

Sighting record of the Slaty-legged Crake from Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat

The Slaty-legged Crake (SLC) *Rallina eurizonoides* is known to be a resident as well as local migrant, in well-wooded areas with waterbodies and affects a wide range of jungle habitat practically throughout India. It is widely distributed from the Himalaya (Darjeeling District) to Pakistan in the west. From eastern Assam (including Nepal) to the extreme south of the Peninsula, all the way to Kerala and Rameswaram Island (Ali & Ripley 2001). The SLC inhabits well-watered areas up to 1,600 m and dwells in dense scrub, forests along with well-wooded areas. This bird has a chestnut-coloured head and breast with black and white stripes on the belly. Its legs are dark lead-coloured, setting it apart from the Ruddy-breasted Crake *Zapornia fusca*. It mainly forages on shoots and seeds of marsh plants and also takes worms, molluscs, and insects (Taylor 2020).

On 4 July 2026, while birdwatching around the Mahal Eco-campsite (20.9075° N, 73.6483° E)



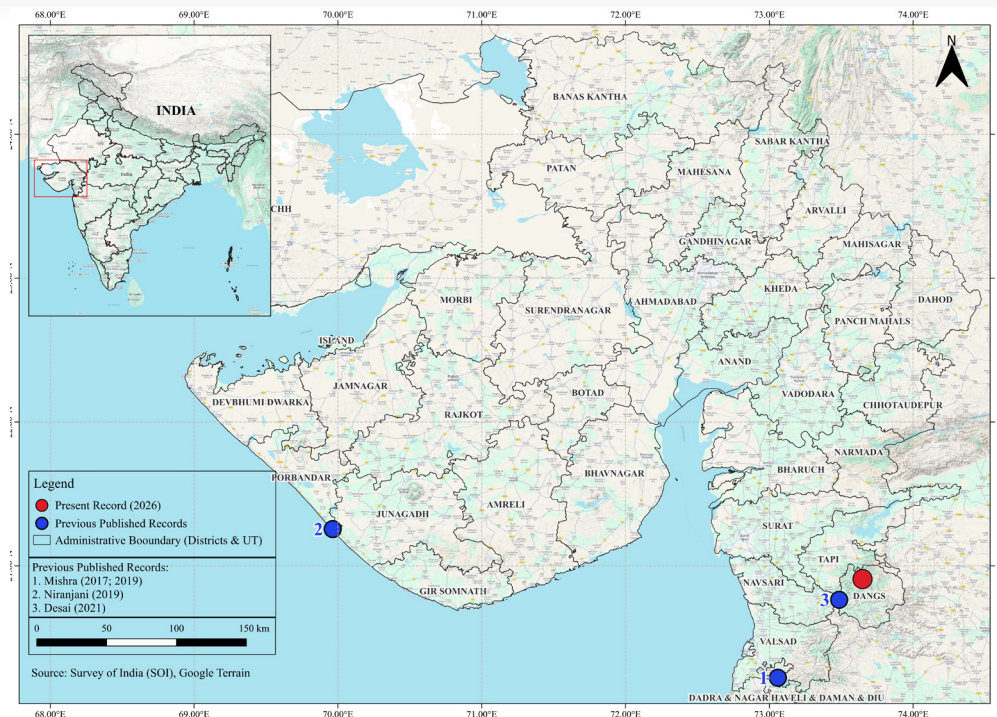
Slaty-legged Crake in the water puddle.



Pair of Slaty-legged Crake.

Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides* in Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, India. © Chhaditya Parikh.

in Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, Dang District, we observed a crane sp. crossing the approach road in the rain at approximately 1840 h. It first entered the adjacent bamboo cluster, but a few seconds later it returned on the road with another individual. We used a car's headlight and a torch to photograph the bird due to low light. After reviewing the photos, the bird was identified as a SLC. One bird stopped near a water puddle and began bathing for another 2–3 minutes; later both birds



Distribution of the published records (blue circles) and present record (red circle) of the Slaty-legged Crane *Rallina eurizonoides* in Gujarat, India.

went inside the forest. The forest of Purna Wildlife Sanctuary is classified as southern dry deciduous forests and moist deciduous forests with bamboo brakes of *Bambusa arundinacea* and *Dendrocalamus strictus* along with extensive teak *Tectona grandis* plantation (Maslehuddin et al. 2020).

In the context of the records from Gujarat, the first records of the species were from the Madhuban Dam forest area near Silvassa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli approximately 130 km away from Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, where one adult and one juvenile were photographed on 26 August 2017 (Mishra 2017). Due to its close proximity to the Gujarat State boundary this record was also considered as the first record for the Gujarat State (Ganpule 2022). The species was later re-sighted at the same site suggesting possible local breeding

(Mishra 2019). Niranjani (2020) rescued a juvenile individual from the village area of the Madhavpur–Ghed, near Porbandar in October 2020. Since this species is distributed mainly in the Himalaya and the Western Ghats of India such records of occurrence from the Saurashtra region are very interesting which might indicate the vagrant behaviour of the species. Further in June 2020 one individual of the SLC was seen in the Vansada National Park of Navsari by Desai (2021). According to Ganpule (2025) it is considered a vagrant as well as monsoon breeding migrant to the state of Gujarat.

This observation is the first record of SLC from Purna Wildlife Sanctuary further extending the occurrence of the species in the state and highlights the importance of the sanctuary's protected corridors for under-documented and resident bird populations (Jambu & Patel

2021). This current sighting along with the few previous records from Gujarat suggests the rarity of the species in the state and the possibility of it being missed or overlooked in suitable forested habitats of southern Gujarat due to the elusive or shy nature of the species.

This photographic record adds to evidence of range expansion among under-studied forest birds and contributes to provide better understanding of local species richness for guiding conservation and habitat management in the region. The present record is based on a single incidental observation, and nothing can be inferred about the species' residency or breeding status in the area.

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