

Sighting of the Philippine Shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis* at Rameswaram Island, Tamil Nadu, India

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On a recent visit to Rameswaram Island (9°17'2"N, 79°18'2"E; SE coast of India: Tamil Nadu state) between 1st and 4th November 2007, I spotted the Philippine Shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis*. I located at least 8-10 solitary individuals perched on shrubs, especially *Prosopis* sp., in open areas around the following locations: Ramar Padam, Dhanushkodi, Kothanda Ramar Temple, beach front beyond Hotel Tamil Nadu and in the town, near the temple (southern road bordering the temple). The bird was easily told apart from the nominate subspecies-Brown Shrike *L. c. cristatus* by its greyish crown and yellowish white under parts. The birds were quite vocal and their calls sounded similar to those of the nominate race.

Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) say that the Philippine Shrike is a scarce but regular winter visitor to Sri Lanka and SE coast of India. My earlier encounter with this bird had been in the South Andamans (Santharam 1997) and Scharikota Island in Andhra Pradesh where we were able to ring a bird (Mohapatra & Santharam 1992). Balachandran & Rajan (1994) felt that the Philippine Shrike might be a regular winter visitor to Point

Calimere (Tamil Nadu state), where more than ten individuals were ringed during October 1991. They felt its population might equal that of the Brown Shrike. At Point Calimere, peak populations of both subspecies occurred during their autumn passage. At Rameswaram, however, I failed to come across the Brown Shrike or any other shrike species.

References

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Recoveries from the *Newsletter for Birdwatchers (1969)-19*

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One of the great joys of editing the *Newsletter* was the pleasure of receiving fine articles by contributors who knew more about birds than the Editor, and where the editorial function was merely to change a comma into a semi-colon, if that. But a more lasting satisfaction was to have encouraged people interested in birds to take to pen. Many shied away, but some responded, and to them I always related the story of the poet, apocryphal though it may have been that he didn't know what to write. "Fool," said his Muse to him, "look into thy heart and write." In some such way the best pieces in the *Newsletter* were not necessarily from competent ornithologists but from amateurs who put their feelings into words.

In the previous issue I carried extensive extracts from an article by S. K. Reeves published in July 1969. I had decided not to hurry, and attempt to give the reader a better feel of the area and the subject, rather than just a short extract which would be only of historical interest. Now I go a step further, by going a step backwards and reproducing an article published in April 1969 by K. S. R. Krishna Raju. I am sure you will enjoy it.

Birdwatching around Visakhapatnam

"On 20 September 1968, I went on holiday to my native-place, Alamanda R.S., a village in the Visakhapatnam district of