

Abdulali (1983) stated that *ruficeps* becomes paler northwards of Mumbai, and birds from Gujarat are paler than those from further southwards in the Western Ghats. The birds observed in Phulwari ki Nal were definitely paler compared to the birds from the Western Ghats, and generally resembled birds from Gujarat. Moreover, these birds were not only streaked dark brown (vs. black) below, but also showed a rather indistinct supercilium (vs. broad and pale).

A scrutiny of images on Oriental Bird Images (www.orientalbirdimages.org) revealed that the birds photographed in Gujarat from Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary on 08 April 2016 (Patel & Maheria 2016); Vansada National Park, 14 April 2017 (Patel & Maheria 2017)), and Madhya Pradesh at Pachmarhi, 08 May 2010 (Gohil 2017) are comparatively paler than the birds photographed in Goa, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

In Phulwari ki Nal the birds were observed in Gamdi ki Nal bordering the northern bank of the Wakal River. Gamdi Ki Nal is a c.12 km long very narrow valley and looks like a gorge between two parallel hills. Being a part of the Aravalli Hill Range, the sanctuary has many narrow valleys that are known as *nal* in the local dialect. As the water regime in a *nal* is usually higher than the adjacent areas, many riparian strips along the banks of streams comprise semi-evergreen and evergreen flora.

In Kazmierczak (2000) and Grimmett et al. (2011) its occurrence in Rajasthan is not shown in the distribution maps, although a '?' is marked in southern Rajasthan. Very obviously it is based on Ali (1949) who also indicated its status from Mt Abu with a '?'. But surprisingly, in his much later co-authored work, he did not give its distribution in Rajasthan and Gujarat (Ali & Ripley 1996). Ripley (1982) also did not record it from Rajasthan. More recently, Sangha & Devarshi (2006) did not record the species at Mt. Abu during an ornithological survey covering all seasons. Rasmussen & Anderton (2005, 2012) recorded it only from Gujarat, and mentioned that it is 'widespread resident in wooded parts of Peninsular India, south from Gujarat to south-west from W Bengal, and disjunctly in Himalayan foothills and adjacent plains from west Himachal to Arunachal, Assam valley, south Assam hills, and east Bangladesh.'

Although the sighting of the species in the Phulwari ki Nal area of southern Rajasthan constitutes the first record for the state, it is not difficult to explain its presence there. It is an uncommon resident in the forest belt of Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). Two birds were recently recorded in Polo forest near Abhapur village, Sabarkantha District on 04 Dec 2019 (Theba 2019) a mere 40 km, as the crow flies, from Phulwari ki Nal. The species is probably resident in Phulwari ki Nal but has been overlooked in the past.

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The Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*: An addition to the avifauna of Gujarat

The Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus* is largely resident in the Himalayas from northern Pakistan to Arunachal Pradesh in India. It breeds between c.2,200–4,200 m asl and winters from foothills to an altitude of 2,100 m on hillside woodland (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It has two recognized subspecies—*simlaensis* of the western Himalayas, breeding till about central Nepal, and the nominate that occurs further east (Alström & Christie 2020).

On 03 February 2011, around at 0830 h, while taking photographs of butterflies at Shahwadi, a sewage treatment area with grass and shrubby growth around it (22.96°N, 72.57°E), near Pirana village on the southern fringe of Ahmedabad city, RT spotted a tiny, fluffy leaf-warbler with a short black bill, moving towards him through some bushes. The bird disappeared in a thick bush but soon reappeared much closer, eventually perching within 0.5–1.0 m from him. After a couple of minutes, the bird moved away and perched on a Lantana bush *Lantana camara*, but it soon flew away and disappeared among the bushes. The peculiarly fearless behaviour of the bird astonished usRT went closer and took some record shots from point-and-shoot camera. We could not identify it, as this warbler appeared a bit different from the other *Phylloscopus* species recorded in Gujarat. After returning home, RT sent the photographs to a few senior birdwatchers for an opinion on the identification but could not

get a clinching opinion. Looking at the three images of the bird, and giving weightage to its two wing bars and white supercilium extending beyond the eyes, RT identified it as a Western Crowned Warbler *P. occipitalis*. He submitted the image to the Editor of *Vihang* (Gujarati newsletter for birdwatchers) for publication along with the sighting details, which were published (Trivedi 2012). As the Western Crowned Warbler is known to occur in Gujarat, this photographic record went un-noticed. Recently, while reviewing soft copies of the images of warblers in RT's collection, DM felt that identification of this already published photograph of the warbler was not correct and required further expert opinion. We sent the photographs to Viral Joshi, Shashank Dalvi, and Kryz Kazmierczak for confirmation of the identification.

The bird was identified as a *Phylloscopus* warbler by its tiny and compact size, generally greenish appearance and broad yellowish-white supercilium. The bird had two clear yellowish bold wing bars, a thin dark eye-stripe, thicker around ear-coverts, and a conspicuous yellowish stripe through the centre of the crown. Other features noted at the time included the yellow-tinged alula and black bill. In one of the photograph, legs are under the shadow of the bird itself and hence look dark. In a second photograph, the legs are in bright sunlight and look lighter (at least not grey or horny) [164, 165]. All these features eliminate other leaf warblers and we concluded that it is a Lemon-rumped Warbler, and earlier it was misidentified as Western Crowned Warbler (Trivedi 2012).



164. Lemon-rumped Warbler.



165. Lemon-rumped Warbler showing crown stripe.

Both: Rajni Trivedi

The Lemon-rumped Warbler is known to occur in the Himalayan foothills, right from Jammu & Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. It is not recorded in the northern and north-western plains of India, except in the Delhi region (Vyas 2019; eBird 2020), and Harike Lake, Punjab (eBird 2020). Earlier records of the species at Delhi and Harike were within c.200 km of the Himalayan foothills. However, its present record at Ahmedabad is more than 1,200 km southward of the Himalayan foothills is surprising.

The Lemon-rumped Warbler has not been included in Gujarat's bird checklists (Parasharya et al. 2004; Ganpule 2016, 2017). This is the first record of the Lemon-rumped Warbler in Gujarat and it is an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat. According to Ganpule (2016, 2017), only 12 species of *Phylloscopus* warblers have been recorded in Gujarat, largely due to the difficulties in identification of these tiny and skulking birds.

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Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* preying on Five-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii*

On 29 June 2018, at 1240 h, during the routine field supervision, we heard the unusually loud squeak of a Five-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* at the Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park, Delhi (28.50°N, 77.27°E; 220 m asl). After a search in the direction of the sound, we saw a Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* chasing the squirrel and trying to attack it with its beak and talons. The squirrel tried to hide in the branches, and scampered around the main trunk of a Vilayati Keekar *Prosopis juliflora* tree to escape the attack. But the Greater Coucal was quick and determined. To save itself, the squirrel jumped from a branch (3.6 m) on to the ground and climbed up again. However, a few minutes later, the squirrel got exhausted. The Greater Coucal got a chance to grab it by its nape, with its talons. The whole incident