

coverts than this bird does. The very restricted and buff colouration on the ear coverts fits White-faced.

2. The broad, white supercilium fits a White-faced Plover.
3. The lateral breast patch appears dark although it is hard to determine its length.
4. The upperparts appear rather pale sandy brown and there is a pronounced whiter area on the outer median and greater coverts. This fits White-faced Plover and would be very odd in a Kentish Plover
5. The wings are long and pointed and the legs appear not to extend beyond the tail. This rules out Malaysian Plover.
6. The legs appear pale pinkish.

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A White-throated Robin *Irani gutturalis* from Karachi, Pakistan: An addition to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent

Indian Subcontinent is a rich avifaunal region in South Asia with a total of 1,452 documented species of birds (Praveen et al. 2025). Each year, the growing birding community, hobbyist bird photographers, and ornithologists keep adding new verifiable species through well-documented records with supporting evidence. Generally, these previously unreported species are found in their natural habitat outside their known distribution range. Every year, some five billion land birds from almost 200 species that breed in Eurasia migrate, with half of them being passerines and allied species in related groups (Hahn et al. 2009). These movements involve medium- or long-range round journeys spanning thousands of kilometres (Newton 2010). Birds utilize stopovers during migration to break endurance flights, so reducing immediate and/or future fitness expenses. In ornithological literature, stopovers on ships are regarded as a rare and anecdotal occurrence. Scientific literature documenting avian occurrences on vessels is limited (Sarà et al. 2023). One such case of a single White-throated Robin *Irani gutturalis* was found stranded on a small boat on 11 April 2024 at Karachi Port, Sindh, Pakistan (24.817°N, 66.976°E), posted on Facebook for identification purpose. This previously undocumented species was found trapped inside a chamber of a longstanding, parked



243. Stranded White-throated Robin in the boat.



244. White-throated Robin showing the white eyebrow and orangish underparts.



245. White-throated Robin showing the characteristic white chin.

private boat, hitting a glass panel in an attempt to escape. It was in exhausted state, which led the observer to put it aside, considering that it was dying [243–245]. To his surprise, the bird later gain rigor and flew away (Mohammad Rizwan Sap, pers. comm. 14 April 2024). The bird might have arrived via other vessels and ships at the seaport and ended up in the standing boat. Karachi Port handles most of Pakistan's inbound and outbound cargo and operates 24x7, accommodating vessels up to 75,000 DWT (Shahzad 2022), including international trade, which could be the origin of this bird landing on a vessel as a stopover in the open Arabian Sea.

Comparison with field guide illustrations identified the bird as a White-throated Robin and the same was confirmed by regional experts (Zafeer Ahmed Shaikh and Akram Awan, pers. comm. April 2024). There is no morphologically confusing species in the reported area. Presumably an adult autumn/fresh male with blue-grey crown, upperparts and wings, thin and long white supercilium reaching behind eye, black on face and throat-sides enclosing narrow white chin and throat, rich orange breast, flanks and belly transitioning to white towards vent (Clement & Rose 2015). White-throated Robin is distributed in Asia Minor, southern Caucasus and Levant east to Iran, and from southern Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to west-central and north-eastern Afghanistan as a summer breeding migrant, while it winters in north-eastern and eastern Africa (Collar 2020). There are two unconfirmed anecdotal records from Baluchistan in the form of a pair collected from Chaman on 02 July 1880 by Barnes and another collected by Watson at Quetta in June; both were reported by Murray but were later rejected and deemed unverified indirect observations in proceeding ornithological studies of Baluchistan (Ticehurst 1926:709; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). This species is also absent from all the standard ornithological literature on Pakistan (Ali & Ripley 1987; Roberts 1992; Grimmett et al. 2008). However, it was expected as a potential vagrant to northern areas of Pakistan (Kazimierczak, 2000). The closest and recent observation to Pakistan is c.40 km from the international border at linear distance, reported from Zahedan-Jahad Keshavarzi Garden, Iran, on eBird (Atashpanjeh 2024; Keyha 2025). It is a long-distance migrant with south, south-east, and south-west directional affinities and a potential for vagrancy outside its normal range further west, as it has been reported from the British Isles, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, mainland Greece (two records), Cyprus (12 records up to 2006), Egypt (May 1984), and South Africa (Northern Cape, July 2006) (Clement & Rose 2015). The current extralimital record in the east is potentially a spring passage migrant returning from its wintering range in Africa to the breeding grounds in Asia, which is usually done in April, with first-year males usually arriving up to one week ahead of females to secure breeding territory (Clement & Rose 2015). This record is an important addition to the national avifaunal inventory of Pakistan as well as the Indian Subcontinent bird checklist.

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The Common Gull *Larus canus* at Mamachiwadi, Virar, near Mumbai: An addition to the avifauna of Maharashtra

On the morning of 14 December 2024, while birding and scanning a gull flock for a potential Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* at Mamachiwadi, Virar (19.284°N, 72.452°E), near Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, we noticed a smaller sized gull amongst the larger Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L. fuscus*. Immediately, the different structure was noticeable and we wondered what species we were looking at. The bird mostly rested on the shore, only sometimes standing up when the flock got disturbed. Several pictures were taken to get the underwing and tail pattern along with side-by-side comparison with Lesser Black-backed Gull (Pereira 2024a). The individual took off southwards with two Lesser Black-backed Gulls while the rest of the flock remained.

Upon reviewing images in the field and using Merlin Bird ID App, we realized that the bird seemed like a first calendar-year Common Gull *L. canus*. Since no records were found for Maharashtra in eBird and from a literature search, and given the complexities of gull identification, we approached Prasad Ganpule and Ashwin Viswanathan for confirmation. They agreed with certainty that it was a Common Gull based on the graceful structure, small and compact size, white rounded head, short and slim bill together with longer and lean wings [246, 247].

Subsequent searches were made at nearby locations with no sightings in December and January 2025. However, on 17 February 2025, two individuals were reported at the same site ([248–251], Shenai 2025). These two individuals were observed and photographed by several birders throughout the month of February. The two Common Gulls were actively foraging amongst Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus*, feral Rock Pigeons *Columba livia*, House Crows *Corvus splendens*, Western Reef-Heron *Egretta gularis*, and stray dogs feeding on organic waste at the shore near Arnala Jetty (19.274°N, 72.444°E), c.3 km from first site (Pereira 2025).