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Some Winter Vagrant Records of Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus Schoenobaenus* from Nal Sarovar Birds Sanctuary, Dist. Gujarat, India.

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Abstract: First photographic records from Western India. The Sedge Warbler (Acrocephalus schoenobaenus) is a small migratory reed warbler widely distributed across Europe and known to winter in parts of Africa. However, its presence in the Indian subcontinent—particularly in Western India—has been extremely rare, with only two juvenile records reported from Ladakh in 1981. This paper documents two significant winter vagrant records of the Sedge Warbler from the Nal Sarovar Birds Sanctuary region in Gujarat, India, representing the first photographic evidence from Western India. Observations were made at Vekaria and Kayla wetlands, both situated near the sanctuary and characterized by dense reed beds and aquatic vegetation suitable for reed warblers. On 4 January 2023, one juvenile Sedge Warbler was photographed while foraging in reed patches, exhibiting diagnostic features such as a pale supercilium, rufous-brown mantle, blackish eye-stripe, and brownish tail. A second bird, identified as an adult, showed distinguishing traits including a square-ended white supercilium, darker crown feathers, yellowish underparts, and black legs. These records highlight the species' overlooked presence in Western India and suggest the possibility of occasional winter visitation. The findings contribute valuable data on the species' winter distribution and emphasize the need for careful differentiation from the similar Moustached Warbler during field observations.

Species authority: - Linnacus, 1758
Domain: Eukaryote
Genus: - Acrocephalus
Family: - Sylviidae
Order: - Passeriformes
Class: - Aves
Phylum: - Chordata
Kingdom: - Animalia
Scientific name: - Acrocephalus schoenobaenus
Common name: - Sedge warbler

Keywords: Winter Vagrant Records, Sedge Warbler, Acrocephalus Schoenobaenus, Nal Sarovar Birds Sanctuary

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INTRODUCTION

The Sedge warbler *A. schoenobaenus* is small size reed warbler rather larger and resemblence of moustached warbler (**Peter & David)**, very difficult to identify and distinguished from Moustached Warbler, without long time study and observation. Found in reed bed in swamp, densy vegetations, ponds and river beds – **Svensson.** Heavily distributed in European continent, Spain (North), Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, North-West Iran, Kucasus, Caspian Sea, Aral (North-West), Tinenshan, Finland, North Sweden, coastal area of Norway, British Island. During winter migration, it is found in West Africa to Sahara East of Senegal, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Kongo, Gaeban, Tanzania, Angola, Jhangiya, Mozambique, Zewambe, South Africa (West), South-East provinces, North Namibia – **K. Baker, P. David & K. Peter**. Some important wintering records are available from Western India, Ladakh. Two vagrant juvenile birds were ringed on 20th September, 1981 and 11th October, 1981 in Monsoon at Tikse by **Williams & Delaney**.

Observation Site

- Vekaria wetland is located 1 km South-east from Nal Sarovar Birds Sanctuary. Spreaded over more than 2 sq. km.
- Kayla village wetland, spreaded over more than 2.5 sq. km., it is human made largest wetland for irrigation purpose, elongated 1 km North-East range of Nal Sarovar Sanctuary. Both sites are adjusted with Viramgam – Bagodara road, Dist. – Ahmedabad. Also 65 km. West from Ahmedabad city and 55 km east from Surendranagar city. Has a I. carneacamprised, cyperus sp., Typhanqustata and Ipomea aquatica main immigrant vegetation. Interspreaded with thorny P. juliflora (**Rathod and parashiya**).

On 04-01-2023, I was birding by walking from Durgi to Vekaria wetland roughly at 11 AM, I came across bird perched in reed bed frequently foraging in reed patch. I shot one image and then bird was disappeared in reed bed due to disturbed by vehicle. Bird

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was juvenile. Has a black shorter bill, upper mendible black, lower pale, tip black, white throat, rufous brown flying feathers on crown, blackish buff eye strip, creamy supercilium, broad behind eye, pale black eye strip, brownish eye, pale brown nape, rufous brown mentle, rufous/tawny rump, pale brown fringed lesser, medan, greater, secondary tertials and primary coverts extend upto one-third of the tail, round tiped brownish tail, brownish legs, black toe and hind clue.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Fig. 2 – Bird was adult. Has a black bill, blackish flying feathers on crown, square ended white supercilium, black eye strip, pale black ear coverts, brownish nape, black fainted strips on brownish mentle, rufous brown or tawny mentle and upper tail base, round tiped black tail, white fringed lesser, medan, greater, secondary tertials, primary coverts, yellow belly, black fringed upper breast, black legs.

Only 2 Sedge Warbler (Juvenile) were recorded at Ladakh, North India. In last 45 years, not a single bird was recorded in rest of Indian Peninsular. In this article, 2 birds were found in Nal Sarovar Birds Sanctuary, very important for its winter distribution. Might be bird is winter visitor, but overlooked due to bird is very close by plumage to Moustached.

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