



## CORRESPONDENCE

**SIGHTING RECORDS OF RUDDY-BREASTED CRAKE (*Porzana fusca*) AND SLATY-BREASTED RAIL (*Gallirallus striatus*) IN VIDARBHA**, by RAJU KASAMBE\*, NEERAJ GADE\*\* and ROHIT CHAKRAVARTY#, \*G-1, Laxmi Apartment, 64, Vidya Vihar, Pratap Nagar, Nagpur-440022, \*\*G/2, Satysai Apartments, Near Somalwar High School, Khamla, Nagpur-440025. #46, Om Sai Building, Anant Nagar, Surana Layout, Nagpur-440013, Maharashtra

### **Ruddy-breasted Crake (*Porzana fusca*):**

Parag Deshmukh and Rohit Chakravarty were birding on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at Ambazari tank near Nagpur city. When they saw two Crakes foraging together in the marshy area of the back waters. There was one Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pusilla*) and one Ruddy-breasted Crake (*Porzana fusca*) (see photograph above). It was photographed by both Parag and Rohit. Next day it was sighted and photographed by Tarique Sani at the same location.

Though, Grimmett et. al. (2000) mentions it as widespread resident, the map shows otherwise. It is probably because of the shyness of the bird that it is missed by bird watchers. Hence the Pocket Guide has shown only few sighting records in the mainland India and one sighting in Central India.

D'Abreu (1923) had not included the Ruddy-breasted Crake in his handlist of the birds of Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha). Probably this is the first report of Ruddy-breasted Crake in Vidarbha.

### **Slaty-breasted Rail (*Gallirallus striatus*):**

Raju visited Bor Wildlife Sanctuary; district Wardha on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008 along with birder friends, namely, Aditya Joshi and Koustubh Thomare. When he was searching for a Royal Bengal Tiger family hidden in a patch of tall elephant grass he saw a bird foraging which looked like a White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*). He took photographs of the bird. When the photographs were analysed on his personal computer it came out to be a Slaty-breasted Rail (*Gallirallus striatus*), previously called Indian Blue-breasted Banded Rail (*Rallus striatus*). It was Rufous-chestnut to the upperside of its head and sides of neck.

Rest of upperparts was dark brown. It had its chin and throat white, breast ashy blue. It had partly red bill and olive grey legs (Ali and Ripley, 1987). It foraged like a White-breasted Waterhen.

According to Ali and Ripley (1987) it moves about locally under stress of drought and flood. It is distributed in "Kutch, Madhya Pradesh, eastern Nepal, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri duars, North-East. Southward through Bangladesh and peninsular India to Kerala. It affects reedy swamps and mangroves, margins of village tanks, inundated paddy cultivation, etc".

Grimmett et. al. (2000) has shown only few sighting records in the peninsular India and one sighting which is probably in Nagpur in their Pocket Guide. D'Abreu (1923) had included the Blue-breasted Banded Rail (then called *Hypotaenida striata striata*) in his handlist of the birds of Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha), but mentioned that "it is probably to be found but which I have not yet observed or identified with certainty". This is therefore an important sighting record for Nagpur as well as in Central India.

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### **References:**

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- Grimmett R., Inskipp C., Inskipp T., (2000): *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*, Oxford Univ. Press. 1-384.

**Front Cover : A Portfolio of Waterbirds:** 1) Cattle Egret (*Bulbulcus ibis*), 2) Black Ibis (*Pseudibis papillosa*), 3) Eurasian Spoon Bill (*Platalea leucorodia*), 4) Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*). All photographs by **Shivadarshan Balse**  
**Back Cover:** 5) Baillon's Crake (*Porzana pusilla*) and Ruddy-breasted Crake (*Porzana fusca*). Photo by **Rohit Chakravarty**, 6) Black-crested Bulbul (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*). Photo by **Rajiv Lather**