

- Sarkar, P., 2023. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S134694908> [Accessed on 31 October 2024.]
- Stanford, J. K., 1937. On the breeding of the Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus* subsp.) and other birds in the Bengal Sunderbunds. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 39 (4):867–868.
- Thompson, P. M., Harvey, W. G., Johnson, D. L., Millin, D. J., Rashid, S. M. A., Scott, D. A., Stanford, C., & Woolner, J. D., 1993. Recent notable bird records from Bangladesh. *Forktail* 9:12–44.
- Thompson, P. M., & Johnson, D. L., 2003. Further notable bird records from Bangladesh. *Forktail* 19:85–102.
- Wells, D. R., 1999. *The birds of the Thai-Malaya peninsula, covering Burma and Thailand south of the eleventh parallel, peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. Non-passerines*. 1st ed. Academic Press, London. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. i–liii, 1–648.
- West Bengal Rarities, 2023. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S15578264> [Accessed on 31 October 2024.]
- Wetlands International, 2024. Eurasian Oystercatcher. Webpage URL: <https://wpp.wetlands.org/explore/3076/731> [Accessed on 5 November 2024.]
- Manojit Sau, Debal Ray, Rajendra Jakher, Milan Mondal, S. Jones Justin, Ashim Kumar Dandapat, Arnab Shee, Samir Kumar Saha, & Supratim Mukherjee
- Manojit Sau, Department of Zoology, West Bengal State University, Barasat, Kolkata, West Bengal, 700126, India. [MS]
- Debal Ray, Office of the PCCF (Wildlife), Government of West Bengal, Salt Lake, Kolkata, West Bengal, 700091, India. [DR]
- Rajendra Jakher, Office of the Field Director STR, Government of West Bengal, 24 Parganas (South), West Bengal, 743329, India [RJ]
- Milan Mondal, Office of the DFO, Government of West Bengal, Alipore, West Bengal, 700027, India [MM]
- S. Jones. Justin, Office of the Field Director STR, Government of West Bengal, 24 Parganas (South), West Bengal, 743329, India [SJJ]
- Ashim Kumar Dandapat, Office of the DFO, Government of West Bengal, Alipore, West Bengal, 700027, India [AKD]
- Arnab Shee, Dept of Zoology, Government General Degree College, Singur, West Bengal, 712409, India. [AS]
- Samir Kumar Saha, Dept of Zoology, West Bengal State University, Barasat, Kolkata, West Bengal, 700126, India [SKS]
- Supratim Mukherjee, Dept of Zoology, Government General Degree College, Singur, West Bengal, 712409, India. E-mail: supratim.zoology@singurgovtcollege.org [SM] [Corresponding author]

A Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* from Nal Sarovar, Gujarat, India

On a rainy afternoon, on 27 September 2024, on the outskirts of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary (22.8179°N, 72.0453°E; 35 m asl), I, along with fellow birders and bird guide Memud Multani, set out in the hope of photographing some of the passage migrant species, such as, Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides* and Red-backed Shrike *L. collurio*, which are usually seen during autumn migration in Gujarat. The habitat in the area we visited consisted of open scrublands around a water body and some paddyfields. While looking out for a Rock Bush-Quail *Perdica argoondah* by the road side, one of my fellow birders spotted a shy bird in a bush beside us. As the bird was too shy and skulking around the base of the bush, it was difficult to identify it. Our guide, Memud Multani, assumed it to be a Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*, which is observed during the passage migration and winter season in and around Nal Sarovar. We played the song of a Grasshopper Warbler but this individual did not respond and stayed low at the base of the bush. We waited and moved away a little. After some time, for hardly a few seconds, the bird perched in the open and we could take a few photographs [62, 63]. Even after waiting for a long time, the bird did not appear in the open again and was not observed subsequently. We tried to look for the individual again at this location for the next two days but were unable to find it again. We posted the photographs on the social media and after discussions on different platforms over the next few days, it was re-identified and confirmed as Lanceolated Warbler *L. lanceolata*, which is a very rare species for western India. Over the next few days, other birders tried to lookout for the bird, but were

unsuccessful in finding the bird again at this location.

The identification of Lanceolated Warbler and its separation from Grasshopper Warbler is challenging. The main features to be noted in a Lanceolated Warbler vis-à-vis Grasshopper Warbler are as follows: extensive throat, breast and flank streaking, presence of malar stripe, a thicker based bill, prominent and contrasting streaking on crown, evenly wide and well-defined edges to tertials, and pattern of markings on undertail-coverts (Shirihai & Svensson 2018). Many of these features were visible in the photographs we took and the identification was further confirmed based on these features.

Chattopadhyay (2023) reviewed the status of Lanceolated Warbler from mainland India; for western India, a few records from Gujarat have been listed but these were all treated as unconfirmed. Recent confirmed records of this species have been mainly from West Bengal while a historical specimen record exists from Uttar Pradesh. But there are no accepted records of this species from western India and hence, this is the first confirmed sighting of Lanceolated Warbler from western India. This species also represents an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat as it was not listed for the state of Gujarat by Ganpule et al. (2022) but was listed in an appendix of that work (which listed unconfirmed/hypothetical species) with the comments, such as, 'unconfirmed sightings from Kachchh' and 'inadequately documented'.

