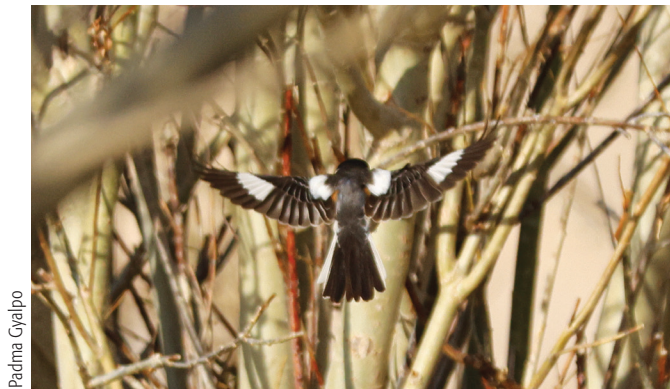




Padma Gyalpo

108. Masked Shrike female showing orangish breast on an otherwise pied plumage.



Padma Gyalpo

109. Masked Shrike female in flight showing broad white wing patches and grey mantle.

While the Masked Shrike has been widely recorded as a vagrant in the Western Palearctic (Lefranc & Worfolk 2022), such widespread vagrancy has not been reported in the Oriental region and this species is a rare vagrant here. There is only one previous record of the Masked Shrike from the Indian Subcontinent, which was from southern Gujarat in 2017 (Bharati 2017). Our record from Hanley in Ladakh is the easternmost record of the species and the second confirmed record for India and the Indian Subcontinent.

We would like to thank Choldan Gasha and Lt Col Avadhesh Malik for providing additional information regarding Masked Shrike and Sanderling. Thanks also to Acho Paljor of Paljor Homestay for his hospitality and for arranging our stay in Hanley Village.

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Letter to the Editors

Incorrect identification of colour aberrations published in *Indian BIRDS*

For a while I had the intention to contact you, but after seeing today two notes published in *Indian BIRDS* about colour aberrations with rather incorrect information, I decided to write to you right

now. Most of the records of aberrantly coloured birds published in *Indian BIRDS* over the years are incorrectly identified (Table 1), although most of them quote van Grouw (2013) or van Grouw (2021). If you wish, I am happy to review any records of colour aberrations before publishing them.

Table 1. List of colour aberrations published in *Indian BIRDS* during 2020–24

Sl No.	Species	Reference	Claimed Aberration	Actual Aberration
1.	Eurasian Wigeon <i>Mareca penelope</i>	Choudhury (2023)	Suspected partial leucism	Brown.
2.	Red-crested Pochard <i>Netta rufina</i>	Sarkar et al. (2023)	Brown	A mutation with a similar effect as Brown (i.e., the melanin synthesis is affected, resulting in less synthesised melanin). Due to the inheritance of the mutation, it is highly unlikely to occur in the wild in male birds. However, without further info we cannot give this aberration a specific name.
3.	Lesser Flamingo <i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>	Jain et al. (2021)	Suspected melanism	Not a colour aberrant. Authors also suspected that the black colouration '... was an outcome of chemical toxins/ environmental contaminants.' This conclusion was quite sufficient as clearly evident based on the dirty, matted state of the plumage. Speculation about melanism was unnecessary.
4.	Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Islam et al. (2020)	Leucism	A form of Ino in combination with further sun-bleaching; a common aberration throughout the species range (van Grouw 2022). All the plumage is not white and only bleached. The black neck-ring and dark primaries clearly show that this bird is not white. The dark bill is also evidence that it is not leucistic.

Table 1. List of colour aberrations published in Indian BIRDS during 2020–24

Sl No.	Species	Reference	Claimed Aberration	Actual Aberration
5.	Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Rathore & Saxena (2022)	Leucism	A form of progressive greying.
6.	Great Slaty Woodpecker <i>Mulleripicus pulverulentus</i>	Kaur et al. (2023)	Melanism	Not a colour aberrant in my opinion. The darker parts are, in my opinion, dirt rather than pigment. We have some specimens in the collection with the original red/yellow patches being dark because of dirt.
7.	Andaman Woodpecker <i>Dryocopus hodgei</i>	Sojitra & Prakash (2023)	Leucism	A form of progressive greying.
8.	Red-necked Falcon <i>Falco chicquera</i>	Kushal et al. (2020)	Melanism	Melanism. Correctly categorised.
9.	White-throated Fantail <i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>	Choudhury (2020)	Leucism	Leucism. Correctly categorised.
10.	Indian Paradise-Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	Kumar & Balamurugan (2023)	Melanism	Melanism. Correctly categorised.
11.	Eurasian Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	Khan et al. (2023)	Leucism	A form of Ino and then bleached further by the sunlight.
12.	Rufous-tailed Lark <i>Ammomanes phoenicurus</i>	Bhattacharya et al. (2020)	Progressive greying	Progressive greying. Correctly categorised.
13.	Brahminy Starling <i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>	Phalke (2020)	Leucism	Most likely 100% leucism. All the melanin is also absent in the beak (the original blue is pink now). The term leucism is used for almost any aberration, even the ones which are not white (leucism, from the Greek Leukos meaning white), but proper leucism is very rare in wild birds.
14.	Dark-sided Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>	Patra et al. (2022)	Leucism	A form of progressive greying.
15.	Rock Bunting <i>Emberiza cia</i>	Khan & Lone (2024)	Partial leucism	Progressive greying

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In Memoriam

ROBERT GRUBH

(26 APRIL 1943 – 25 SEPTEMBER 2024)