakh), with wintering or passage populations occurring regularly in Italy, Malta, Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, U.A.E., Bahrain, Kuwait, Iran, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Azerbaijan, with much smaller numbers or vagrants reaching many other countries (BirdLife International 2014; Global Raptor Information Network 2014).

The species has declined in numbers and has been up listed to Endangered category because a revised population trend analysis indicates that it may be undergoing a very rapid decline. This negative trend is a result of an unsustainable trend to capture the birds for the falconry trade, as well as habitat degradation and the impacts of agrochemicals. The rate of decline appears to be particularly severe in the species' Central Asian breeding grounds (BirdLife International 2014).

In Ladakh, Saker Falcon was reported by Mallon (1987) during consecutive winters (1980–1984), 'in very small number', around plantations and at villages along the Indus Valley, but he did not specify any location. One was recorded at Pannikhar, Suru Valley on 11 July 1977 (Williams & Delany 1979 in Holmes 1986). Rishad Naoroji and HSS observed it a few times during seven summer trips to Ladakh between 1997 and 2003, at Chushul, Mahe, Hanle road, Hanle-Chumur road, and Dungti