

# Gwendolen (Wendy) Mary Beryl Sparks (1916–2007): a Gujarat sojourn in 1947–1948

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Richard Sparks & Margold Heron

Wendy Sparks in her WWII uniform—she was in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) as a driver of lorries and ambulances during the London Blitz.

## Introduction

In 2008 I bought a 'lot' of books on Indian ornithology from an online bookseller. Some of them were signed, 'Gwendolen Sparks,' on the front free-endpaper, and contained a great deal of marginalia: it seemed that Mrs Sparks knew her birds intimately. Intrigued by comments in the copy of Salim Ali's *The birds of Kachchh* (1945), I enquired on email groups for information about this lady. Just one was forthcoming, from Margaret Sykes, of the Oriental Bird Club (OBC), who emailed me stating that Wendy Sparks had been a member of the OBC from 1992 to 2001. "Wendy wrote to me in February 2001 enclosing a copy of the list of birds she had seen in the former Kachchh state, western India, between 5 February 1947 and the end of March 1948. She also said, 'I feel it would be a pity if all my records were just thrown away, which is what will probably happen when I die. I am already 84 years old.' But we do have the list of birds if you are interested." For some incomprehensible reason I did not respond to her generous offer. Recently, while compiling a bibliography of Gujarat ornithology, my interest in Wendy Sparks' contributions to Indian ornithology was rekindled, and I emailed Margaret Sykes once again, requesting the list, which she promptly sent. It is presented here as a historical record of bird life in Kachchh from over half a century ago, preceded by a brief biographical sketch of Wendy Sparks.

## Gwendolen (Wendy) Mary Beryl Sparks (1916–2007)

Gwendolen (Wendy) Mary Beryl Haviland was born on 1 November 1916 to Captain Wilfred Pollen Haviland MBE and Beryl Marion Haviland (nee Durand, who was born in Dehra Dun in 1887). Wendy's maternal grandfather, Colonel Sir Edward Law Durand, was Assistant Commissioner of the Afghan Boundary Commission between 1884 and 1886. He was invested as a Companion, Order of the Bath (CB) in 1887. He held the office of Resident of Nepal between 1889 and 1891. He gained the rank of Lt-Col in the service of the Indian Staff Corps and was created

1<sup>st</sup> Baronet Durand, of Ruckley Grange, Shropshire (UK), on 8 April 1892. His younger brother was Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Mortimer Durand of the Durand Line Agreement (1884). Wendy's brother, Pilot Officer David Haviland, was killed in action in 1940 aged 22.

On 19 October 1946, Wendy married Major Peter Herbert Sparks (b. 7 March 1914, d. 23 March 2003), who had been commissioned into the King Edward's Own Second Gurkha Rifles (2GR) in 1941. They were introduced by a mutual friend—the only girl Peter knew in London on his repatriation—and became engaged five weeks later. Peter was delighted to meet Wendy's Indian-born mother, who showed him some of the many beautiful landscapes painted by her father during his years in India and Nepal; Peter always said that Wendy's family history "made her an honorary Gurkha in my eyes." Early in 1947 he took Wendy back to Kachchh, where he resumed his job as tutor to MKS Himmatsinhji, grandson of Maharao Sri Khengarji of Kachchh, which he had begun in 1939. Peter too was very interested in natural history: he had regularly consulted Whistler's *Popular Handbook of Indian Birds* during the war, and he and Wendy gave each other a pair of initialled Zeiss 10x50 binoculars as wedding presents. Peter was not sure whether his new wife would want to live in a remote part of India, but she was thrilled at the prospect—mainly because of the endless opportunities for bird-watching—and she continued to compile her Life List while living there. The royal family divided its time between Bhuj and Vijay Vilas palace on the coast at Mandvi. She was able to visit the entire country, and particularly loved the Rann. A keen ornithologist all her life, Wendy always thought of her time in India as the high point of her bird-watching life.

