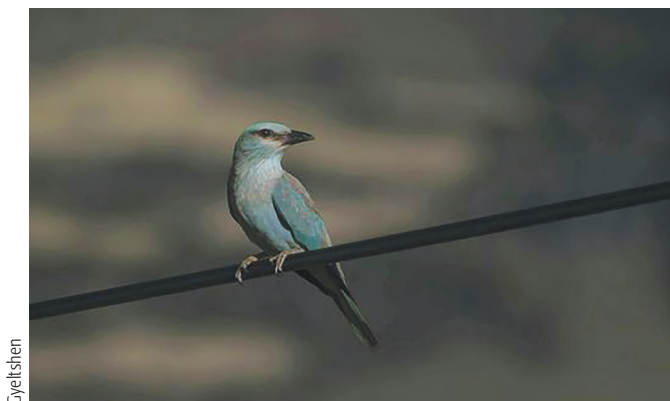


identification, and that this observation marked a new record for Bhutan. The sighting location is part of the Minjey Wetland Important Bird Area (BirdLife International 2024).



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

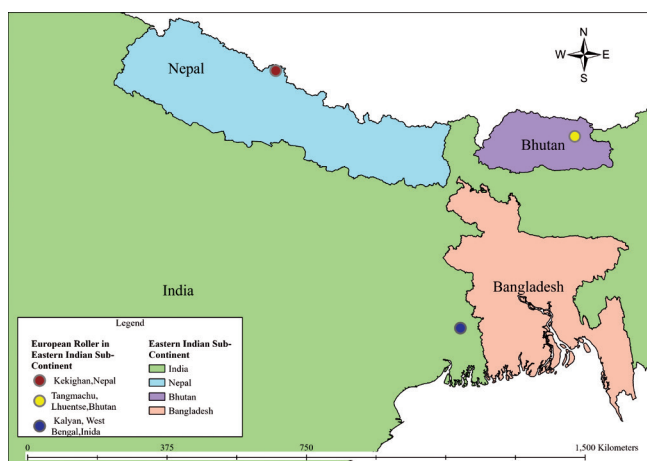


Fig. 1. Relative location of European Roller sighting in Bhutan.

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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- **Gyeltschen, Sangay Chedup, Tendel Wangdi & Rinchen Dorji**  
 Gyeltschen, Divisional Forest Office, Mongar, Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan  
 Sangay Chedup, Divisional Forest Office, Mongar, Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan. E-mail: [sangaychedup16@gmail.com](mailto:sangaychedup16@gmail.com) [Corresponding author]  
 Tendel Wangdi, Divisional Forest Office Mongar, Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan  
 Rinchen Dorji, Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan

## 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

appearance separated it from the similar Northern Wheatear in first-winter plumage. When the bird was flushed, it showed a narrow white rump with a less-pronounced shape of a black inverse 'T' on the tail, formed by black central tail feathers and a broader black terminal tail-bar. This terminal bar extended further up the tail compared to Northern Wheatear but was less than as compared to the Desert Wheatear which shows two-thirds of the tail as black.



17. Isabelline Wheatear showing characteristic tail pattern.



18. Isabelline Wheatear showing uniform buff wing coverts.

Both: Shahriar Kabir

The bird was present at the location until, at least, 27 October 2024; however, it was not found after this date despite two more visits to this location, and has not been reported from the area thereafter. The nearest sightings of Isabelline Wheatear to our Bangladesh record are from India, from Rajarghat wetlands, North 24 Parganas District in West Bengal dated 13 April 2019 (Roychoudhury 2019), which is c.190 km north-west; and another from Deepor Beel, Kamrup Metropolitan District in Assam (Willoughby 2018), dated 12 March 2018, which is c.500 km north-east. There are no previous records of Isabelline Wheatear for Bangladesh, and therefore, our record appears to be the first record of the species for the country (Siddiqui et al. 2008; Thompson & Chowdhury 2023).

Kuakata has recently emerged as a notable hotspot for local rarities in Bangladesh, and also producing three of the country's significant first bird records, namely, the Amur Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone incei*, the Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, and the Oriental Plover *Anarhynchus veredus* (Chowdhury 2016; Ahmed & Jannat 2020), which were first sighted at this location. Kuakata is a coastal beach with a small mangrove patch on the bank of the Galachipa River and the Bay of Bengal. This area may serve as a regular stopover for long-distance migrants or vagrants,

as it is the last landmass, including natural mangrove habitat, before the open expanse of sea, and this potentially explains the occurrence of unusual or rare sightings.

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– Shahriar Kabir & Riedoan I. Riyad

Shahriar Kabir, Lecturer, Chemistry, Govt. Brojomohun College, Barishal 8200, Bangladesh.

E-mail: [rush.manutd@gmail.com](mailto:rush.manutd@gmail.com) [SK]

Riedoan I. Riyad, MBBS (Intern), Sir Salimullah Medical College & Mitford Hospital, Mitford Road, Dhaka 1100, Bangladesh. E-mail: [riedoan56@gmail.com](mailto:riedoan56@gmail.com) [RR]

## The Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* feeding on *Caryota urens* fruits

The Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* is widely distributed across the tropical regions of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia (Biswas et al. 2014). Stork-billed Kingfishers are typically found in well-wooded areas near water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and coastal regions. The Stork-billed Kingfisher is primarily piscivorous, but has a diverse diet of frogs, crabs, and occasionally rodents and young birds. Its hunting strategy involves perching quietly and patiently above water or on a branch until it spots potential prey (Billerman et al. 2020).

On a recent bird watching trip to Poomala Dam (10.601°N, 76.242°E) reservoir in Kerala, India, I noticed a pair of Stork-billed Kingfishers feeding on the fruits of *Caryota urens*, commonly known as fishtail palm. The pair was perched on a dried palm leaf, flying to the cluster of fruits, pulling the fruit from the palm frond and returning to their perch to consume it. They returned to the cluster of fruits every two to three minutes for over an hour. This unusual sighting aroused my curiosity and I scheduled a field visit to the same place for a week starting from 04 July 2024 to 09 July 2024, to observe their feeding behaviour for a week, every day, from morning to evening [19]. I observed this unique feeding behaviour only in the mornings.