

Uttam Mahatha



13. European Greenfinch showing no black at the base of yellow primaries.



14. European Greenfinch showing yellowish-green forehead.

Both: Sheikh Riyaz



15. European Greenfinch feeding on the ground.

The closest known breeding populations of European Greenfinch are found in Tajikistan, eastern Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Given that vagrancy of this species has been reported in China and other parts of Central Asia, it is likely that this individual dispersed southward from its regular range. The nearest records of this species in Indian subcontinent are from Hanna Lake (Pakistan Historical Records 2019) and Golain Valley (Mosavi 2024), both locations in Pakistan. Though subspecies identification is difficult, the expected population that would occur here is *C. c. turkestanica* which is a winter visitor to Afghanistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), and has more yellowish-green forehead like in our bird [14]. The current record not only adds a new species to India's avifauna but also highlights the importance of continuous monitoring and documentation to understand avian distribution changes, especially in the context of environmental changes in the region.

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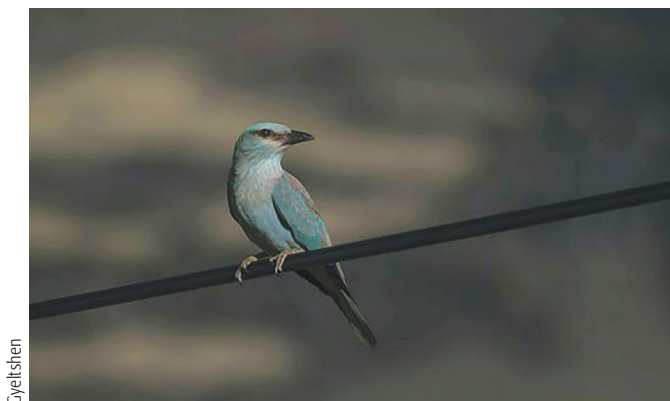
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Addition of the European Roller *Coracias garrulus* to the avifauna of Bhutan

The European Roller *Coracias garrulus* breeds in Europe (primarily eastern Europe), extreme north-western Africa, and western Asia. Almost its entire population winters in sub-Saharan Africa (Fry et al. 2020). In India, this species is a passage migrant from August to November, when large numbers pass through northwestern and western India and smaller numbers through the south (SoIB 2023). Additionally, there are a few wintering records from western India, and it is also known to breed in Kashmir (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). In peninsular states like Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala, sightings have been consistently reported since 1998, particularly between September and November each year (Narayanan et al. 2008; Kasambe et al. 2013; eBird 2024). The easternmost records in India are from the Andaman Islands, where it was first recorded on 31 October 2009 (Rajan & Pramod 2011) and more recently on 19 November 2016 (Mohanty 2016). The easternmost record in mainland India is from Nadia District, West Bengal, on 07 October 2017 (Birdwatcher's Society of Bengal 2017). The first and only confirmed record from Nepal was on 29 August 2021, at Kekighan in the Annapurna Conservation Area (29.180°N, 83.970°E; c.3,780 m asl) (Gurung & Baral 2022).

On 20 October 2017, a European Roller was observed at a paddy field in Tangmachu, Lhuentse, eastern Bhutan (27.597°N, 91.196°E; c.1,550 m asl) (Fig. 1), perched on an electric line [16]. Photographs of the bird were taken using a Canon DSLR equipped with a Tamron 75–300 mm lens. These photos were subsequently shared with the Facebook citizen science group *Birds of Bhutan* for identification and verification of prior records. Sherub, an ornithologist from the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research Training (UWIFoRT) in Lamai Goenpa, Bumthang, and Tim Inskipp confirmed the

identification, and that this observation marked a new record for Bhutan. The sighting location is part of the Minjey Wetland Important Bird Area (BirdLife International 2024).



Gyeltschen

16. European Roller, 20 October 2017, Tangmachu, Lhuentse, Bhutan.

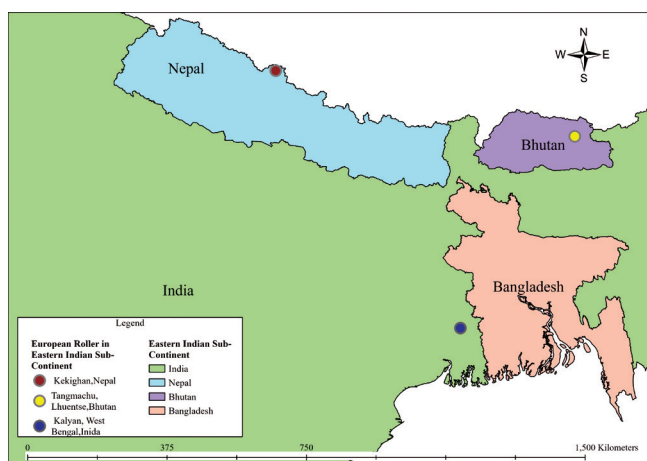


Fig. 1. Relative location of European Roller sighting in Bhutan.

Since this sighting of the European Roller, the authors have continued monitoring and documenting incidental bird sightings in the area. Despite consistent efforts, the species was not observed in later years, concluding it was a vagrant to the region. This rare occurrence might have been influenced by atypical weather conditions or changes in habitat availability along its migration path. Although the species has experienced population declines in Europe due to habitat loss, intensified agricultural activities, and pesticide use (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al. 2019), its capacity to appear as a vagrant in far-flung regions underscores its adaptability and resilience.

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Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* for Bangladesh – A new species for the country

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* is known to breed in Afghanistan and western Pakistan in South Asia and its wintering range is primarily in Pakistan and north-western India, however, it is also known to occur east, with scattered records especially on passage from Nepal, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in India, and further south from south-western and southern India, Sri Lanka, as well as Maldives in autumn passage (Kazmierczak 2000; Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012a). It breeds in expansive stony plateaus, valleys, gullies and winters in semidesert with scattered bushes, preferring sandier substrates (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012b).

On 16 October, 2024 at 1400 h, we spotted an Isabelline Wheatear at Kuakata, Patuakhali in south-western Bangladesh [17, 18]. The bird was first observed on the shore next to the open sea over some large concrete blocks which have been placed to protect the shoreline from tidal water. The area is just beside the road built over the dike called Paschim Beribandh (21.822°N, 90.108°E; 4 m asl). The bird was observed feeding on small insects over the concrete blocks and at the adjacent sandy beach. While foraging, it was observed running with its head pointed downwards and would usually pause with an upright stance. The individual was photographed and later identified based on features, such as, an overall sandy-brown appearance, uniform buff colour, showing a long distinctive supercilium which was wider and whiter in front of eye, blackish loreal eye-stripe, almost uniform buff primaries, white rump, and prominent white base and side of the tail (Grimmett et al. 1998). The bird was distinguished from other wheatears, such as, Desert Wheatear *O. deserti* and Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*, by its uniformly buff wing-coverts, contrasting blackish alula and broad pale fringes to greater coverts and tertials. The larger bill, longer legs, and lankier structure in