Politics put an end to their time in India, when the Raj ended in 1948. They were asked to stay on but decided to return to England, believing that from then on India should be for the Indians. Peter had succeeded in getting Himmatsinhji a place at Oxford University, but after India became an independent country it was decided that he should go to college in India. The old

Maharao, Khengarji, was broken-hearted at the prospect of the end of the Raj. As Peter put it, "He turned his face to the wall and died." Wendy and Peter returned home via Bombay, where they witnessed some of the tragic violence of that sad time of partition.

A few months after leaving Kachchh's palaces, they were living in a caravan on various farms where Peter worked as a farmhand. Jobs were very hard to come by, but being an Oxford graduate in English Language & Literature he was well qualified to teach, and he duly became a schoolmaster at Cheltenham College in 1952. By that time they had two small children, Marigold (3) and Richard (1), who were brought up on stories of a magical place called Kachchh and treated to regular imitations of tiger and bird calls. In 1987 Richard and his wife decided to backpack around the Far East and went to Kachchh where they were royally entertained by both Himmatsinhji and his elder brother Madansinhji, the then Maharao. They enjoyed several bird-watching days at places mentioned by Wendy in her records, both in Kachchh and at other reserves in Saurashtra. They also visited Bharatpur in Rajasthan. Ten years later Marigold and her husband visited Gorkha while trekking the Annapurnas in Nepal, and met some of the famous 'soldiers of small stature but indomitable spirit' with whom it had been such an honour and privilege for Peter to serve his "six unforgettable years."

Wendy Sparks' memberships of ornithological societies included the British Trust for Ornithology: August 1978–January 2004 (Carole Showell, *in litt.*, 10 November 2010); British Ornithologists' Union: 1980–? (Olney 1981); Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: 1981–2007 (Chris Bowden, *in litt.*, 15 November 2010); Oriental Bird Club: 1992–2001 (Margaret Sykes, *in litt.*, 1 April 2008); life membership of the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society. She was both proud and pleased when her name was put forward for a Fellowship of the BOU following one of her many bird-watching trips. Both Peter and Wendy maintained a lifelong friendship with Himmatsinhji, himself a keen naturalist and member of the Bombay Natural History Society. They corresponded until the end of Wendy's life and it is certain that they both inspired his love of birds. She also corresponded in great detail with Salim Ali, sending him the minutiae of all her bird records from her time in Kachchh.

As children, Marigold and Richard visited reserves all over Great Britain, such as Slimbridge and Kilspindie, with their parents. When they both started boarding school in 1960, Wendy took a degree in philosophy at Bristol University, and in 1964 she and Peter took over Berkhampstead School in Cheltenham. As joint Principals they ran the school together for 14 happy years; it was

very successful, regularly winning scholarships to the top public schools in the west of England (St Mary's Calne, Westonbirt, Cheltenham Ladies College and Cheltenham College, several well-known schools in Malvern, Sherbourne, and so on). Among other subjects, Wendy taught natural history. She particularly enjoyed leading field trips and teaching the children to keep careful diaries of what they had seen. They retired in 1978, which left them free to undertake bird-watching holidays wherever they could—St. Kilda and the Faroe Islands, South Africa, Israel, and Egypt, to mention a few. The one they most enjoyed was to the Himalayas. While Peter had been a serving Gurkha officer, Nepal was closed to the British. Now at last he could visit the home of the people he so admired. Wendy described him as being surrounded by Gurkha people everywhere they went, and said how much he enjoyed speaking Gurkhali again.

### Equipment & recordkeeping

Her first pair of Zeiss binoculars was a small lightweight 8x30 pair given to her on her twenty-first birthday in 1937. She always had binoculars (for which she used the old-fashioned term 'field glasses') at the ready, and her children remember them being in almost every room in the house. One of her oldest pairs was a Stepruva Ross 9x35, but she strongly favoured Zeiss, of which she had at least three pairs of 10x40B. Her preferred travel binoculars were a pair of Swift 8x42 Ultralite. Her first telescope was a Nickel Supra 15x60X on a Cobra CX30 stand—later replaced by a more up-to-date model.

