

# WESTERN INDIA: GUJARAT

December 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 – January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010

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(with Ratan Singh, Asian Adventures)*

The State of Gujarat, in the far W of India, has some really excellent birds and mammals on offer. As this was our 4<sup>th</sup> visit to India, our “shopping list” was relatively small, and this 2-week customised tour was done in tandem with a similar targeted trip to the Western Ghats. Although we were successful with most of the main targets, a few of the more difficult spp. eluded our and our guide’s efforts. The very dry conditions, following a poor monsoon, were certainly a negative factor.

The plan was carefully arranged around our wants list in discussions with Jo Thomas of **Wild about India** ([jo@wildaboutindia.com](mailto:jo@wildaboutindia.com); [jo@wildabouttravel.co.uk](mailto:jo@wildabouttravel.co.uk)), who made all of the arrangements – accommodation, driver and guide, via her ground agents **Asian Adventures** ([info@asianadventures.in](mailto:info@asianadventures.in)). Jo’s pre-tour information was very comprehensive and the accommodation was all very comfortable.

We deliberately selected Asian Adventures’ guide Ratan Singh, as we had spent an enjoyable time with him on an earlier (2006) trip to Rajasthan; Asian Adventures also provided the same driver Rakesh Rantan – so it was the old team re-united! Rakesh and Ratan are great company; both are extremely well-organised, knew the people at all of the sites we visited, and made sure that everything ran smoothly – making it a very enjoyable trip.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**International Flights** : Return flights (into Kochi and back from Ahmedabad) from Heathrow via Dubai with Air Emirates cost £667 incl. of taxes from **Wildwings**.

**Visas** : A Tourist Visa is required, and applications must now be made on-line (visit <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk>) – beware, it is a lengthy process; the necessary documentation can then be posted or taken to the appropriate Visa Application Office. Cost, incl. a return courier envelope £46.

**Travel in India** : Asian Adventures provided a large, very comfortable 4x4, used throughout, except in parks only accessible on Jeep safaris. The quality of roads varies from good to dreadful, and Indian driving standards are still diabolical. Gujarat is large, and as always journey times are typically very slow; this circuit included four half-day drives.

**Currency :** 1GBP = Rs.74; 1US\$ = Rs.44. We exchanged US\$ travellers cheques at airport banks, and with a travel agent found by Rakesh.

**Accommodation :** Very comfortable hotels or lodges throughout.

**Entry into National Parks, Reserves and Charges :** Most of our permits, particularly during the Christmas/New Year holiday period had to be arranged in advance (by Rakesh), and would not have been available on the day. Unfortunately, charges (entry, jeep safaris, camera fees) made by the National Parks and Reserves in Gujarat are amongst the highest in India – see **SITE DETAILS**.

**Tips :** The practice of tipping is expected in India, and the very low incomes of most people should be remembered; also, without the knowledge and help of the (selected) right drivers and guides, some visits would not be as successful. Following recommendations from Jo and Ratan, the following guidelines might be useful:-

For Jeep drivers – c.Rs.300 (2 drives) and park guides – c.Rs.200/day

We usually put c.Rs.100/day in the house tips boxes at our accommodation, as the staff were always friendly and helpful.

**Food and Drink :** Great, if you like Indian! Most of Gujarat is vegetarian, though a limited number of meat dishes were available. Lunches and dinners ample and good, breakfasts typically European style, and picnic breakfasts or lunches provided to fit in with birding schedules. Where we did buy some meals out in restaurants, these were excellent value ranging from Rs.600-1000 for 4 people. We drank only bottled water; Asian Adventures kept the vehicle cool box well stocked, and bottles were also provided at most places we stayed; otherwise c.Rs.30. Gujarat is also a “dry” state – so no long cold beers at the end of a day in the field!

**Weather :** Very pleasant. Consistently dry with largely clear skies, rising to mid-20's °C, but much cooler at night; rides in open jeeps can definitely be cold in early mornings, and fleece/hat/gloves recommended.

**Daylight Hours :** All of India is GMT + 5.5hr; this far W first good light c.0730, and dusk c.1800.

**Health :** No major problems, apart from odd days with a “dodgy” gut (but a month of curries in UK would probably do the same!). We were taking doxycycline as a malaria prophylactic (surely unnecessary in such dry conditions), and this may have helped to control any potential microbiological hazards.

## SITE DETAILS

This section describes the main areas – habitats and access, the **various costs** related to the Parks/Sanctuaries visited, and the accommodation used.

Amongst the key spp. seen, those marked with an \* were recorded at only that site.

### **Velavadar NP.**

A large area of predominantly grassland, c.1hr N of Bhavnagar where there are plenty of hotels. **Entrance cost Rs.1500 for the party; access to the network of gravel roads is in own vehicles, but a park guide (Rs.500) is obligatory; camera fee Rs.500 = total cost of Rs.2500 for the whole (12hr) day.**

The Park holds impressive herds of \*Blackbuck (? India's largest population); other mammals incl: Nilgai, Wild Boar, \*Striped Hyena, Jungle Cat, \*Wolf and Indian Hare. An excellent area for raptors:- Montagu's, Pallid and Hen Harriers (though sadly the famous roost has dwindled in recent years), Greater Spotted, Lesser Spotted and Tawny Eagles. Amongst the passerines: \*Stoliczka's Bushchat, Rufous-tailed, Sykes's, and Ashy-crowned Sparrow Larks, Long-billed Pipit, Desert Wheatear, Isabelline and Bay-backed Shrikes.

When conditions are wetter, there would certainly be more water (and probably) other birds.

### **Gir Forest NP.**

A huge area of open dry scrubby woodland (*Acacia*, teak, etc) in the far S of the state, maintained to protect Asia's only Lions; the park also contains 40 villages and their associated inhabitants and livestock. There are many lodges in and around the village of Sasan Gir, where the NP HQ/Visitor Centre is also situated; we stayed at **Gir Birding Lodge** right beside one of the 2 entrance gates – small, friendly, good food and highly recommended.

**The only access is by “safaris” in park jeeps – expensive at Rs.3000 (though maybe only Rs.2000 outside holiday periods/weekends) for 3 hours, plus Rs.75 for on-board guide, plus Rs.500 camera fee/day (though small <6 megapixel cameras not charged); so a day incl. two jeep-trips cost Rs.6650, without the almost obligatory tips if successful! [having cleaned up on day 1 we considered that the driver and guide had done a good job, saved us a great deal, and we were only too happy to tip them well !]**

Apart from the star attraction of \*Asiatic Lion, \*Leopard are fairly regularly seen, though neither of the large cats are guaranteed; also Sambar, Cheetal (abundant), Nilgai, Wild Boar, Jackal and Grey Mongoose. The more interesting birds seen in and around the NP incl:- Black Ibis, O.Honey Buzzard, White-eyed Buzzard, Short-toed Eagle, Booted Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Stone Curlew, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, roosting \*Collared Scops Owl, Spotted Owlet and \*Mottled Wood Owls, \*Grey Nightjar, Small Minivet, Common Iora, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, White-browed Fantail, Booted and Sykes's Warblers, \*Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Bay-backed Shrike and Chestnut-shouldered Petronia.

The nearby **Lake Mulsagar** is also worth a couple of hours – with Comb Duck, a good selection of waders, River Tern, Caspian Tern, larks, pipits, wagtails, etc.

### **Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary.**

A massive area of lagoons, marsh and working saltpans situated on the S.side of the Gulf of Kutch c.18km E of Jamnagar, where there are plenty of hotels.

The network of unsurfaced roads can be explored in own vehicles; permits cost us Rs.1575 for an afternoon incl.a single camera fee.

The numbers and range of birds is enormous and really warrants at least a whole day; however in a 3hr visit, the better spp. seen incl:- Black-necked Grebe, Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Gt.White and Dalmatian Pelicans, \*Striated Heron, Painted and Black-necked Storks, \*Glossy Ibis, Spoonbill, \*Ferruginous Duck, Common Crane, \*Purple Swamphen, White-br.Waterhen, \*White-tailed Plover, Temminck's Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Gt.Stone Curlew, Slender-billed, Brown-headed and Pallas's Gulls, Caspian Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Whiskered Tern, Isabelline Wheatear, Sykes's Lark, Citrine Wagtail, \*Blyth's Pipit, Paddyfield Pipit, Jungle Prinia, \*Paddyfield Warbler, Clamorous Reed Warbler, and Bluethroat.