I thank my fellow birders Shreenivas Ghaisas and Dattatray Kulkarni for encouraging me to write the report of such a rare observation. We are grateful to Memud Multani for his field expertise and dedication towards finding such a rare species. I specially thank Lars Svensson, Nils van Duivendijk, and Arend Wassink for confirming the identification. I am grateful to Prasad Ganpule for his help in the initial identification and for getting the identification confirmed from experts. Special thanks to Sunil Kini, Hemant Dhadanekar and Chinmay Rahane for their constant support.



62. Lanceolated Warbler at Nal Sarovar.



63. Lanceolated Warbler at Nal Sarovar.

References

- Chattopadhyay, P., 2023. The Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* from the South 24 Parganas District, West Bengal, and a review of its status in mainland India. *Indian BIRDS* 18 (6):187–190.
- Ganpule, P., Varu, M., Trivedi, B., & Raina, A. D., 2022. *A field guide to the birds of Gujarat*, 1st ed. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat, Ahmedabad. Pp. i-viii,1-488.
- Shirihai, H., & Svensson, L., 2018. *Handbook of Western Palearctic Birds. Volume I. Passerines: Larks to Phylloscopus Warblers*. Helm, London, UK. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–648.

– Krutarth Kshirsagar

Dr. Krutarth Kshirsagar, Plot No.28, Sahawas Society, Karvenagar, Pune 411052, Maharashtra, India. Email: krutarth.kshirsagar@gmail.com [Corresponding author]

Reports of Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* from Tripura, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan in 2024–2025

The Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* breeds from northern Scandinavia, eastwards through northern Russia and Siberia (Byers et al. 1995). In the non-breeding season, it is found in eastern Nepal, northeastern India, northern and central Myanmar, northern Thailand, northern Laos, northern Vietnam, southern China, and Taiwan (Byers et al. 1995; Copete 2020). It is known as vagrant to most European countries, including Iceland, and to the Canary Islands, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Borneo, the Philippines, Alaska and California (Byers et al. 1995). In the non-breeding period, it is found in a variety of open and semi-open habitats, such as fringes of forest, scrubby hillsides, crop fields, stubble and paddy fields, gardens and orchards, edges of roads and paths, riverbanks, and bushy areas near marshes (Byers et al. 1995; Copete 2020). This note describes unusual sightings from northern and eastern India, resulting in the addition of this species to the avifauna lists of Tripura, Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan, as well as a first photographic record from Jharkhand. Since males and females are indistinguishable, identification of sex was not possible. Otherwise, relevant identification features have been mentioned for each observation.

Khilpara, Sukhsagar, Gomati District, Tripura

On 01 November 2024, a Black-faced Bunting *E. spodocephala* was spotted by PC, SB, and DC in a marshy area known as Sukhsagar (23.520°N, 91.496°E; c.22 m asl), near Udaipur city in the Gomti District of Tripura. Inspired by this discovery, PC and his co-birders, SB, DC, SK & SG, visited the location on 02 November 2024 and successfully photographed the Black-faced Bunting. While PC was taking pictures, another bunting caught his attention. At first glance, he thought it to be a Chestnut-eared Bunting *E. fucata*. So, after a couple of photos, he did not pay much attention to it since he already had good images of that species. Later, SB identified the bird from the photos as a Little Bunting [64]. This bird was identified based on the combination of chestnut ear-coverts bordered black with a pale spot, chestnut lores, black lateral crown stripes, and grey nape, thus ruling out all possible confusion species and confirming it as a Little Bunting. Excited by the initial sighting, they searched extensively for the bird but could not spot it again. The bird was not seen for nearly two months thereafter, when on 31 December 2024, two individuals were sighted again near the same location, this time by PC and SB, marking the second recorded observation of this species in Tripura. This encounter rekindles the interest

in the habitat and movements of Little Buntings in the region, suggesting the possibility of a more sustained presence than previously thought.



Shawon Kuri

64. Adult non-breeding Little Bunting, Sukhsagar, Tripura.

Massanjore Dam, Dumka District, Jharkhand

Massanjore is located on the northeastern fringes of the Chota Nagpur Plateau in Dumka District, Jharkhand. This area features undulating terrain, shallow valleys, and a network of streams and rivers, supporting a diverse range of habitats, including dry deciduous forests, scrublands, and fallow lands. The Massanjore Reservoir, created on the Mayurakshi River, enhances habitat diversity by providing a stable aquatic ecosystem. These varied landscapes and rich habitat heterogeneity make Massanjore a vital haven for a diverse array of wildlife, including migratory birds.

On 30 November 2024, BS, PC, MKC, SD & AM were out for birding near Massanjore Dam (24.109°N, 87.297°E; c.123 m asl). At 0930 h, they came across a Little Bunting [65]. The combination of small stature with a straight culmen, a pale reddish-brown median crown stripe bordered by darker crown sides, and light reddish brown lores with a pale supercilium identified it as a Little Bunting. Further supporting this identification are the white outer-tail feathers, pale eye-ring, reddish-brown ear coverts bordered by a dark line at the rear, and a pale spot in the rear corner of the ear coverts (Grimmett et al. 2011; Copete 2020).

Following its first recorded observation on 30 November 2024, the Little Bunting was also sighted at Massanjore on 04, 15, and 30 January 2025, confirming its continued presence there. Ara (1976) reported a single sighting of the Little Bunting from the Kechki area of erstwhile Bihar (now in Jharkhand).



Bandeep Sinha

65. Adult non-breeding Little Bunting, Massanjore Dam, Jharkhand.