Wendy was a meticulous annalist and researcher. She was very much the perfectionist. Her life lists were marvellously detailed, and perfectly neat. She used marker pens in many different shades according to the information she was recording—a source of great amusement to her children. If she made a mistake, she preferred to start a page again rather than correct it. She was very careful to be absolutely certain of all her bird identifications, and to note whether they were seen or heard, or both, and the place, weather conditions, time, *etc.* She was very accomplished at identifying British birds by song. She never guessed. Her list of the birds of Kachchh is testimony of this trait.

### Wendy's copy of 'The birds of Kachchh'

On 29 July 1946, Peter presented his fiancée with a copy of 'The birds of Kachchh' (Ali 1945) following their engagement, inscribing it with the words 'Wendy from Peter' and the date. She entered marginalia into it at least till the tenth, and last volume of the Ali & Ripley (1974) magnum opus was published. The evidence for this is on p. 172, wherein, along the fore-edge, she wrote, 'The figure against each name is the number given for it in *The Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan*, Ali and Ripley, 1968 to 1974,'—referring to her notes, on the same page, on four species she had added during her sojourn in Kachchh, to Ali's (1945) work. These were: Pallas's Fishing Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Large Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*, Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albicollis*, and Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* (highlighted with an asterisk '\*' before the English names in the list below).

Wendy used her book extensively, but also preserved it in excellent condition, despite her innumerable marginalia. She had a critical eye for accuracy, and edited typos in several places, e.g., on p. 34, in the first line she corrected 'withethroats' to "whitethroats"; on p. 57 she changes 'The Small Punjab Skylark' to "The Punjab Small Skylark." Large sections of the book are neatly



Richard Sparks & Marigold Heron

Peter & Wendy Sparks.

underlined to highlight information that was important to her: identification features of larks; the descriptions of nightjar's songs; the onomatopoeic call of *Pterocles senegallus*, "waku-waku." She applied very strict objectivity to the correct identification of larks, pencilling in Peterson-style arrows on the plate depicting them, and underlining appropriate text in each species' account. Waders, and egrets were other birds that held her special attention. That she was up-to-date with published literature is evident through her innumerable emendations of English and scientific names, as they changed over the years. At the bottom of the Index (p. 175), the book ends, with her evidently proud note, "315 sp. (sic.) in Index + 4 added!" Her personal list, given below, stood at 178 spp.