### **Narana Marine NP.**

Another huge wetland reserve, situated c.50km W of Jamnagar, beyond a large area of industrial (petrochemical, etc) developments. There are several large hotels along the road out of Jamnagar; we stayed in the Hotel Express, c.20km W of town.

Our permits were collected from an office in Jamnagar the previous day, and cost us Rs.1700, presumably incl. some fee for camera(s); as with Khijadiya, access is in own vehicles.

The reserve includes a massive area of working saltpans, plus extensive saltmarsh and mangroves behind the muddy foreshore, and requires most of a day, depending on tide times. The star attraction is undoubtedly the large gathering of \*Crab Plovers, which roost in a tight flock at HW, then disperse on the falling tide.

The sheer number of waders, etc. especially on the exposed mud at low tide, is really impressive, and spp. seen here included:- Black-necked Grebe, Gt .and Lesser Flamingos, W.Reef Herons, Black-headed Ibis, Spoonbill, Marsh and Pallid Harriers, Peregrine, \*Pacific Golden Plover, \*Crab Plover, Slender-billed Gull, Pallas's Gull, Heuglin's Gull, \*Lesser Crested Tern, Caspian Tern, Kentish Plover, Lesser and \*Greater Sandplovers, \*Great Knot, Marsh Sandpiper and \*Terek Sandpiper; passerines included:- Clamorous Reed Warbler, Graceful Prinia, Desert Warbler, Isabelline Shrike and large flocks of Rosy Starlings.

## **Bhuj/Nakhatrana Area.**

The part of Gujarat on the N.side of the Gulf of Kutch is usually referred to as the “Bhuj area”, though most of the key birding areas are centred around the small town of **Nakhatrana**, 50km further to the W. Probably the only sensible place to say is at the **Centre for Desert and Ocean (C.E.D.O)** in the tiny village of **Moti Virani**, a few km E of Nakhatrana. They run a simple but extremely friendly lodge ([www.cedobirding.com](http://www.cedobirding.com); [cedoindia@yahoo.com](mailto:cedoindia@yahoo.com)) for birders and naturalists, and the owner Jugal Tiwari is a mine of knowledge on the local wildlife. The whole area is good accessible habitat, but many of the key spp. of birds are highly localised and some found only at particular stake-outs – so local knowledge is absolutely essential. As it takes the best part of a day to drive here, a minimum of 3 nights/2 days are needed.

There are huge tracts of rocky scrubland dominated by *Acacia* and *Euphorbia* in this area, and the main targets in this habitat are \*White-bellied Minivet and \*White-naped Tit - both are scarce and difficult, and the former highly nomadic. Other characteristic birds include:- Yellow-wattled Lapwing, \*Painted Sandgrouse, \*Indian Bushlark, Small Minivet, Marshall’s Iora, Common Woodshrike, Black Redstart, Variable Wheatear, \*Rufous-tailed Wheatear, Rufous-breasted Prinia, Orphean Warbler, \*House Bunting and Grey-necked Bunting.

The other good birds we saw in the CEDO area, some at very specific sites were:- \*Bonelli’s Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, \*Sirkheer Malkoha, \*Rock Eagle Owl, \*Indian Nightjar, \*Sykes’s Nightjar, Hoopoe, Rufous-tailed Lark, and \*Grey Hypocolius (at their only regular wintering site in India).

The **Lala Grasslands/Bustard Sanctuary** constitute a (poorly protected) area of c.80km<sup>2</sup> of grass and scrubland, some of it being encroached by cultivation, c.1hr further W from CEDO. Unrestricted access is from roads or a number of rough tracks. Great Indian Bustards are regularly seen, but we failed on our visit; however, this area is very productive, especially for raptors:- \*Eurasian Griffon Vulture, Short-toed Eagle, 4 spp. harriers, \*Long-legged Buzzard, Greater Spotted, Tawny and Steppe Eagles, \*Black Francolin, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, \*Short-eared Owl, Indian Bushlark, \*Bimaculated Lark, Variable Wheatear, \*Fan-tailed Warbler and Southern Grey Shrike, etc. Mammals seen:- \*Bengal Fox, Grey Mongoose, \*Chinkara and Nilgai.

Beyond Lala, **Pingwasver Beach** had roosting \*Sykes’s Nightjar in the dunes, and offered a selection of waders, gulls and terns; Bluethroat, \*Red-backed Shrike, Jungle Cat and Chinkara were also seen here. Other coastal sites accessible from CEDO hold Crab Plover.

## **Dasada/Little Rann of Kutch.**

**Dasada**, the obvious base for the **The Little Rann of Kutch** is c.100km (c.2hr) NW of Ahmedabad; we stayed at the very comfortable and well-appointed **Rann Riders Hotel** ([www.rannriders.com](http://www.rannriders.com); [rann-riders@usa.com](mailto:rann-riders@usa.com)). Much of the huge expanse of salt flat and scrubby grassland of the Little Rann is protected as the **Wild Ass Sanctuary**. Vehicles, either your own, or for areas with poorly defined routes – jeeps, all need permits to drive into restricted areas.

We paid Rs.1200 for two safaris in a jeep operated by our hotel; we were out for a total of >9hrs; the driver/guide was really helpful and knowledgeable, and certainly knew where to look for our targets, so this represented good value.

Many other areas of the Rann – pools, scrub, grassland and fields outside the Sanctuary – also provide excellent birding, though would have been better if conditions had been wetter (after a poor monsoon, the whole area was very dry, and numbers of many birds- Cranes, waders, etc. were low).

The number one attraction of \*Wild Asses are more or less guaranteed, but there are also some good birds on offer :- Gt.White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Spoonbill, Painted Stork, \*Asian Openbill, Ruddy and \*Common Shelduck, Marsh, Montagu's and Pallid Harriers, Tawny, Greater Spotted and Imperial Eagles, large flocks of Common Cranes (\*Demoiselle Cranes are normally also numerous, though we saw only one!), \*Macqueen's Bustard, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, \*Savanna Nightjar, Southern Grey Shrike, Isabelline Shrikes, Tawny Pipit, \*Hoopoe Lark, Desert (v.common), Isabelline and Variable Wheatears and Desert Warbler.

## **ITINERARY – SUMMARY**

**Dec.20<sup>th</sup>** – Coimbatore (W.Ghats) – Mumbai – Bhavnagar.  
**Dec.21<sup>st</sup>** – Velavadar.  
**Dec.22<sup>nd</sup>** – Bhavnagar – Palitana.  
**Dec.23<sup>rd</sup>** – Palitana – Gir.  
**Dec.24<sup>th</sup>** - Gir.  
**Dec.25<sup>th</sup>** – Gir area.  
**Dec.26<sup>th</sup>** – Gir – Jamnagar – Khijadiya.  
**Dec.27<sup>th</sup>** – Narara, Jamnagar.  
**Dec.28<sup>th</sup>** – Jamnagar – Bhuj – CEDO.  
**Dec.29<sup>th</sup>** – CEDO area all day.  
**Dec.30<sup>th</sup>** – Lala Grasslands, CEDO area.  
**Dec.31<sup>st</sup>** – CEDO – Bhuj – Dasada.  
**Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>** - Little Rann of Kutch.  
**Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Dasada – Ahmedabad.  
**Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Ahmedabad – Dubai – London.

## DETAILED ITINERARY and DIARY

### Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> – Mumbai to Bhavnagar.

After a rushed connection from Coimbatore (where we ended 12 days in the W.Ghats), 1400 Kingfisher Airlines flight from Mumbai arr. Bhavnagar 1530, where we were met by the familiar faces of Ratan, and to our surprise and delight Rakesh. Transfer to the **Narayani Heritage Hotel** in town; the remainder of the afternoon was devoted to changing money, e-mailing passport and visa details to various National Parks to expedite permits over the holiday period, and discussing plans with Ratan.

### Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> – Velavadar NP all day.

0500 call, 0515 breakfast and dep.0530 for **Velavadar NP** arr. still in darkness 0630; a pair of Jungle cats beside the road pre-dawn proved to be a good omen for the day. Ratan's insistence on the early start was to look for Wolf, and the first was secured by 0730, quickly followed by a group of 4 at 0745! Other good finds on this first section driven :- Painted Storks, perched Spotted, Lesser Spotted and Tawny Eagles, the first Wild Boars and an Indian Hare.

