

The Isabelline Shrike is found in Mongolia, Russia, China, India, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Pakistan (Bol 2022; del Hoyo et al. 2008; eBird 2022). It is a passage migrant and/or a winter visitor to northern India, regularly spreading southwards to Maharashtra and Telangana (Ali & Ripley 1972; Grimmett et al. 2011; eBird 2022). Ganpule (2017), has reported all the three subspecies of the Isabelline Shrike from Gujarat. The bird has been reported earlier from Jammu, and the Ladakh region of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir (Suhail, et al. 2020). This is the first record from the Kashmir region.

## References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D. 1972. Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal Bhutan and Sri Lanka, vol. 5. Bombay.
- Bol. 2022. Isabelline shrike. Webpage URL: <https://indianbirds.thedynamicnature.com/2018/05/isabelline-shrike-lanius-isabellinus.html> [Accessed on 03 May 2022.]
- eBird. 2022. Isabelline Shrike distribution. Webpage URL: <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/isashr1/cur/introduction?login#distrib>. [Accessed on 20 January 2022.]
- Ganpule, P., 2017. Red-backed, Brown, Isabelline and Red-tailed Shrike in Gujarat. *Flamingo* 15 (3): 1–7.
- Grimmett R., Inskipp C., and Inskipp T., 2011. Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., & Christie, D., 2008. *Handbook of the birds of the world. Volume 13. Penduline-Tits to Shrikes*. 1st ed. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions. Vol. 13 of 17 vols. Pp. 1–879.
- Suhail, I., Ahmad, R., & Ahmad, K., 2020. Avifaunal diversity in Jammu and Kashmir state. In: Dar, G. H., & Khuroo, A. A., (eds.). *Biodiversity of the Himalaya: Jammu and Kashmir State*. Singapore: Springer Nature. Pp. 897–931.
- Webpage URL: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9174-4\\_35](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9174-4_35).

– **Mohammad Feroz**

Assistant Professor, AAAM Degree College Bemina,  
Srimagar 190018, Jammu & Kashmir UT, India.

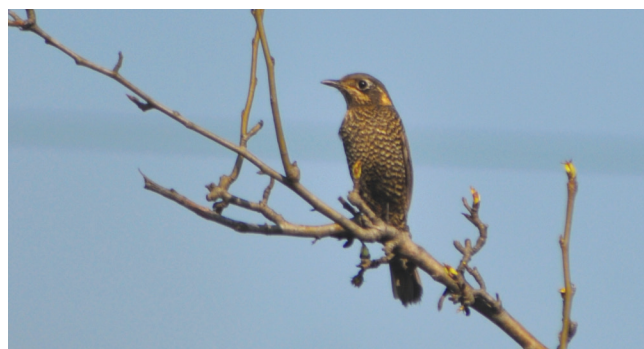
E-mail: [feroz.ento@gmail.com](mailto:feroz.ento@gmail.com)

## Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush *Monticola rufiventris* from Ludhiana, Punjab

At 0918 h on 4 March 2022, we spotted a female Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush *Monticola rufiventris* in the orchard field area of Punjab Agricultural University campus (30.90°N, 75.79°E; 189 m asl), Ludhiana, Punjab, India. The bird was grey brown, with boldly scaled underparts, and a whitish crescent behind the ear [137, 138]. It was perched on a pear fruit tree and was seen hopping from one tree to another. No other individual was sighted from the same area.



137. Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush in the natural habitat at Ludhiana, Punjab.



138. Closer view of Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush, Ludhiana, Punjab.

The university has a 650 ha campus in the north-west of Ludhiana along the Ferozepur Road. The campus has a large expanse of agricultural fields comprising seasonal crops, fodder, vegetables, and fruit trees. Bird inventories from the campus (Kler & Kumar 2015a) and the neighbourhood (Kler & Kumar 2015b) have not reported this species and hence this record was further investigated.

The Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush is a resident species with distribution range from Himalayas in the northern regions of the Indian Subcontinent, eastwards towards parts of South-east Asia (Clement & Hathway 2000; Ali 2002; Brazil 2009). It breeds between 1,200 and 3,300 m (optimum zone 1,800–2,400 m) and winters from c. 1,800 m down to the foothills and occasionally into the plains (Ali & Ripley 1998). The closest foothills to Ludhiana are at an elevation between 275 to 320 m whereas the average elevation of Ludhiana situated on the flood plains of the Sutlej River is around 240 m and it is about 90–100 km away from the foothills. Following the current observation at low altitude and deep into the plains, we visited the same area on two subsequent days to search for a possible male or another individual, but without success.

No other published record was found from Punjab, India (Pittie 2022) nor were any historical specimens in the data with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). However, there are two relevant records with photos on eBird. One is a female from Roopnagar, eastern Punjab (Thapar 2021), and the second is a male from Chandigarh (Waraich 2020). Both these locations are very near to the Shivalik Range foothills. Thus, finding the Chestnut-bellied Rock-thrush at a low-altitude location in the plains is something that is very interesting and worth putting on record.

We wish to thank the members of Punjab Bird Club, an active WhatsApp and Facebook group about the birds of Punjab, for discussion on this bird sighting and providing useful insights.

## References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1998. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Robins to wagtails*. 2nd (Hardback) ed. Delhi: (Sponsored by Bombay Natural History Society.) Oxford University Press. Vol. 9 of 10 vols. Pp. i–xviii, 1–310, 10 II.
- Ali, S., 2002. *The book of Indian birds*. 13th (Revised) ed. Mumbai: Bombay Natural History Society & Oxford University Press. Pp. i–lvii, 1–326+7.
- Brazil, M., 2009. *Birds of East Asia: eastern China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, eastern Russia*. Christopher Helm, London. Pp. 1–528.
- Clement, P., & Hathway, R., 2000. *Thrushes*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1–463.
- Kler, T. K., & Kumar M., 2015. Prevalence of bird species in relation to food habits and habitat. *Agricultural Research Journal* 52 (1): 50–53.

Kler, T. K., & Kumar, M. 2015a. Avian fauna recorded from the agricultural habitat of Punjab state. *Agricultural Research Journal* 52 (3): 83–90.

Pittie, A., 2022. Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology. Website URL: <http://www.southasiaornith.in>. [Accessed on 07 March 2022.]

Thapar, R., 2021. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S80803690>. [Accessed on 07 March 2022.]

Waraich, B. K., 2020. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S76640631>. [Accessed on 07 March 2022.]

– Manoj Kumar & Gurpartap Singh

Manoj Kumar, Department of Zoology, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana-141004, Punjab, India. E. mail: [mansnr1@gmail.com](mailto:mansnr1@gmail.com)

Gurpartap Singh, 1969, Sector 64, Mohali-160062, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, Punjab, India. E. mail: [prof.gurpartap.singh@gmail.com](mailto:prof.gurpartap.singh@gmail.com)

### A Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* in the Delhi National Capital Region

On 13 March 2022, we were on a casual birding trek along the roads of Bhondsi (28.36°N, 77.04°E), Gurugram, Delhi NCR, India. At 0810 h, we observed a single Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* perched on a tree (as a bulbul sized bird), overlooking the waterbody in Bhondsi. It had a black forehead, crown (extending down to the cheeks) and upper back, with scattered paler feathers, an orange breast, and black tipped yellowish beak. It was at first hidden between the leaves, then emerged and perched on a protruding branch of a Neem *Azadirachta indica* tree. The bird seemed to be a male moulting from non-breeding to breeding plumage [139].



Rajagopala Rao Srinadhuni

139. Male Brambling in Delhi NCR.

After our sighting, many other birders also visited the place and got to observe the species. It was seen frequently with a flock of Red-vented Buleuls *Pycnonotus cafer*, either foraging with or being chased by them, the latter seeming more plausible. As per the updates on eBird and by referencing sightings mentioned in online birding groups based out of Delhi-NCR, the last reported sighting of the Brambling at this site was on 18 March 2022.

