

For Gujarat, a record of a Bearded Vulture was claimed from Vighakot, near the India-Pakistan border in the Greater Rann of Kachchh (Thakkar 2005). However, due to lack of photographs or any other corroborative evidence, it was treated as unconfirmed (Ganpule 2016). Thus, the present sighting confirms the occurrence of the Bearded Vulture in Gujarat and is an addition to the Gujarat checklist. This is the southern-most record of the species for India.

Another interesting aspect about this sighting from the Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary is that this sanctuary is located in Saurashtra. Here, it should be noted that the Girnar Hills are the highest point in the Saurashtra region, with the highest peak at 1,117 m and the Bearded Vulture is said to prefer mountainous areas. The Bearded Vulture is a winter migrant to Sindh, in western Pakistan, from where the bird can drift into Gujarat. It is an 'occasional visitor to the higher hill ranges such as Kirthar in January and February' in Sindh (Roberts 1991). It can be expected to be a vagrant to nearby areas like Kachchh (or maybe even in Rajasthan), but this sighting is quite far from its normal wintering range. It is possible that the species wanders to suitable hilly/mountainous areas in the winter.

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Ringed Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* found at Porbandar, Gujarat in September 2017

The pelagic Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* breeds on islands in the Arabian Sea, in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Lakshadweep, etc., in the Indian Subcontinent, and is found in the non-breeding season in the seas off Pakistan, western India, and in the Indian Ocean (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

The Bridled Tern is a vagrant to Gujarat: a bird ringed in Saudi Arabia was recovered in Surat in 2011; one bird was rescued in Ahmedabad in August 2012 and handed over to an NGO looking after birds, but it died within 24 h (Rafique 2012); one in Surat in 2014; and a dead bird was found in Kachchh (Ganpule 2016).

On 01 September 2017, a dehydrated, ringed, Bridled Tern was found in the Chhaya Rann wetland, Porbandar, Gujarat [31], and was handed over, for treatment, to the veterinarian at Porbandar Bird Sanctuary. The bird was hydrated and isolated for a while, which allowed it to get some rest. Fortunately it survived, and was released.



31. The dehydrated Bridled Tern rescued from Chhaya Rann wetland, Porbandar.

Hamid Amini, Wildlife Bureau, Department of Environment Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran shared the following ringing details in October 2017.

Ring numbers: Left leg "Environment Tehran CW 00924", and Right leg "Environment Tehran CW 00886." [32].

Ringing date: 11 July 2011.

Ringing place: Nakhilu Island, Persian Gulf, Iran (27.880°N, 51.405°E).

Age when ringed: Chick.

Ring recovery date: 01 September 2017.

Recovery Place: Chhaya Rann wetland, Porbandar, Gujarat, India (21.630°N, 69.628°E).

Condition of bird when recovered: Dehydrated; allowed to rest and subsequently released.

Duration between ringing and recovery: six years, one month, 22 days (2,245 days).

Distance between place of ringing, and that of recovery: 1,963 km. (Fig. 1).



32. The Bridled Tern had rings on both its legs.

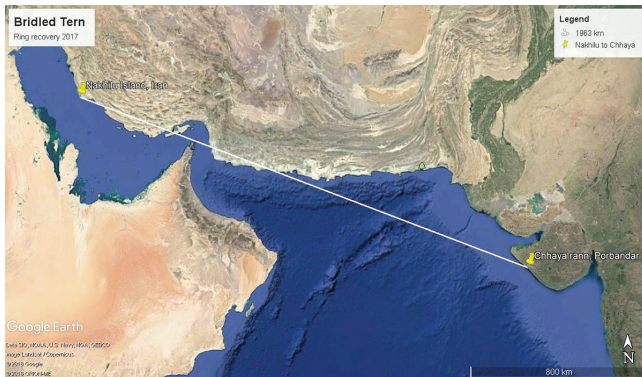


Fig. 1. The straight-line distance that the Bridled Tern travelled.

Nakhilu Island is located in Nakhilu Marine National Park, Iran. Since 2003, ringing has been carried out here by the personnel of Bushehr Provincial Office and the Wildlife Bureau of the Department of the Environment (DOE), Iran. A total of 5,897 terns, including 628 Bridled Terns, 4,836 Lesser Crested Terns *Thalasseus bengalensis*, and 433 Greater Crested Terns *T. bergii* were ringed during 2003–2010 (Tayefeh *et al.* 2012). This recovered individual was ringed twice, by mistake, and it was more than six years old (Amini H, *in litt.*, e-mail dated 04 October 2017). A ringed bird recovered at Surat in 2011 had survived more than 17 years (Babbington 2015). Earlier, another ringed Bridled Tern was recovered in Maharashtra (Kavanagh *et al.* 2017). The Bridled Tern is known to live for more than 20 years, based on a ringed bird recovered at Cousin Island, Seychelles (Burt 2014).

Presumably, the recovered bird was driven towards the Porbandar coast by monsoon winds (Mundkur, T. *in litt.*, e-mail dated 04 September 2017). However, Bridled Terns were recorded in good numbers off the Gujarat coast during a recent pelagic trip in September 2016 (Naik 2016). Recent data suggests that Bridled Terns, nesting in the Persian Gulf, spend their non-breeding season in the Indian Ocean, moving along the western coast of India, to Sri Lanka, and the Maldives (Kavanagh *et al.* 2017). Thus, this ringed bird recovered in Porbandar, was from the population nesting in the Persian Gulf, and is the third record of a ringed Bridled Tern from India, and the second for Gujarat.

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Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaulti* in Jhalana, Jaipur, Rajasthan

On 29 September 2018, I saw two adult Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters *Merops leschenaulti* at Jhalana Safari Park (26.86°N, 75.83°E), Jaipur, Rajasthan. Identification was straightforward and I was able to photograph one of them [33]. I came to know that the species was photographed four to five times at Jaipur, during almost six weeks in August–September (Harkirat Singh Sangha, *pers. comm.*). There appear to be no published reports of this species from Rajasthan (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; eBird 2018). Though the species is found along the foothills of the Himalayas, the only report from the northern plains appears to be from Delhi (Waraich 2017). It is also absent from most of the central Indian highlands. Hence, this is an addition to the state’s avifauna.



33. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

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