Back via reception, across the road on a much larger loop through the grassland – with its impressive herds of Blackbuck and Nilgai, interesting birds incl :- Bay-backed Shrike, Long-billed Pipit, Rufous-tailed and Sykes's Larks, and careful searching of some likely areas of *Acacia* yielded several Stoliczka's Bushchats. Picnic lunch was enjoyed in a cool room at Reception, followed by exploration of the surrounding scrub – White-cheeked Bulbul, Orphean Warbler and Clamorous Reed Warbler. Beyond the Park, the scrub and pools beside the road were also very fruitful:- Jungle Prinia, Citrine Wagtail, Temminck's Stint, and some good photo-opportunities on various larks.

At 1430, we set off again in the vehicle for a final assault on the grasslands, photographing mammals and adding :- Gt.Coucal, Variable Wheatear, Black Redstart, Short-toed Eagle, C.Cranes and 3 more Jungle Cats. However, much effort was devoted to searching for the last big mammal target of Striped Hyena before we joined a group of photographers busy enjoying at close range a very obliging individual recently emerged from its den at 1700. The final show of the day were the Harriers arriving to roost from c.1745; numbers sadly only a shadow of some recent years, but 40+ Montagu's (mostly ad. males) and several Pallid's brought a long and productive day to a close at 1815.

### Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Bhavnagar to Palitana.

A more leisurely 0630 breakfast, then set out 0700, spending <1030 birding along the road towards Velavadar. The patchwork of dry fields, *Acacia* scrub, salt pans and saline pools provided continuous good birding, incl. many spp. seen in the NP on the previous day, but also Black Ibis, W.Reef Heron, Ruddy Shelduck, Spot-billed Duck, River Tern, Gull-billed Tern, a good selection of waders, Sykes's Warbler and another Stoliczka's Bushchat. Ret. to hotel by 1100 – showered, packed, lunch and away by 1230.

Short drive via a couple of stops in rocky scrubland (too hot in the middle of the day) to **Palitana** arr.1500 at the amazing **Vijay Vilas**, a former Maharajah's residence tucked away in farmland below Shatrunjaya Hill. A late afternoon walk amongst the

surrounding fields 1600-1800, including a tour of a local's vegetable garden, produced a good selection of commoner birds.

**Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Palitana to Gir.**

0630 breakfast then drove the short distance to the start of the climb up **Shatrunjaya Hill** to **Palitana Temples** by 0700; the 3,500 steps (all well maintained) were not too strenuous in the cool early morning, and Marshall's Iora, Blue Rock Thrush and Grey Mongoose seen before reaching the summit temple complex at 0830. Spent until 1000 amongst the crowds of worshippers, enjoying and photographing the stunning buildings, then strolled slowly down – seeing Changeable Hawk Eagle and Dusky Crag Martins. Collected by Rakesh, lunch back at Vijay and left 1315.

The entire afternoon on the road, much of it rough and pot-holed; several *ad hoc* stops in the parched *Acacia* scrubland contributed Yellow-wattled Lapwings, Marshall's Ioras and Bay-backed Shrikes.

Finally drove into **Gir NP** 1830, and settled into **Gir Birding Lodge** for 3 nights.

**Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Gir NP all day.**

0615 breakfast before morning jeep trip 0645-1015; mammals :- plentiful Cheetal, a few Sambar and Wild Boar, plus single Jackal and Grey Mongoose – but no felines! Birdlife also interesting with several Short-toed Eagles, two White-eyed Buzzards, Booted Warbler, Small Minivets and a Pale-billed Flowerpecker in the first hour, followed by a stunning family group of Mottled Wood Owls, Grey Nightjar, Stone Curlews, Blue Rock Thrush and Tickell's Blue Flycatcher.

After a quick tea break at the Lodge, walked nearby scrubby woodland and riverbank 1100-1215, adding Yellow Bittern, Wire-tailed Swallows and Hume's Leaf Warbler of note, before lunch.

The afternoon "safari" was late (1515) starting, and the forest was distinctly quieter, but a perched Lesser Spotted Eagle and several close Nilgai were seen en route to a spot where 2 Lions were reported to be sleeping; the pair strolled out onto the roadside and performed brilliantly! Soon after this, we "bumped into" a further group of 3 Lionesses relaxing by the road – prompting much more camera action. As light levels began to fade, an obliging flock of Ashy-crowned Sparrow Larks, a Collared Scops Owl posing in its hole, and the grand finale of a Leopard just before 1800 rounded off an excellent day.

**Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> – Gir area all day.**

Having scored so well on all the major targets on the previous day, we decided to forgo our (very expensive) safaris, and explore areas outside the Park. Left the Lodge 0715, and drove ?E to **Lake Mulsagar**. The dry fields here held Isabelline Wheatear, Tawny Pipit, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Larks and Sykes's Larks, whilst the lake and its muddy shoreline yielded a good mix of waders and wagtails, Gt.Stone Curlew, Caspian Tern, an impressive gathering of River Terns, plus Booted Eagles overhead. Despite the heat during late morning, various patches of *Acacia* scrub on the return drive were still fairly productive – Sykes's Warblers, Jungle Prinia, Bay-backed Shrike and Yellow-eyed Babblers, as well as a couple of Jackals. The afternoon excursion was to areas of grass and scrub W of Sasan Gir village; a fine banyan tree



filled with roosting Flying Foxes and an Indian Cuckoo were the only finds of note; ret. to Lodge at 1800.

**Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> – Gir to Khijadiya and Jamnagar.**

Left Gir Birding Lodge 0730, and spent most of a long morning on the drive N to Jamnagar. A couple of stops in likely-looking but “Minivet-free” *Acacia* did yield Stone Curlews, Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker and Coppersmith Barbets amongst the now familiar inhabitants. Later in the morning, a much longer walk over parched short grass fields, beside a strategically-placed chai stall, produced huge numbers of larks (mostly Short-toed), Tawny Pipit, Isabelline and Desert Wheatears, and eventually Indian Coursers and the first fly-over Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. Further N were several flocks of C.Cranes and White Pelicans, and Rakesh’s sharp eyesight and an emergency stop gave us brief but adequate views of 2 Yellow-legged Buttonquails in a roadside gully, with more Sykes’s and Orphean Warblers at the same stop.

We eventually reached **Jamnagar** and turned E before town, arriving at **Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary** at 1430. The enormous wetland, including working saltpans, was extremely bird-rich, and 3 hours barely scratched the surface. Nevertheless, good birds seen included:- Lesser Flamingo, Dalmatian Pelican, Black-necked Stork, Ferruginous Duck, White-tailed Plover, Gt.Stone Curlew, Slender-billed and Pallas’s Gulls – and amongst the passerines: Sykes’s Larks, Blyth’s Pipit, Isabelline Wheatear, Paddyfield and Clamorous Reed Warblers, and Bluethroat. Called it a day at 1730, and Rakesh fought back through Jamnagar’s rush hour traffic to the **Hotel Express**, well to the W of town by 1830. Much-needed shower and room service food before tackling the paperwork backlog.

**Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> – Narara Marine NP and Jamnagar.**

“Early” breakfast at 0630, and away by 0700; drove W through industrial areas then N to **Narara NP** arr. 0730 to find the tide very high and the roosting Crab Plover flock viewable only at long range tucked behind the mangroves. A preliminary assortment of herons, Black-headed Ibis and Painted Storks were enjoyed near to the reserve centre, before we drove round through extensive saltpans to a small temple, where a muddy bay was filling with waders on the falling tide; incl:- Kentish, Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, Terek Sandpipers and a single Great Knot found amongst the throng. From here, we walked back towards our starting point, sorting through waders including a group of Broad-billed Sandpipers on the mud; Graceful Warblers and a very obliging Desert Warbler in the dry saltmarsh, plus a fine display of yellow *Cistanche* spikes flowering along the top of the beach. Eventually reaching a point level with the Crab Plovers, the obvious solution was to wade/paddle out over the wet sandy shore and follow the dispersing birds on the low tide – good views of this high profile species at last, and some photographs attempted in the glare. Met up with Rakesh and drove back to the hotel by 1430 for recuperation and an ice cream.

