

On the last day at 1430 hrs, we could see two adults hawking their prey over the grassy paddy fields, somewhat like swallows. One of these had an entirely black head and body, except for the white forehead and little white blotches on the underparts.

There is no earlier published record of the white-winged black tern in Kerala.

January 11, 1999

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15. SIGHTINGS OF WHITECHEEKED TERN *STERNA REPRESSA*, WHITEWINGED BLACK TERN *CHLIDONIAS LEUCOPTERUS* AND SAUNDERS'S LITTLE TERN *STERNA SAUNDERSI* AT PORBANDER COAST, GUJARAT

Porbander (21° 37' N, 69° 49' E), a small coastal town on the west coast of Gujarat, is an important area for birds. A wide intertidal zone, a muddy creek with mangroves encircling the town, extensive saltpans on the outskirts, fishing industry and a small (3.1 ha) bird sanctuary on the sewage dump are all bird habitats. Various tern species observed at Porbander during a few visits in 1997 are recorded here.

On June 17, 1997 we saw several terns slightly larger than the whiskered tern *Chlidonias hybrida* flying above the salt pans. An osprey *Pandion haliaetus* caught one of them and landed on a stone about 60 m from us. The other terns mobbed the osprey and landed nearby. Closer examination revealed that all the 35 birds were whitecheeked tern *Sterna repressa* in non-breeding plumage. A flock of 450 other terns was also seen pursuing each other with chirping calls.

The whitecheeked tern is known to breed on Vengurla Rocks off Malvan on the west coast, c. 16° N, 73° 30' E (Ali and Ripley 1983). It is common on the Makran and Sindh coasts of Pakistan, particularly from March to May, but there is no evidence of its breeding (Ali and Ripley 1983). However, a specimen was collected on June 12, 1973, at Bombay harbour (Menon 1974). This species has never been reported from Gujarat coast and hence, this is the first record.

Though it was June 17, we also recorded the gullbilled tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (1), Caspian tern *Hydroprogne caspia* (2), whiskered tern *Chlidonias hybrida* (8) and Saunders's little tern *Sterna saundersi* (2).

On April 27, we saw 3 whitewinged black tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* repeatedly flying over the waters of the bird sanctuary. Two birds had complete breeding plumage, whereas the third one still had some white patches on the black belly. These three terns were foraging along with 16 whiskered terns *Chlidonias hybrida*. The whitewinged black tern is a rare visitor to Assam, West Bengal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Ali and Ripley 1983). There have been three records of this species from Gujarat: twice from Jasdan (Shivraj Kumar 1955) and once from Jamnagar (Mundkur 1987). Sighting of three birds from the Porbander coast indicates that the species occurs over a greater area of Gujarat state and is less vagrant than recorded (Ali and Ripley 1983). Sangha (1998) reported the species from Rajasthan, which further supports this view.

We also saw two flying Saunders's little tern *Sterna saundersi* from a very short distance on April 27 and June 17. This tern is known to breed around Karachi (Pakistan), Kachchh, Okhamandal (India) and in Sri Lanka (Ali and Ripley 1983). The only record of its occurrence in Gujarat is from Mithapur (Dharmakumarsinhji 1972). On Mundra coast,

Kachchh, 5 pairs were incubating eggs and initiating nesting on April 17, 1986 (Taej Mundkur, *pers. comm.*, Naik *et al.* 1991). The present record confirms its occurrence at Porbander, where the possibility of its breeding cannot be ruled out.

During our visit in January and April, the whiskered tern and gullbilled tern were common, whereas the Caspian tern was seen occasionally. Our records of terns on Porbander coast support the view of Khacher (1996) that "our knowledge of terns, especially the migratory and more

marine ones is comparatively meagre and more information is needed."

March 22, 1999

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16. RED-WINGED CRESTED CUCKOO *CLAMATOR COROMANDUS*, AN ADDITION TO THE AVIFAUNA OF ANAIMALAI HILLS (WESTERN GHATS) OF TAMIL NADU

Raghupathy Kannan's 'Avifauna of Anaimalai Hills. (*JBNHS* 95(1): 193-214)' does not include the red-winged crested cuckoo (*Clamator coromandus*). I have recorded the species at Top Slip (Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary) in January 1996, in Erumai Pallam, close to the road leading to Parambikulam in the *Lantana camara* undergrowth. In February 1997, my friends Dr and Mrs Eric Lott had seen the bird in *Lantana camara* bushes in Karian Shola

near the watch tower at Top Slip.

The species probably occurs in small numbers in this area. In January 1998, Dr. and Mrs. Eric Lott and I recorded a single bird in Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala.

December 4, 1998

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