#### Classified list of birds seen in Kachchh between 5 February 1947 and the end of March 1948

- Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 18 February 1947 between Mandvi and Bhuj.
- Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Great Cormorant *P. carbo* 12 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Large Egret *Casmerodius albus* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi: POSSIBLE.
- Median Egret *Mesophox intermedius* 12 August 1947 at Laeja creek, Mandvi: POSSIBLE. Unsure about ID of egrets, whether Large, or Median, sighted on 9 July Laeja creek, 19 October Raval Pir tank 1947; 8 February 1948 Chaduva Rakhhal. Therefore listed as probables.
- Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Reserve.
- Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus* 6 March 1947 at Khari Nadi, near Rhudramata.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Reserve.
- Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* 15 February 1948 at Jamara tank.
- Oriental White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* 10 February 1947 in Vijay Vilas Palace grounds.
- Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Lesser Flamingo *P. minor* 18 August 1947 in Laeja creek, Mandvi.
- Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* 16 July 1947 between Mandvi and Bhuj.
- Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* 27 July 1947 at Khatriwala talau, Bhuj, six birds.
- Gadwal *Anas strepera* 19 October 1947 at Rawal Pir tank, Mandvi, three birds.
- Eurasian Wigeon *A. penelope* 4 March 1947 towards Ningal, near Bhuj.
- Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* 2 November 1947 at Rawal Pir tank, Mandvi.
- Spot-billed Duck *A. poecilorhyncha* 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Northern Shoveller *A. clypeata* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Northern Pintail *A. acuta* 6 March 1947 on Hamirsar tank, Bhuj.
- Common Teal *A. crecca* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* 4 March 1947, by P. H. S. [= Peter Herbert Sparks?], towards Ningal, near Bhuj; 24 January 1948 at Marmoor tank.
- Oriental Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* 27 February 1947 SW of Bhuj; 1 October 1947, a pair in Vijay Vilas Palace grounds, Mandvi.
- Black Kite *Milvus govinda* 6 February 1947 on Bhuj golf course; 8 February 1947 on the Bhujia.
- Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi; 8 February 1948 at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- \*Pallas' Fishing Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* 15 February 1948 at Jamara tank, an adult.
- Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* 5 March 1947 on the way to Bhrindiala.
- Indian White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* 6 February 1947 from garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.
- Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* 24 January 1948 between Bhuj and Ratnal (immature). PROBABLE.
- Marsh Harrier *C. aeruginosus* 24 January 1948 at Marmoor tank.
- Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* 10 February 1947 at Mandvi golf course; 15 February 1947 near Mandvi; 23 February 1947 near Narayanpur. POSSIBLE.
- Montagu's Harrier *C. pygargus* 5 October 1947 near Laeja creek. POSSIBLE.
- Shikra *Accipiter badius* 18 February 1947 near Bhuj.
- White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* 28 February 1947 near Bhuj by Peter Herbert Sparks; 27 June 1947 near Laeja creek, Mandvi; 24 January 1948 between Bhuj and Ratnal.
- Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* 16 February 1947 near Mandvi. POSSIBLE.
- Tawny Eagle *A. rapax* 5 March 1947 on the way to Bhrindiala. 15 February 1947 near Mandvi: PROBABLE.
- Eastern Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi; 29 July 1947 south of Ganga Nal, Mandvi, two birds (pair?). Both records listed as PROBABLE.
- Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus* 26 July 1947 near Bhuj: POSSIBLE.
- Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 13 July 1947 at Laeja creek, Mandvi; 7 August 1947 on Mandvi golf course; 2 November 1947 at Rawal Pir tank (2 birds).
- Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* 7 February 1947 Bhujia area.
- Red-headed Falcon *F. chicquera* 5 July 1947 at Mandvi ("Turumti").
- Laggar Falcon *F. jugger* 5 February 1947 between Kandla and Bhuj; 5 March 1947 between Bhuj and Bhrindiala. POSSIBLE.
- Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Grey Francolin *F. pondicerianus* 5 February 1947 between Kandla and Bhuj.
- Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* 5 March 1947 by Peter Herbert Sparks between Bhuj and Bhrindiala: POSSIBLE. 8 March 1947 at Trumbau, near Bhuj.
- Rock Bush-Quail *Perdica argoondah* Seen 9–11 February 1948 at Edmund dam.
- Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* 10 February 1947.
- Eastern Common Crane *Grus grus* 12 February 1947 near Mandvi. 26 September 1947 (two flocks, one of 30 birds), between 27 September and 4 October 1947 (many large flocks), all near Mandvi. PROBABLE records: 26 September 1947 from Vijay Vilas palace gardens, Mandvi, two flocks in flight, the second of c. 30 birds; 2 November 1947 at Raval pir, three flocks of four, 41, and 36 birds.
- Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* 5 March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Purple Moorhen *Porphyrio porphyrio* 9 November 1947 at Rawal Pir tank.
- Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* 9 March 1947 at Trombau near Bhuj.
- Common Coot *Fulica atra* 5 March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Houbara *Chlamydotis undulata* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi; 5 March

<sup>1</sup> Though five spp., are marked by asterisks in her list, she added only four to the main list. She might have believed the Alexandrine Parakeet was a probable escapee, and did not allow its inclusion in her list of added species. This was typical of her strict self-censure!