Late afternoon - a more relaxing drive into **Jamnagar** to look at two town centre lakes – both full of duck (especially Spot-billed), terns and larger water birds.

### **Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> – Jamnagar to Bhuj and C.E.D.O.**

Checked out after breakfast at 0730, and drove via Morbi, with a brief stop which yielded Booted and Sykes's Warblers and Grey-necked Buntings, then over the Little Rann Causeway with its endless saltpans, to **Bhuj** arr.1330 for lunch in town restaurant.

Headed W/NW from town for c.30km and spent 1530-1800 birding dry *Acacia* and *Euphorbia* scrub – often hard going, but S.Grey Shrike, more Grey-necked Buntings, Indian Bushlark, and several groups of Small Minivets found, before the main target of a stunning male White-bellied Minivet appeared on the roadside – the reward for many hours of effort! The final birds of the day were males of two distinct races of Black Redstart.

Finally drove on 25km to the tiny village of **Moti Virani** and the **Centre for Desert and Ocean (C.E.D.O)** Lodge – our base for the next 3 nights, arr.1830 at dusk.

### **Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> – C.E.D.O area all day.**

Left 0630 and drove c.20km NE into scrubby desert for 0730; several harriers were already moving away from their roost, before our search of rock outcrops produced the goods – a fine pair of Rock Eagle Owls, which posed for the camera. After the first course of the day, we continued a few km. to a small village, where we “collected” a local youth who escorted us onto private land with many *Salvadora* trees – whose fruit are irresistible to our next objective – Grey Hypocolius; amongst several seen, one male was enjoyed and photographed at length. Other good birds here incl: Lesser Spotted Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Sirkheer Malkoha, and several Hoopoes. Dragged ourselves away for a long overdue picnic breakfast in the desert, followed by another exploration of some stony *Acacia* scrub 1115-1215 – already very hot, but a Bonelli's Eagle circled overhead, and our efforts also yielded Rufous-tailed Wheatear, House Bunting and more Indian Bushlarks.

Lunch and a brief rest back at CEDO, before setting out in the opposite (W) direction through Nakhatrana to yet more *Acacias* near the village of **Fort Masdev**; birded these 1545-1745 :- Painted Sandgrouse, Marshall's Ioras and Grey-necked Buntings, but only John caught up with the main bird White-naped Tit. Finally back-tracked through Moti Virani and beyond the Hypocolius site, seeing two Indian Nightjars in headlights at c.1845 en route, into a huge area of flat featureless desert. The planned rendezvous with another guide and his British client Dick Byrne took much longer than planned and several cellphone calls, before everyone was assembled at 2000, and enjoying point-blank views of a spotlighted Sykes's Nightjar under the full moon in the middle of nowhere – a truly surreal experience !

Back to CEDO for a very late meal to end a memorable day.

### **Dec.30<sup>th</sup> – Lala Bustard Sanctuary and Pingwasver Beach.**

Left again 0630 and drove in convoy with Dick and his guide Vaibhav to the **Lala Grasslands** 30km to the W, arr.c.0800. Worked the grass/scrub from vehicles and on foot up to 1230, incl .a picnic breakfast on a hill offering good views, and ending our search from a purpose-built viewing tower – but no sign of any Great Indian Bustards. However, an excellent selection of raptors :- E.Griffon Vultures, Greater Spotted, Steppe, Tawny and many Short-toed Eagles, Long-legged Buzzard and 4 spp. of harriers; also Black Francolins, Short-eared Owl, many Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (with some enjoyed on the ground), Indian Bushlarks, a flock of Bimaculated Larks,

plus an Indian Fox. A little further N, a brief stop in a river canyon yielded a second pair of Rock Eagle Owls, more Pallid Harriers and a Citrine Wagtail.

The extended group took lunch at a roadside restaurant, before continuing W to the coast at **Pingwasver Beach**. The highlight of a short walk through the dunes were several roosting Sykes's Nightjars and 2 Bluethroats, and driving back through the coastal scrub, a Red-backed Shrike and a surprisingly bold Jungle Cat on the road. Returned to **Lala** 1600-1745, failing on Bustards, but seeing a family of Common Cranes, many flights of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and a group of Chinkara. Back to CEDO by 1845 – another long day.

#### **Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> – CEDO to Dasada.**

Out after early coffee for a return assault on the *Acacia* “woodland” at **Fort Masdev**; very quiet initially, but bird activity rapidly improved as the sun rose, and excellent close views of White-naped Tits, loosely associating with a feeding flock of Marshall's Ioras, Small Minivets and Common Woodshrikes, were being enjoyed by everyone by 0830. Celebratory breakfast, then returned via Nakhatrana to get a puncture repaired, to CEDO – coffee, packed and way by 1030. Drove to **Bhuj**, visited a textile shop, then had lunch 1230-1330.

The remainder of the day driving E, over the Little Rann Causeway, and via Dhrangadha to **Dasada** and the **Rann Riders Hotel**, our final base, arr.1845.

#### **Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 – Dasada and The Little Rann of Kutch all day.**

Out in the hotel jeep 0700 and drove – the first hour on tarmac roads through farmland – to the **Little Rann of Kutch**. The whole morning was spent driving around the partly vegetated salt flats, with early success on Macqueen's Bustards and Wild Asses, followed by several flocks of Common Cranes, our only Demoiselle Crane in flight, Desert Warbler and 2 Hoopoe Larks feeding (on something?) out on a huge expanse of totally unvegetated saline mud flat. The return drive was mostly devoted to tracking down some larger groups of Wild Asses to photograph – with mixed success because of the heat haze.

Ret. to Rann Riders 1200; 1300 lunch then ambled around the garden – finding Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Red-breasted and Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers, and the almost dried up lake – with a good assortment of waders.

The second jeep trip of the day from 1500 was to **Tundi Wetland S** of Dasada; plenty of waterbirds – Common Cranes, 2 spp. of Pelicans, Spoonbills, Pallas's Gull, etc. as well as Greater Spotted and Tawny Eagles. Then continued on another circuitous drive out onto the **Little Rann**, finding a perched adult Imperial Eagle (soon joined by a 1<sup>st</sup> year bird) and roosting Savanna Nightjar. As the orange sun set, the last 3 Wild Asses strolled slowly by, and the sky was filled with 40+ Montagu's Harriers gathering to roost – making a magical end to the day. Returned to Rann Riders very wind-blown and dusty, and in need of showers.

**Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Dasada to Ahmedabad.**

Leisurely breakfast before setting out 0730; birded local areas of fields, finding only the usual spp. Returned to Rann Riders 1030, packed and checked out 1130.

Drove, with a brief stop beside a refuse tip – with several Egyptian Vultures and a Steppe Eagle amongst the throng of Black Kites, to **Ahmedabad** for a final lunch with Ratan and Rakesh, then to the Hotel Pinnacle to relax for the rest of the day.

**Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Ahmedabad – Dubai – Heathrow.**

0015 transfer to Airport for 0425 Air Emirates flight to Dubai arr. 0600 local time; connecting 0950 Emirates flight to Heathrow arr.1330 GMT.

# BIRD CHECKLIST

Order and nomenclature mostly follows:- The Annotated Checklist of Birds of the Oriental Region – *Inskipp et al.* (1966), and The Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent – *Grimmett et al.* (1999).

**Abbreviations for sites:** Vel – Velavadar NP; Gir – Gir Forest (in and out of NP)  
Jam – Jamnagar; Khij – Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary  
Pal – Palitana; Narara – Narara Marine NP  
Bhuj – Bhuj/Nahkatrana area;  
CEDO – C.E.D.O (Centre for Deserts and Oceans)  
at Modi Virani village.  
Lala - Lala Bustard Sanctuary/grasslands  
LRK - Little Rann of Kutch.

**Grey Francolin** *Francolinus pondicerianus* – common, seen (<25) daily.

**Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus* – 6 seen, many more calling Lala 30/12.

**Yellow-legged Buttonquail** *Turnix tanki* – 2 on roadside between Gir and Jam 26/12.

**Indian Peafowl** *Pavo cristatus* – common throughout in suitable habitat.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* – abundant Tundi wetland, LRK 1/1.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* – 12 between Bhavnagar and Vel, and 30 on a lake between Bhavnagar and Palitana 22/12; 1 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 5 Tundi, LRK 1/1

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* – 6 LRK 1/1.