The Brambling breeds in a broad band spanning northern and north-eastern Europe, eastwards to eastern Russia (Chukotka), southwards to north-eastern Kazakhstan, central and south-eastern Altai, Tuva, S L Baikal, Russian Far East (south to Amurland, Sakhalin and Kamchatka) and winters in west, central, and southern Europe, northern Africa, the Middle East, and south-western, central, and eastern Asia. These finches are also prone to random dispersive movements in years of periodic abundance, following successful breeding seasons. Abundance of food such as beech *Fagus* mast, which is the birds' 'staple', also affects their dispersal. In India, it has been reported along

the Himalaya from Ladakh (Pfister 2004), Kashmir (Ward 1906), Himachal Pradesh (Robson 1997; Prasad 2006, Robson 2000; den Besten 2004; Sharma et al 2013), and Arunachal Pradesh (De Souza Q., 2015). Since then, it has been reported from all these regions on eBird (nearly 200 reports, excluding reports of this bird) indicating that it is an annual visitor to the Himalayan region. However, based on literature available (Pittie 2022) and citizen science portals (eBird 2022), there has been no record of Bramblings from the Indian Subcontinent southwards of the Himalayas or east of the Balochistan ranges in Pakistan. From eBird records and observers' reports, we can see that there was an influx in the 2021–2022 winter, with Bramblings recorded in large numbers in the Vale of Kashmir, especially between January and March 2022. Ours, evidently, is of a vagrant individual that strayed from its usual migration pattern. There had been no unusual storms or adverse weather recorded around the time of the observation that could serve as an explanation of its presence there. Nevertheless, this is an addition to the avifauna of the Delhi region (Vyas 2019), and we may expect such out of place Brambling sightings in years with eruptions.

We would like to thank Mohit Mehta for guiding us towards making our observation formal, and Praveen for guiding us through the documentation process.

### References

- De Souza, Q., 2015. A report of Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* from Mandala Road, Arunachal Pradesh. *Indian BIRDS* 10 (5): 136–137.
- den Besten, J. W., 2004. Eurasian Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*) in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 101 (2): 325–326.
- Pfister, O., 2004. *Birds and mammals of Ladakh*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xxvii, 1–361.
- Prasad, A., 2006. Some interesting bird records from Manali, Himachal Pradesh. *Indian Birds* 2 (1): 8–9.
- Robson, C., 1997. India. *Oriental Bird Club Bulletin* 25: 63–64.
- Robson, C., 2000. From the field: India. *Oriental Bird Club Bulletin* 32: 68–69.
- Sharma, M., Abhinav, C., & Dhadwal, D. S., 2013. Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, Brambling *F. montifringilla*, and Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* in Himachal Pradesh, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (6): 156–157.
- Vyas, S., 2019. The birds of the Delhi area: An annotated checklist. *Indian BIRDS Monograph* 1: 1–128.
- Ward, A. E., 1906. Birds of the provinces of Kashmir and Jammu and adjacent districts. Part II. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 17 (2): 479–485.

– Arushi Kanwar, Shivani Sharma & Rajagopala Rao Srinadhuni

Delhi Birding Foundation.

E-mail: [rajherefrn29794@gmail.com](mailto:rajherefrn29794@gmail.com) [Corresponding author.]

### A nest of the Yellow-bellied Fantail *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* in the Valley of Flowers National Park

The Yellow-bellied Fantail *Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus* is distributed along the Himalaya Range and in South-east Asia (Boles 2020). It often participates in the mixed-species bird flocks during winter, as well as occasionally during summer. Its small size, face markings, and colours are similar to those of the Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps*, with whom it forms mixed flocks along with leaf-warblers and tits. It is an altitudinal migrant, moving to the foothills and plains during winter, and summers in the mixed coniferous, birch (*Betula*) and rhododendron (*Rhododendron*) forests up to the treeline (Boles 2020). In the Western Himalaya, the highest nest was reported from 4,200 m by Osmaston (1897, 1898, 1918), and Whympers (1911), with Thompson finding it nesting at around 300 m (Baker 1924), which last is remarkably