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Third Important Record of Eastern Marsh Harrier (Juvenile Male) *Circucus Spilonotus* from Wild Ass Sanctuary, Gujarat, India

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Abstract: This article documents the third winter vagrant record of the Eastern Marsh Harrier (Circus spilonotus) from Gujarat, Western India. A juvenile male was observed on 25 November 2014 in the Wild Ass Sanctuary, approximately 40 km north of Surendranagar, Gujarat. The bird was identified through its distinctive plumage and morphological characteristics. This observation provides an important addition to the species' distribution records in Gujarat and highlights the sanctuary's significance as a wintering habitat for migratory raptors.

Keyword: Eastern Marsh Harrier, Circus spilonotus, Juvenile Male, Vagrant Record, Wild Ass Sanctuary, Gujarat, India

Species authority: - Kaup, 1847
Domain: Eukaryote
Genus: - Circus
Family: - Acciptridae
Order: - Accipitriformes
Class: - Aves
Phylum: - Chordata
Kingdom: - Animalia
Scientific name: - Circus spilonotus
Common name: - Eastern Marsh Harrier
Gujarati name: - Purva ni paan patai
Japani name: - Chu-hi

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INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Marsh Harrier Circus spilonotus is large-sized raptor. It was recognized as a sub species of Western Marsh Harrier. Was listed in IUCN Red List of Threatened BirdLife International 2014 – Now stable. Belongs to Circus Genius, Family Accipitridae, male bird is very similar to Western Marsh Harrier, female bird is resembling of Pied Harrier. Bread in North-East Russia and South-East Asia. During winter migration, found in East Asia – **del hoyo, 2014 & H. tosiaki,** Myanmar – **Robson 2015**. Two vagrant birds were sighted in 1990 in Kerala, Tiger Reserve forest and Andaman Islands. Female bird was sighted by **Naoroji**, **1960**, at Corbett National park, Uttarakhand. **Ali 1997**, didn't mention in birds of Eastern Himalayas, **Grimmett 2011**, **Rasmussen 2012**, winter visitor in North-East India. Bird was reported from South India, **Kesavabharti & Sundaram**, male bird was sighted in Tamil Nadu, Chennai at Frungattu kottai lake. More one bird was reported by **Kallettumkra R.**, from Kerala at **Thrisura.** Recently two birds were sighted and photographed by Author on 20th January, 2019 at Vadla Wetland, Western range of Nal Sarovar Birds Sanctuary. 2nd (juvenile female) bird was sighted at Jakhaoo, Kachchh, Gujarat on 7th December, 2017.

On 25-11-2014, I was birding at Wild Ass Sanctuary, located 40 kms North from Surendranagar (District) city. Spreaded over roughly more than 5000 sq. km., Patan, Surendranagar, Rajkot, Banaskantha District. Site is considered as highly ecosystem. Declared as a Sanctuary as one of the world natural heritage site, internationally sites are recognized for its geographical and natural value. Also has a high biodiversity, conservation, signification. It is also very large wintering site of all the raptors, roosting site of Harrier, wintering site of thousands and thousands of Larks, Crane, Sandgrooves, provides enough opportunity for wintering. Also, Desert cat, fox and other mammals attract every feathered raptor.

At 11:30 AM, I observed large-sized raptor like bird, perched on ground, near P. juliflora thorny scrub. As per reference book on raptor, bird was male juvenile of Eastern Marsh Harrier C. spilonotus. Has a dark thicked head, dark black streaked brown crown, nape, neck, ear coverts and breast, pale collar ring, hooked black bill, sere yellow, blackish-brown wing coverts, pale fringed primary coverts, undertail white.

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25-11-2014

It is third winter vagrant record from Gujarat, Western India. Sites are known for its largest wintering and roosting site of Harrier, also wintering site of all the Eagles, common Kestrel, thousands and thousands of larks, Sandgrooves and waterfouls. Provide excellent opportunity and habitation for every feathered wintering birds. Ali has recorded 50 Red Kites in this range, also, many other Raptors like Lesser Kestrel, Eurasian Sparrow Hawk, Northern Goosehawk, Lesser spotted Eagle, Golden Eagle, Peregrine and Barbary Falcon are spotted in this range.

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