**Comb Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* – 2 on lake between Palitana and Gir 23/12; 11 L.Mulsagar 25/12; pair Khij 26/12; odd ones on other journeys.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* – 8 Jam lakes 27/12; 10 on pond W of CEDO 30/12; 8 Tundi, LRK 1/1.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* – 1 Khij 26/12; 20+ Tundi, LRK 1/1.

**Spot-billed Duck** *Anas poecilorhyncha* – 16 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12; 4 between Gir and Jam, and 4 Khij 26/12; many 100's Jam lakes 27/12; 2 W of CEDO 30/12.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* – 20+ Khij 26/12; 3 on desert reservoir N of CEDO 29/12; 2 on pool W of CEDO 30/12; flock of 18 over Fort Masdev 31/12.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* – the most widespread duck sp., seen on 7 days; abundant on Jam lakes 27/12, and at Tundi, LRK 1/1.

**Common Teal** *Anas crecca* – regular on most water bodies, seen on 8 days.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina* – 50+ Khij 26/12; 10 Jam lakes 27/12; 9 Tundi, LRK 1/1.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* – 2 Khij 26/12.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* – 30+ Khij 26/12; many on Jam lakes 27/12.

**Yellow-crowned Pied Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos mahrattensis* –  
1 in *Acacias* between Gir and Jam 26/12.

**Coppersmith Barbet** *Megalaima haemacephala* – 1 Bhavnagar 20/12;  
3 nr. Vijay Vilas, Pal 22/12; 3 in *Acacias* between Gir and Jam 26/12.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* – seen on 6 days, most common in Bhuj/CEDO area.

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis* –  
fairly frequent on roadside wires, seen on 11 days.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* – 1 Khij 26/12; 1 Narara 27/12.

**White-throated Kingfisher** – *Halcyon smyrnensis* –  
common everywhere, seen daily.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* – 1 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
1 Gir 24/12; 3 L.Mulsagar 24/12; 2 between Gir and Jam, and 4 Khij 26/12;  
4 Jam 28/12; 3 Tundi, LRK 1/1.

**Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis* – very common everywhere, especially on  
roadside wires.

**Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus* – 1 Gir 25/12.

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea* – 4 Pal 22/12; 2-3 Gir 24 & 25/12.

**Sirkeer Malkoha** *Taccocua leschenaultii* – 1 at Hypocolius site NE of CEDO 29/12.

**Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis* – c.10 seen on total of 6 days.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* – abundant throughout.

**Plum-headed Parakeet** *Psittacula cyanocephala* – 2 Gir 24/12.

**Asian Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus balasiensis* – few between Gir and Jam 26/12.

**House Swift** *Apus affinis* – 1 or 2 over hotel at Bhavnagar 20/12.

**Indian (Collared) Scops Owl** *Otus bakkamoena* [now regarded as distinct from  
Collared Scops Owl *O. lettia* of S.E.Asia] – one at roost Gir 24/12.

**Rock Eagle Owl** *Bubo (bubo) bengalensis* [HBW splits the Indian Subcontinent birds as a separate sp.] – two stunning pairs seen when disturbed from their daytime roosts: one in desert NE of CEDO 29/12, and one in a river canyon N of Lala 30/12.

**Mottled Wood Owl** *Strix ocellata* – a family of 4 roosting Gir 24/12.

**Spotted Owlet** *Athene brama* – 1 Gir 24/12; 1 Dasada 1/1.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* – 1 Lala 30/12.

**Grey Nightjar** *Caprimulgus indicus* – 1 at roost Gir 24/12.

**Sykes's Nightjar** *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* – a superb showing of this localised species: one spotlighted in the desert NE of CEDO 29/12; 4+ at roost in sand dunes Pingwasver Beach W of CEDO.

**Indian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus asiaticus* - 2 in headlights on road nr.CEDO 29/12.

**Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis* – 1 discovered at roost and seen well on the ground and in flight LRK late afternoon 1/1.

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* – abundant throughout.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis* – common, seen daily.

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis* – only in the more wooded areas around Gir.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* – abundant everywhere.

**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon** *Treron phoenicoptera* – 10+ Gir 24/12, and 1 there 25/12; 10 on roadside wires N of Gir 26/12.

**Macqueen's Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueeni* – 2 LRK 1/1.

**Demoiselle Crane** *Grus virgo* – 1 only in flight over LRK 1/1, apparently missing from LRK because of the very dry conditions.

**Common Crane** *Grus grus* – 3 Vel 21/12; seen daily around Jam, Bhuj and LRK areas, with largest numbers: 150 between Gir and Jam 26/12, a flock of 250 on LRK jeep trip am 1/1, and 200+ Tundi wetland LRK pm 1/1. These numbers very low because of dry conditions.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* – 1 Khij 26/12; 2 Dasada 1/1.

**Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus* – c.20 Khij 26/12.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* – 1 between Pal and Gir 23/12; fairly common Khij 26/12; few on waters between CEDO and Lala 30/12.

- Eurasian Coot** *Fulicula atra* – 3 between Pal and Gir 23/12;  
common Khij 26/12 and Jam lakes 27/12; few on pools near CEDO 30/12.
- Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* – 4 between Gir and Jam 26/12;  
4 between Jam and Bhuj, and 10 over *Acacia* scrub W of Bhuj 28/12;  
100+ Lala grasslands, incl. many seen on ground 30/12; several LRK 1/1.
- Painted Sandgrouse** *Pterocles indicus* –  
only 2 pairs, flushed from *Acacia* scrub Fort Masdev, nr.CEDO 29/12.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* – few Khij 26/12.
- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* – abundant Khij 26/12, and some Narara 27/12;  
9 Pinwasver Beach 30/12; 20 LRK 2/1.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* – many Narara beach 27/12.
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* – many Narara 27/12.
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* – 1 Vel 21/12; 2 Khij 26/12;  
many Narara 27/12; 1 on desert reservoir NE of CEDO 29/12.
- Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* – 1 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
1 Narara 27/12; 3 on pool Rann Riders Hotel, Dasada 1 & 2/1.
- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* – 15 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
few Khij 26/12; abundant Narara 27/12; few LRK 1-2/1.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* – 3 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
1 on pool between Pal and Gir 23/12; 2 L.Mulsagar 25/12; few Khij 26/12;  
common Narara 27/12; few around LRK 1/1.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* - 2 Vel 21/12, and 6 between there and  
Bhavnagar 22/12; 2 L.Mulsagar 25/12; few Khij 26/12; many Narara 27/12;  
few LRK 1-2/1.
- Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* - fairly regular on pools throughout.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* – 2 on largely dry river Amreli (between Pal and  
Gir) 23/12; 2 L.Mulsagar 25/12; few Khij 26/12; 2 Rann Riders 1-2/1.
- Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* – common on beach at Narara 27/12.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* – commonly seen on all pools, rivers and wet  
areas.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* – common Narara 27/12.
- Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* – 1 found amongst the throngs of waders Narara  
Beach 27/12.



- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* – fairly common Narara 27/12.
- Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* – 2 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
9 L.Mulsagar 25/12; many Khij 26/12; abundant Narara 27/12; 3 LRK 2/1.
- Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* – 1 Vel 21/12, and 16 on pools between there  
and Bhavnagar 22/12; 30 Khij 26/12; 6-8 daily LRK 1-2/1.
- Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* – common Narara 27/12.
- Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* – c.100 Jam Lakes 27/12; <1000 on pool E of Bhuj;  
a few elsewhere.
- Indian Courser** *Cursorius coromandelicus* – 2 only, typically very mobile,  
in dry fields between Gir and Jam 26/12.
- Eurasian Thick-knee** *Burhinus oedicephalus* – 2 Vel 21/12; 2 Gir 24/12;  
3 in *Acacias* between Gir and Jam 26/12.
- Great Thick-knee** *Esacus recurvirostris* – 3 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 2 Khij 26/12.
- Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* – 5 Khij 26/12; 15 Narara 27/12.
- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* –  
very common, found almost any pool.
- Pied Avocet** *recurvirostra avosetta* –  
5 on saltpans between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12; 100+ Khij 26/12;  
50 Narara 27/12; 7 Pingwasver Beach 30/12; 40 Tundi wetland, LRK 1/1.
- Crab Plover** *Dromas ardeola* – a splendid flock est.c.500 roosting on Narara Beach  
at HW, later dispersing widely to feed as tide fell. 27/12.
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* – amazingly, only 1 on Narara Beach 27/12.
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* – common Narara Beach 27/12.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* – 4 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
6 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 2 on pool nr.Dasada, LRK 2/1.
- Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* – 6 on saltpans between Bhavnagar and Vel  
22/12; 2 L.Mulsagar 24/12; 1 Khij 26/12; many Narara 27/12; 1 LRK 1/1.
- Lesser Sandplover** *Charadrius mongolus atrifrons* – few Khij 26/12;  
abundant Narara 27/12.
- Greater Sandplover** *Charadrius leschenaulti* – common Narara, but much less so  
than Lesser's 27/12.