- 1947 on the Great Rann of Kachchh (one bird on each occasion).  
Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* End of March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* 8 August 1947 at Laeja creek, Mandvi (five birds). POSSIBLE record: 2 July 1947 at Ganga nal near Mandvi, two birds.
- Little Ringed Plover *C. dubius* 8 February 1948 at Chaduva Rakhhal. POSSIBLE records of two races, *curonicus*, and *jerdoni*: 1947: 6 March, Hamirsar tank, Bhuj city, 16 March Chaduva, 8 July Mandvi, 19 October Raval Pir tank. 1948: 11 January between Bhuj and Majal / Angia / Jakhau / Dhinodhar, 8 February Chaduva, 9 February Jamara, second tank.
- \*Kentish Plover *C. alexandrinus* 5 August 1947 in bay beyond Laeja creek. POSSIBLE, 1947: 13 February near Mandvi, 5 March between Bhuj and Bhrindiala, 8, 10 July, 16 August near Mandvi, 8 November Laeja creek.
- Lesser Sand Plover *C. mongolus* 8 July 1947 in bay beyond Laeja creek. POSSIBLE, 1947: 4 July near Mandvi, 5 August beyond Laeja creek.
- Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* 8 July 1947 in bay beyond Laeja creek. POSSIBLE records in 1947 from near Mandvi: 13 February, 22 June, 4, 5, 11, 13, 28, 31 July, 1 August, 5 October, 8 November.
- Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* 5 March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Yellow-wattled Lapwing *V. malabaricus* 12 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Sociable Lapwing *V. gregarius* 3 August 1947 on Mandvi Golf Course (200); 7 August 1947 (20); 9 August 1947 (125); 13 August 1947 (20); 16 August 1947 (flocks of c. 20 and c. 10, plus another flock, uncounted); 17 August 1947 (10); 18 August 1947 (30); 19 August 1947 (uncounted); all on Mandvi Golf Course.
- Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* PROBABLE: 1947: 5 March between Bhuj and Bhrindiala, 1 November at Raval Pir tank, 13 birds; 1948: 18 January at Ningul, 8 February at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- Bar-tailed Godwit *L. lapponica* 5 October 1947 at Laeja creek, Mandvi, several birds.
- Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* 6 July 1947 near Ganga Nal, Mandvi, about three birds. POSSIBLE: 3 July 1947 near Mandvi.
- Eastern Curlew *N. phaeopus* 5 February 1947 between Kandla and Bhuj.
- Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* 5 February 1947 between Kandla and Bhuj. POSSIBLE: 15 February 1947 at Jamara tank.
- Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis* 12 October 1947 at Raval Pir tank (two birds). POSSIBLE: 5 March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Common Greenshank *T. nebularia* 10 February 1947 near Mandvi. POSSIBLE: 5 March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* 12 October 1947 at Raval Pir tank.
- Terek Sandpiper *T. terek* 28 July 1947 near Laeja creek.
- Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* 9 August 1947 beyond Laeja creek, 12 birds.
- Sanderling *Calidris alba* 7 July 1947 near Laeja creek, about eight birds.
- Little Stint *C. minuta* 7 August 1947 on shore beyond Laeja creek, three birds.
- Temminck's Stint *C. temminckii* 19 October 1947 at Raval Pir tank, eight birds.
- Dunlin *C. alpina* 17 August 1947 at Laeja creek. POSSIBLE, 1947: 7, 8, 31 July near Laeja creek.
- Curlew Sandpiper *C. testacea* 7 August 1947 on shore beyond Laeja creek, five birds.
- Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* 12 October 1947 at Raval Pir tank, four birds, also two birds on 19 October 1947, with females, and immatures. POSSIBLE: 15 February 1948 at Jamara tank.
- Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* 5 March 1947 on the way to Bhrindiala.
- Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* 12 October 1947 at Raval Pir tank, two birds.
- Stone-Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* 5 July 1947 from road between Mandvi town and Vijay Vilas palace, two birds in the fields. Also seen on 22 October 1947 when out shooting near Laeja creek, four birds among sand dunes.
- Great Stone-Plover *Esascus recurvirostris* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi and on 16 August 1947 beyond Laeja creek, Mandvi.
- Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor* 12 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- Indian Courser *C. coromandelicus* 2 March 1947 near Mandvi.
- Lesser Black-backed / Eastern / Yellow-legged Herring gull *Larus fuscus* / *L. heuglini* POSSIBLE / PROBABLE 25 October 1947 beyond Laeja creek.
- Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi. PROBABLE: 5 August 1947 beyond Laeja creek.
- Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* 29 July 1947 near Ganga nal, Mandvi.
- Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi.
- River Tern *S. aurantia* 8 February 1948 at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- \*Large Crested Tern *S. bergii* 7 July 1947 near Mandvi.
- Little Tern *S. albifrons* 3 July 1947 near Mandvi, three birds.
- \*Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albigollis* 3 August 1947 near Mandvi, nine birds.
- Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* 12 February 1947 near Mandvi; 5 March 1947 on way to Bhrindiala. PROBABLE: 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi.
- Painted Sandgrouse *P. indicus* 8 March 1947 at Trombau, near Bhuj.
- Blue Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* 6 February 1947 in the Bhuj area.
- Little Brown Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* 6 February 1947 in the Bhuj area.
- Red Collared-Dove *S. tranquebarica* 4 March 1947 in the Bhuj area.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove *S. decaocto* 5 February 1947 between Kandla and Bhuj.
- \*Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* 2 March 1947 near Bhuj. 27 September 1947 in Vijay Vilas palace gardens, a pair was around for two–three days. PROBABLE escapee?
- Rose-ringed Parakeet *P. krameri* 6 February 1947 in the garden of the Commandant's bungalow at Bhuj.
- Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* 9 February 1947 in Vijay Vilas palace grounds at Mandvi.
- Sirkeer Malkoha *Taccocua leschenaultii* 15 February 1948 at Jamara tank.
- Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi; 12 February 1948 in Mitra Niwas garden, Bhuj.
- Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* 5 March 1947 at Devisar tank.
- Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* 2 March 1947 near Mandvi.
- Common Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus* 29 March 1947 at Fakinwadi near Bhuj.
- Alpine Swift *Tachymartus melba* 9 March 1947 at Trombau near Bhuj.
- House Swift *Apus affinis* 18 February 1947 near Bhuj.
- Small Blue Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* 9 March 1947 at Trombau near Bhuj.
- White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* 2 March 1947 near Mandvi.
- Lesser Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* 9 February 1948 at Edmund dam.
- Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* 8 February 1947 on Bhuj golf course.
- Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *M. persicus* 20 January 1948 on the Bhujia.
- European Roller *Coracias garrulus* PROBABLE: 1 September 1947 the first roller of the autumn was seen at Mandvi. From that date onwards numbers increased daily until by 21 September 1947 there were rollers everywhere in the Mandvi area. These were assumed to be mainly Kashmir Rollers *C. g. semenowi* on autumn migration.
- Indian Roller *C. benghalensis* 8 February 1947 at end of private road from Bhuj to Vijay Vilas palace.
- Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops* 5 February 1947 between Kandla and Bhuj.
- Red-winged Bush-Lark *Mirafra erythroptera* 3 July 1947 near Mandvi.
- Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix grisea* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- Rufous-tailed Finch-Lark *Ammomanes phoenicurus* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Rakhhal.
- Greater Hoopoe-Lark *Alaemon alaudipes* 11 January 1948 on the way to Dhinodhar, monastery of the Kanphata Order, or Kanphutties.
- Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* POSSIBLE: 9–10

