

## Stats and breeding records of Large-billed Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus arinus* from Gujarat, India

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### Abstract

The large-billed reed warbler is an Old World warbler in the genus *Acrocephalus*. The species has been dubbed as “the world’s least known bird”. The main aim of this Article is to highlight the breeding and distribution of the birds. It was known from a single specimen collected in 1867 and rediscovered in the wild in Thailand in 2006. There were three records of this bird before I sighted this bird. Generally, this bird breeds in Afghanistan but during winter it is discovered in Gujarat, one record in central India and some records in South India. There are no single records found in North-west, North-east, Central-south India. Large-billed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus ornius* breed in Afghanistan, winter visitor in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh through Uttarakhand, North east Bangladesh Kolkata area Vagrant Gujarat central South India or winter visitor, South-East Asia (Thailand). On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021, at 1002 hrs I photographed Warbler like Large billed. It created a bit of confusion about the distribution (wintering) period then after the bird was entered in reed patch with nesting material in the bill, it also created a question about the breeding area. This record changed the distributed map of the breeding area. So, I became active and aggressive, captured every moment of breeding in photographs, and made a plan and observation time.

All the photographs and breeding records show that the bird is observed all the year and breeding also.

**Keywords:** *Breeding Records; Large-Billed Reed-Warbler; Acrocephalus orinus*

### Introduction

The Large-Billed Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus orinus*. One of the large sized Reed Warbler in *Acrocephalus* Genus, very similar in size and plumage with Blyth’s Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* and Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens*. It’s create confusion for identification. The bird Large-billed Reed-Warbler has large bill with strong base and different in shape, belong to Sylviidae Family, Order - Passeriformes.

### Breeds

Afghanistan (Wakan), winter in Kangara and Satluj valley, Himachal Pradesh, through Uttarakhand around Mussorie, also recorded in North-East Bangladesh [1], Vagrant or winter visitor, South-East Asia (Thailand) [2], Central-India at Kanha Tiger Reserve forest (MP) [3]. There are three records from Gujarat. One injured juvenile bird was sited and photographed by author at central road of Nal Sarovar

Bird Sanctuary on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 Flamingo; Newsletter of the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat. Vol. XIV 2. April - June 2016 [4]. Second bird was sited and photographed near Vekaria village on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2017, Flamingo Gujarat; Bulletin of Gujarat Birds. Vol. XVII 1. Jan - Mar 2019 [5]. Third record was from Vansada National park, South Gujarat on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2017, Flamingo Gujarat; Bulletin of Guajrat Birds. Vol. XVI 3. Jul - Sep 2018 [6].

## Methodology and Results

### Study area

On 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 I visited the Kayala village dam with Kasam Sidani. We observed the Large-Billed Reed Warbler perched on thorny scrub (Figure 1) at Kayla Village Dam (22.8441° N, 72.0604°E). Site is human made fresh water body and muddy lagoon. Spreaded over more than 1.5 sq. km. That was roughly 100 - 150 cm. Along North-East end of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary adjusted Viramgam-Bagodra road and Kayla Village cultivation field. It has *I. carnea*, *Cyperus* sp. and *Typha angustata* comprised the main emergent vegetation, interspersed with *Prosopis juliflora* [7].

### Records

There are some unpublished records are showed in figure 1-6.



**Figure 1:** 08-01-2015 Mani village (41.4082° N, 26.4012° E) (NSBS).



**Figure 2A:** 11-04-2017 Vadla village (22.9314° N, 71.9816° E) (Dist. - Surendranagar, NSBS).



**Figure 2B:** 11-04-2017 Vadla village (22.9314° N, 71.9816° E) (Dist. - Surendranagar, NSBS).



**Figure 3:** 03-09-2020 Dharji NSBS (22.8209° N, 72.0572° E).



**Figure 4:** 07-01-2017 Dharabla Island NSBS (22.8209° N, 72.0572° E).



**Figure 5:** 16-12-2019 Kayla village NSBS (22.8209° N, 72.0572° E).



**Figure 6:** 29-11-2020 Cross-road Nal Sarovar bird sanctuary (22.8209° N, 72.0572° E).

### Method and raw material

During our observation in this muddy lagoon, I sited adult Large-Billed Reed-Warbler, perched on thorny scrub; I shot one image then after bird had flew up and often enter in Reed patch. Bird was active in nesting, we used two long range camera Nikon P900 and P950 and one curtain of 40\*40 cm with hole and minimum distance was 15 - 20 meters and we spent every 3 or 4 days for around 20 - 30 minutes and captured every moment of the bird.

Observation



**Figure 7:** 25-06-2021 Kayla Dam



**Figure 8:** On 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, bird collected spider net for nesting material.



**Figure 9:** Bird was searching for food for young birds.



**Figure 10A:** On 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021. Juvenile became young with large bill, strong base.



**Figure 10B:** On 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021.



**Figure 11:** On 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2021. Young with large bill, strong base and greyer plumage.



**Figure 12:** On 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2021. Young with large bill, strong base and greyer plumage.



**Figure 13:** On 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2021. Juvenile came out of nest.



**Figure 14**

### Discussion

Large-billed Reed-Warbler consider as a formerly of uncertain status [8]. But breeding and wintering records are show that Long-billed Reed-Warbler is local bird, but overlooked particular reason is only the problem of identification, some plumage is very similar with Blyth's Warbler and most important reason is that it is interspreaded immigrant vegetation also covered by thorny *P. juliflora* made it difficult for observation.

### Conclusion

The Large-billed Reed-warbler *A. ornius* is very similar with Blyth's *A. dumetorum* and Blunt-winged warbler *A. concinens*, but Blunt-winged is does not acquire in Gujarat. Bird has larger bill than Blyth's, bill base is more strong and wider than Blyth's, and bill shape is also different. It looks like wedge-shaped, when we see from below. Legs and claws are also longer than Blyth's.



14-04-2022 Behind the interpretation centre, NSBS



14-04-2022 Behind the interpretation centre, NSBS



14-04-2022 Near the main entrance along the central road of Sanctuary





14-04-2022 Near the main entrance along the central road of Sanctuary



14-04-2022 Near the main entrance along the central road of Sanctuary

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