- Yellow-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus malabaricus* – scarce, even in suitable habitat:  
4 between Pal and Gir 24/12; 2 Fort Masdev, nr.CEDO 29/12 and 11 there 31/12.
- Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* – very common everywhere.
- White-tailed Plover** *Vanellus leucurus* – 2 singles Khij 26/12.
- Yellow-legged/Caspian Gull** *Larus (cachinnans) barabensis* – small numbers Khij and Narara, and on Pingwasver Beach.
- Heuglin's Gull** *Larus heuglini* – 30-40 Narara Beach 27/12.
- Pallas's (Great Black-headed) Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus* – 1ad. Khij 26/12;  
4+ Narara 27/12; 2 ad. Jam lakes 27/12; 1 ad.Tundi wetland, LRK 1/1.
- Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus* – many Khij 26/12;  
many Narara and also present Jam lakes 27/12.
- Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* – flock of 20 over Bhavnagar 20/12;  
present Narara and Jam lakes 27/12.
- Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei* – 4 on salt pans, Khij 26/12; small  
numbers salt pans Narana and 4+ Jam lakes 27/12; few LRK 31/12 and 1/1
- Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* – 2 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
common around Jam, Khij and Narara area 26-28/12; 2 Pingwasver Beach 30/12;  
fairly common around LRK 31/12-2/1.
- Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia* – 2 L.Mulsagar 23 & 25/12; 1 Khij 26/12;  
3 Narara and 1 Jam lakes 27/12; 1 Tundi wetland, LRK 1/1.
- River Tern** *Sterna aurantia* – 3 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
an impressive gathering of 150+ L.Mulsagar 23 & 25/12; 20+ Khij 26/12;  
1 Jam lakes 27/12; few between Jam and Bhuj 28/12.
- Lesser Crested Tern** *Sterna benghalensis* – 20+ Narara 27/12;  
few Pingwasver Beach 30/12.
- Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandwicensis* – a single flew past Pingwasver Beach 30/12.
- Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* – a few found with other terns at Narara Beach 27/12.
- Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons* – c.10 Khij 26/12; fairly common at Narara and also  
seen on Jam lakes. No attempt was made to separate this sp. from possible  
Saunders's Tern in WP.
- Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus* – common Khij 26/12, and at Narara and Jam  
lakes 27/12.

**Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* – common, <12 seen daily, many on roadside wires.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* – singles Bhavnagar 20 & 22/12;  
2 between Pal and Gir 23/12; <10 between Gir and Jam 26/12;  
few around Bhuj 28/12; largest gathering of 60+ over refuse tip between Dasada and Ahmedabad, and fairly common all the way to Ahmedabad 2/1.  
No attempt made to differentiate forms.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* – 1 Jam 27/12.

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* – 4+ with Black Kites at tip between Dasada and Ahmedabad 2/1.

**Eurasian Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* – 18 Lala grasslands 30/12.

**Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* – 1 Vel 21/12; 5 Gir 24/12;  
11 Lala grasslands 30/12; 1 between Dasada and Ahmedabad 2/1.

**Eurasian Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* – 1 L.Mulsagar 25/12;  
6+ Khij 26/12; 6 Narara 27/12; 1 between Jam and Bhuj 28/12;  
4 NE of CEDO 29/12; 2 Lala grasslands 30/12; 4 LRK 1/1.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* – male and fem. Vel 21/12; 2 “ringtails” Khij 26/12;  
2 males Lala grasslands 30/12.

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* – total of 6, incl. several with Montagu’s roost at Vel 21/12; male between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
male between Pal and Gir 23/12; 1 juv, in CEDO area 29/12;  
3 juvs Lala grasslands and a further 2 juvs N of Lala 30/12;  
1-2 “ringtails” with roosting Montagu’s LRK 1/1.

**Montagu’s Harrier** *Circus pygargus* – an estimated total of 45, almost all ad. males coming to roost Vel 21/12 – although a mere shadow of former numbers, nevertheless impressive; 1 juv. CEDO area 29/12; 4+ Lala grasslands 30/12;  
40+ coming to roost LRK 1/1, in contrast to the Vel birds these almost all “ringtails” with only 2-3 adult males.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* – 1-3 seen on 10 dates.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* – 1 Gir 25/12.

**Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* – 1 Gir 24/12 and 4 there 25/12;  
1 between Gir and Jam 26/12; 1 nr. Bhuj 28/12; 1 CEDO area 29/12.

**White-eyed Buzzard** *Butastur teesa* – 1-2 daily around Gir 24-26/12;  
1 between Bhuj and Dasada 31/12; 1 between Dasada and Ahmedabad 2/1.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* – 1 between Bhavnagar and Palitana 22/12;  
1 between Bhuj and Dasada 31/12.

- Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* – CEDO area (Hypocolius site) 29/12;  
2 Lala grasslands 30/12.
- Indian (Lesser) Spotted Eagle** *Aquila (pomarina) hastata* – 2 Vel 21/12;  
1 between Bhavnagar and Pal 22/12; 1 Gir 24/12; 1 CEDO area 29/12.
- Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* – 3 Vel 21/12;  
1 between Jam and Bhuj 28/12; 1 Lala grasslands 30/12; 3 LRK 1/1.
- Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* – 1 Vel 21/12; 3 Lala grasslands 30/12;  
1 LRK 1/1.
- Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* – 2 Lala grasslands 30/12;  
1 with Black Kites at a refuse tip between Dasada and Ahmedabad 2/1.
- Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* – ad plus a 1st year bird LRK 1/1.
- Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraetus fasciatus* – ad. over *Acacia* scrub nr. CEDO 29/12.
- Booted Eagle** *Hieraetus pennatus* – 4 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 1 Khij 26/12;  
2 nr. Bhuj 28/12.
- Changeable Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus cirrhatus* – 1 over Pal temple mount 23/12.
- Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* – fairly common throughout.
- Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus* – 1 on pylon, Narara 27/12.
- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – 6 between Pal and Gir 23/12;  
1 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 30+ Khij 26/12; few Narana 27/12;  
1 or 2 in LRK 1/1.
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* – 25 Khij 26/12.
- Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* – a flock of 25 Khij 26/12;  
flock of 10 on a salt pan, Narara 27/12.
- Oriental Darter** *Anhinga melanogaster* – 3 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 3 Khij 26/12.
- Little Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax niger* – common on most water.
- Indian Cormorant (Shag)** *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* – generally less numerous than  
Little Cormorant, but large numbers at Khij 26/12.
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* – groups recorded nr Bhavnagar, at Narara,  
Jam lakes and Tundi wetland, LRK, and probably elsewhere.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* – common on all wet areas.