February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi, and on Mandvi golf course.

Common Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* 5 March 1947 on the way to Bhrindiala. PROBABLE: 28 July 1947 near Laeja creek, two birds.

Dusky Crag-Martin *Hirundo concolor* 22 March 1947 in the Bhujia fort.

Common Swallow *H. rustica* 13 July 1947 near Laeja creek, Mandvi.

Wire-tailed Swallow *H. smithii* 16 March 1947 at Chaduva Rakhhal.

Red-rumped Swallow *H. daurica* 14 August 1947 between Mandvi and Bhuj.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* 23 February 1947 beside a stream near Narayanpur.

Large Pied Wagtail *M. maderaspatensis* 23 February 1947 by a stream near Narayanpur.

Yellow-headed Wagtail *M. flava* 11 January 1948 between Bhuj–Majal–Angia–Jakhau–Dhinodhar. PROBABLE.

Citrine Wagtail *M. citreola* 14 March 1948 at Jamara tank.

Grey Wagtail *M. cinerea* 23 February 1947 by a stream near Narayanpur.

Brown Rock Pipit *Anthus similis* 19 August 1947 between Mandvi and Bhuj. PROBABLE: 26 July 1947 in the Bhuj area. 19 August 1947 and 5 October 1947 between Mandvi and Bhuj.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* 18 February 1947 near Bhuj.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* 6 February 1947 in garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.

Red-vented Bulbul *P. cafer* 6 February 1947 in garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.

Marshall's Iora *Aegithina nigrolutea* 14 August 1947 between Mandvi and Bhuj.

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* 7 February 1947 on the Bhujia.

Grey Shrike *L. meridionalis* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* 22 March 1947 at Narayanpur near Bhuj.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecicus* 23 February 1947 beside a stream near Narayanpur, near Bhuj.

Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata* 8 February 1947 on the Bhujia.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* 6 February 1947 in garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* 5 March 1947 between Bhuj and Bhrindiala. POSSIBLE: 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi, 14–15 August 1947 in the same areas.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* 11 February 1947 near Mandvi. POSSIBLE: 9 February 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi, 10–11 February 1947 in the Mandvi area.

Indian Chat *Cercomela fusca* 11 January 1948 between Bhuj and Dhinodhar.

Common Babbler *Turdoides caudata* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi.

Rufous-fronted Prinia *Prinia buchanani* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* 13 February 1947 near Mandvi.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* 8 March 1947 near Mandvi.

Common Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* POSSIBLE: 8 February 1948 at Chaduva Rakhhal. The bird was *very small* which suggests Desert Warbler *S. nana*, BUT the colour was wrong. Also, 19 August 1947 and 5 October 1947 between Bhuj and Mandvi and in the Mandvi area.

Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* 2 March 1947 near Mandvi, one female.

Pied Tit *Parus nuchalis* 10 March 1947 on the Bhujia.

Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* 9 February 1947 in guesthouse garden, Vijay Vilas palace, Mandvi.

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani* 27 February 1947 to the south-west of Bhuj.

Common Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* 8 February 1947 on the Bhujia.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* 6 February 1947, Bhuj area.

Yellow-throated Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis* 6 February 1947 from the garden of the Commandant's bungalow near Bhuj.

Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum* 6 February 1947 in garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.

Rosy Starling *S. roseus* 2 March 1947 near Mandvi.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* 6 February 1947 in garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.

Bank Myna *A. ginginianus* 11 January 1948 on the way to Dhinodhar,

monastery of the Kanphata Order.

Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo* 1 September 1947 in Vijay Vilas palace gardens, Mandvi, a pair.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* 6 February 1947 on Bhuj golf course.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* 6 February 1947 in garden of Commandant's bungalow, Bhuj.

## Acknowledgements

I was not making any headway with this biographical sketch, till I wrote to Wendy's son, Richard Sparks. Frankly I did not expect an answer, for the address that I had for him was several years old. But a fortnight or so later his email popped up on my laptop! It made fascinating reading, and as we exchanged emails, he marked copies to his sister, Marigold Heron, who sent me a final draft. This paper would not have been what it is without their wonderful cooperation and help for which I am deeply indebted to them. As you will realise, they have written a large part of Wendy's life history, which is the way it should be. My special thanks go to Margaret Sykes, Membership Secretary, Oriental Bird Club, Alison Harding, Assistant Librarian, Ornithology & Rothschild Libraries, Natural History Museum, Tring, UK, and Tony Statham. All of them played a vital role in the formative stages. Carole Showell, Librarian, British Trust for Ornithology, U. K., for researching Wendy's membership status in BTO, and Chris Bowden (RSPB). Lieut. Gen. Baljit Singh (Retd) for enlightening conversations about movements of the 2GR, and Edward Dickinson for putting me in touch with Alison Harding.

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Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*.