- Western Reef Egret** *Egretta gularis* – all dark morph birds:  
2 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12; 1 Gir 24/12; 5 Khij 26/12; 50+ Narara 27/12;  
2 Pingwasver Beach 30/12; 1 on LRK salt pans 31/12.
- Great White Egret** *Casmerodius/Egretta albus* – common in wet areas throughout.
- Intermediate Egret** *Mesophoyx/Egretta intermedia* – less common than other white egrets, but seen on 7 days.
- Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* – common throughout.
- Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* – common throughout.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* – small numbers seen near water on most days.
- Little Heron** *Butorides striatus* – 1 Khij 26/12.
- Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* – 1 secretive bird beside the river at Gir 24/12.
- Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber* –  
c.50 on salt pans between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12; est. 1000+ Khij 26/12;  
many Narara 27/12; common on suitable waters in LRK 1-2/1.
- Lesser Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus minor* – less numerous and widespread than Greater, but many at both Khij and Narara.
- Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* –  
2 on a river between Pal and Jam, and c.15 Khij 26/12.
- Black-headed Ibis** *Threskiornis melanocephalus* –  
50+ Narara and 30 on Jam lakes 27/12; few LRK 31/12 and 1/1.
- Indian Black Ibis** *Pseudibis papillosa* –  
fairly common throughout, except at coastal wetlands and on LRK.
- Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* – seen on 10 days, with largest numbers:  
13 Vel 21/12, 200 Khij 26/12, 30+ Narara 27/12 and 40 Tundi wetland, LRK 1/1.
- Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* –  
200 over road between Bhavnagar and Pal; 45 between Gir and Jam 26/12;  
500+ Khij 26/12; many 100's Narara 27/12, and on a lake nr. Kutch estuary 28/12;  
40 on lake in Bhuj 31/12; 18 LRK 1/1 and many 100's on a lake there 2/1.
- Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* – 10 Khij 26/12; 25 Tundi wetland LRK 1/1.
- Painted Stork** *Mycteria leucocephala* – 5 Vel 21/12; 2 L.Mulsagar 25/12;  
50 Khij 26/12; 100+ Narara 27/12; 40 between Jam and Bhuj 28/12;  
few daily in CEDO area 29 & 20/12; total of 33 LRK 1/1.
- Asian Openbill** *Anastomus oscitans* – 4 LRK 2/1.

- Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus* – 1 Gir 25/12.
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* – 2 between Pal and Gir 23/12; 1 Lala 30/12.
- Black-necked Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* – 3 Khij 26/12.
- Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio* – male Pingwasver Beach 30/12.
- Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* –  
 6+ Vel 21/12, and 3 between there and Bhavnagar 22/12; 2 Khij 26/12;  
 2 Narara 27/12; singles daily around Bhuj area 28-30/12; 3+ Lala 30/12;  
 3 between CEDO and Dasada 31/12.
- Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* – most often found in *Acacias*: 1 Vel 21/12;  
 2 between Pal and Gir 23/12; 4 Gir 25/12; 4 between Gir and Jam;  
 2 between Jam and CEDO; 1 Lala grasslands 30/12; several around Dasada 1& 2/1.
- Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* –  
 a common bird on roadside wires, seen almost daily.
- Southern Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis* – birds of the race *L.m.lahtora* (very  
 sim. in appearance to European Great Grey Shrike): 1 in *Acacias* W of Bhuj 28/12;  
 8+ Lala 30/12; 1 Fort Masdev 31/12; 3+ daily around Dasada/LRK area 1-2/1.
- Rufous Treepie** *Dendrocitta vagabunda* –  
 1-2 daily around Pal, Gir and Rann Riders, Dasada.
- House Crow** *Corvus splendens* – very common especially near habitation.
- Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchus* – fairly common in open forests of Gir.
- Small Minivet** *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* – 10 Gir 24/12, and 1 there 25/12;  
 in *Acacia* scrub: 12 W of Bhuj 28/12; 8 Fort Masdev 29/12 and 2 there 31/12.
- White-bellied Minivet** *Pericrocotus erythropygius* – after many hours of scouring  
 likely-looking *Acacia* habitat, a fine male eventually found, loosely associated with  
 party of Small Minivets, W of Bhuj.
- White-browed Fantail** *Rhipidura aureola* – 2 Gir 24 and 25/12.
- Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* – very common in all open habitats.
- Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* – 1 Gir 24/12.
- Asian Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi* – 1 Sasan Gir HQ 25/12.
- Common Iora** *Aegithina tiphia* – 1 Pal 22/12; 1 Gir 24/12 and 7 there 25/12.
- Marshall's (White-tailed) Iora** *Aegithina nigrolutea* – always in *Acacias*, often in  
 mixed flocks: 1 Pal and 3 between Pal and Gir 23/12; 3 Fort Masdev 29 & 31/12.

**Common Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* – usually in mixed flocks in *Acacias*: 1 Gir 25/12; 1 W of Bhuj 28/12; 1 Fort Masdev 29/12 and 3 there 31/12.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* – fem. Pal temples 23/12; male Gir 24/12.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* – 1 Rann Riders Hotel, Dasada 1/1.

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis tickelliae* – 2 males Gir 24/12, and 1 there 25/12.

**Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* – 1 Rann Riders Hotel, Dasada 1/1.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* – 1 Khij 26/12; 2 Pingwasver Beach 30/12.

**Oriental Magpie Robin** *Copsychus saularis* – 3-4 daily around Gir 24-25/12; 1 LRK 1/1.

**Indian Robin** *Saxicoloides fulicata* – common, seen daily.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* – fem. Vel 21/12; fem. Pal 23/12; 4 Gir 24/12; 3 in *Acacia* scrub W of Bhuj 28/12; 4 CEDO area 29/12; 1 Lala 30/12; 1 Fort Masdev 31/12. Males showing characteristics of two races: *P.o.phoenicuroides* (charcoal grey crown/mantle) and *P.o.rufiventris* (all black above) recognised.

**Stoliczka's Bushchat** *Saxicola macrorhyncha* – a good showing of this sought-after species: 4 Vel 21/12, and another in fields between Vel and Bhavnagar 22/12.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus* – common and widespread, seen most days.

**Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata* – 2 Lala 30/12; 2 Dasada area 2/1.

**Brown Rock Chat** *Cercomela fusca* – 2 only between Pal and Gir 23/12.

**Variable Wheatear** *Oenanthe picata* – 1 Vel 21/12; 1 Narara 27/12; fairly common in Bhuj/CEDO area; 1-2 Dasada area, LRK 1-2/1.

**Rufous-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna* – 1 only in rocky *Acacia* scrub nr.CEDO 29/12.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* – several around Vel 21-22/12; 2 Khij 26/12; 1 Narara 27/12; 1-2 daily around Bhuj/CEDO area 29-31/12; abundant on open flats of LRK 1/1; 5 Dasada 2/1.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* – 1 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 3 between Gir and Jam, and 3 Khij 26/12; 1 Narara 27/12; 1 nr.CEDO 29/12; 1 Pingwasver Beach 30/12; 1-3 LRK 1&2/1.

**Brahminy Starling** *Sturnus pagodarum* – small numbers in most places except coastal wetlands.

**Rosy Starling** *Sturnus roseus* – abundant everywhere except in the far S (Pal, Gir), with many large flocks of 50-100.

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* – common throughout.

**Bank Myna** *Acridotheres ginginianus* – common in some inhabited areas, often mixed with Common Mynas.

**Great Tit** *Parus major* – 4 daily Gir 24 & 25/12.

**White-naped Tit** *Parus nuchalis* – a very elusive sp. of mature *Acacia* stands: 3-4 Fort Masdev 29 & 31/12.

**Plain (Brown-throated) Sand Martin** *Riparia paludicola* – 1 only over a river N of Lala 30/12.

**Dusky Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne concolor* – 5 Pal 23/12; 2 around old fort between Gir and Jam 26/12; <10 over LRK causeway 31/12.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* – common, seen daily.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* – small numbers over river at Gir 24 & 25/12.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* – few around Vel and Pal only.

**Streak-throated Swallow** *Hirundo fluvicola* – few between Jam and Bhuj 28/12.

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer* – common everywhere.

**White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucotis* – common throughout except around Gir.

**Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* - a male watched at length, and 3 fem. all feeding on fruiting *Salvadora* bushes at their only regular site in a village NE of CEDO 29/12.

**Rufous-fronted Prinia** *Prinia buchanani* – 3 Pal and 1 between Pal and Gir 23/12; fairly regular in *Acacia* scrub around Bhuj/CEDO 28-30/12.

**Grey-breasted Prinia** *Prinia hodgsonii* – common around Pal, Gir, and Bhuj/CEDO, usually in small groups.

**Jungle Prinia** *Prinia sylvatica* – 2 Vel 21/12; 2 Gir 25/12; 5 Khij 26/12.

**Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis* – 1 nr.Vel 22/12; fairly common in dunes/saltmarsh at Narara 27/12; few NE of CEDO (Hypocolius site) 29/12.



**Ashy Prinia** *Prinia socialis* – 1 Pal 22/12; 2 Gir 24/12.

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* – several singing Lala grasslands 30/12.

**Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus* - common in Gir Forests 24-25/12.

**Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* – 4 in rushes in large lake Khij 26/12.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* – several seen, especially at Vel and Khij, but far more frequently heard.

**Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus* – 1 Vel 21/12; common in trackside bushes Khij 26/12, and in mangroves at Narara 27/12.

**Booted Warbler** *Hippolais caligata* – 1 Gir 24/12;  
2 in *Acacias* between Gir and Jam 26/12;  
3 at similar sites between Jam and Bhuj 28/12; 1 LRK 1/1.

**Sykes's Warbler** *Hippolais rama* – 2 between Bhavnagar and Pal 22/12;  
1-2 Gir 25 & 26/12; 2 Khij 26/12; 1 between Jam and Bhuj 28/12; 2 LRK 2/1.  
[Some useful comparisons between this and the previous sp.].

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* – fairly commonly seen/heard in scrub throughout; 2 pale individuals with reduced ear covert patch seen NE of CEDO (Hypocolius site) appeared to be of the *minula* (**Desert L. Whitethroat**) form.

**Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* – 1 in saltmarsh at Narara 27/12;  
1 on dry saltflats LRK 1/1.

**Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensiss* – widely encountered in *Acacia* scrub.

**Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus surorius* – 1 Pal 22/12 and 4 there 23/12;  
2 Gir 24/12 and 8 in area 25/12; 1 Rann Riders Hotel, LRK 2/2.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* – surprisingly seen only at Khij 26/12, where fairly common.

**Sulphur-bellied Warbler** *Phylloscopus griseolus* –  
1 in garden of Rann Riders Hotel 1-2/1.

**Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* – 1 Gir 24/12.

**Yellow-eyed Babbler** *Chrysomma sinense* – 1 Gir 25/12.

**Common Babbler** *Turdoides caudatus* – common throughout.

**Large Grey Babbler** *Turdoides malcomi* – common around Pal and Gir.

**Jungle Babbler** *Turdoides striata* – common around Gir, and a noisy flock in the garden of Rann Riders, LRK 1-2/1.

**Indian Bushlark** *Mirafra erythroptera* – few seen in areas of *Acacia/Euphorbia* scrub around Bhuj/CEDO 28 & 29/12; common in scrubby grasslands at Lala 30/12.

**Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark** *Eremopteryx griseus* – common on short dry turf: 5 Vel 21/12 and 5 between there and Bhavnagar 22/12; flock of 14 Gir 24/12; 30 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 15 between Gir and Jam, and 20 Khij 26/12; many between Jam and Bhuj 28/12; 1 N of Lala 30/12.

**Rufous-tailed Lark** *Ammomanes phoenicurus* – common around Vel 21-22/12; 5 in desert nr. CEDO 29/12.

**Greater Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* – 2 on apparently barren dry salt flats of LRK 1/1.

**Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* – flock of 30 Lala grasslands 30/12.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* – amazingly abundant in deserts, dry grassland and fields, often in flocks of many 100's.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* – small numbers Bhavnagar and Vel 21 & 22/12; 1 Khij 26/12; several between Jam and Bhuj 28/12; 4-5 daily LRK 1&2/1.

**Sykes's Lark** *Galerida deva* – typically favours similar habitat as Ashy-crowned.Sparrow Lark: 14 Vel 21/12; 4 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 30 Khij 26/12; many between Jam and Bhuj 28/12.

**Pale-billed Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* – 1 Gir 24/12.

**Purple Sunbird** *Nectarinia asiatica* – common in suitable habitats.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* – common.

**Chestnut-shouldered Petronia** *Petronia xanthocollis* - <30 daily Gir 24-25/12; 1 between Jam and Bhuj 28/12.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* – small numbers of birds of form *M.a.dukhunensis* (v. similar to nominate form in Europe) seen around Vel, L.Mulsagar and Bhuj/CEDO area. Pair of **Masked Wagtail** *M.a.personata* on salt pans between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12.

**White-browed Wagtail** *Motacilla maderaspatensis* – 1 beside a lake between Pal and Gir 23/12.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* – fem.Vel 21/12; 2 between Pal and Gir 23/12; 4+ L.Mulsagar 25/12; 6 Khij 26/12; 1 on river N. of Lala 30/12; 1 Rann Riders pond 2/1.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* – 1 between Pal and Gir 23/12; 10 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 1 CEDO area 29/12.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* – singles Gir 24 & 25/12.

**Paddyfield Pipit** *Anthus rufulus* – 1 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 1 Khij 26/12.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* – 5 between Bhavnagar and Vel 22/12;  
1 L.Mulsagar 25/12; 2 between Jam and CEDO 28/12; 3 CEDO area 29/12;  
2 Lala grasslands and 4 Pingwasver Beach 30/12; 1-2 daily LRK 1-2/1.

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewski* – 2, with other pipits, larks and wheatears, in a parched grass field Khij 26/12.

**Long-billed Pipit** *Anthus similis* – 6+ Vel 21/12, and 1 nearby 22/12;  
2 Gir 24/12; 3 Narana 27/12; 1 W of Bhuj 28/12.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* – 1 between Jam and Bhuj 28/12; 1 Lala 30/12.

**Baya Weaver** *Ploceus philippinus* – 15 Pal 22/12; 8 NE of CEDO 29/12.

**Indian Silverbill** *Lonchura malabarica* – common in scrub and grassland throughout.

**Grey-necked Bunting** *Emberiza buchanani* – groups of 3 and 5 in areas of *Acacia* scrub between Jam and CEDO 28/12; 1 in similar terrain W of CEDO 30/12.

**House Bunting** *Emberiza striolata* – 1 in *Acacias* nr. CEDO 29/12.

## MAMMAL CHECKLIST

Order and nomenclature follows The Checklist of the Mammals of the World – *Andrew Duff & Ann Lawson* (2004), and this nomenclature is largely the same as in The Field Guide to Indian Mammals – *Menon* (2003).

**Indian Hare** *Lepus nigricollis* – 1 Vel 21/12; 1 CEDO area 29/12.

**Five-striped/Northern Palm Squirrel** *Funambulus pennantii* – common around habitation everywhere, especially Gir, where <10 daily.

**Jungle Cat** *Felis chaus* – 5 Vel 21/12; 1 Pingwasver Beach 30/12.

**Leopard** *Panthera pardus* – 1 late pm Gir 24/12 was much appreciated.

**Asiatic Lion** *Panthera (leo) persica* – [some authorities have split this relict Asian population]. A pair and a group of 3 fem, Gir 24/12.

**Indian Grey Mongoose** *Herpestes edwardsii* – 2 Pal 23/12; 3 Gir 24/12;  
1 W of CEDO 30/12.

**Striped Hyena** *Hyaena hyaena* – 1 emerged from its den and posed at length in Vel  
late pm 21/12.

**Bengal or Indian Fox** *Vulpes bengalensis* – 1 Lala grasslands 30/12.

**Golden Jackal** *Canis aurea* – 1-2 Gir 24 & 25/12; 3 Narara dunes 27/12.

**(Indian) Grey Wolf** *Canis lupus* – 5 (incl. a group of 4) Vel, all early am on 21/12.

**Indian Flying Fox** *Pteropus giganteus* –  
huge roost of many 100's in Banyan tree near to Gir 25/12.

**Northern Plains Grey Langur** *Semnopithecus entellus* [Duff & Lawson split the  
Grey/Hanuman Langur complex] – 10 Gir 24/12, and 3 there 25/12.

**Wild Boar** *Sus scrofa* – total of 25 Vel 21/12; 16 Gir 24/12; 1 Khij 26/12.

**Sambar** *Cervus unicolor* – 7 Gir 24/12.

**Cheetal or Spotted Deer** *Axis axis* –  
very common (100+) Gir 24/12, and few outside the NP 25/12.

**Indian Gazelle or Chinkara** *Gazella bennetti* –  
8 Lala grasslands and 2 Pingwasver Beach 30/12.

**Blackbuck** *Antelope cervicapra* – impressive herds (total 1000+) Vel 21/12,  
and some seen in areas outside the NP on 22/12.

**Nilgai** *Boselaphus tragocamelus* – 100+ Vel 21/12; 6 Gir 24/12; 15 Khij 26/12.

**Asiatic Wild Ass or Onager** *Equus onager* – a total of c.20 seen in fields 20-30km S  
of Dasada late pm 31/12; on the Wild Ass Sanctuary area of LRK itself, a total of 87  
(incl groups of 42 and 18) seen on two drives 1/1.