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## A Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* from Junagadh, Gujarat

The Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* breeds from northern Scandinavia, eastwards through northern Russia and Siberia till the coasts of the Pacific in Russia (Copete 2020). In the non-breeding season, it is found in eastern Nepal, north-eastern India, northern and central Myanmar, northern Thailand, northern Laos, northern Vietnam, southern China, and Taiwan (Copete 2020). Vagrancy of the species has been well documented, and 2024–2025 has been an exceptional season for Little Bunting in India with first records from the states of Tripura, Jharkhand, Haryana, and Rajasthan recorded (Chakrabarti et al. 2025). We add to this list with our record from the state of Gujarat.

On 28 March 2025 at 0645 h, while birding in the premises of our lodge, Aramnesh (21.155°N, 70.557°E) in Junagadh, Gujarat, we saw a small bird that flew in and perched on a lemon tree. We managed to photograph it [282] before it disappeared within less than 15–20 sec. Later, almost every day, till our return on 03 April 2025, we managed to get photographs of this particular bird. Photographs showed a bunting with a black crown with reddish brown head stripe, chestnut ear-coverts, dark eye-stripe behind the eye curving downwards to surround the ear-coverts, dark moustachial stripe connecting to the breast streaking and pale eye-ring. The upperparts showed a grey-brown rump lightly streaked black, and a mantle with heavy black streaking. The median coverts were tipped buff-white, creating a wing-bar. The underparts were buff-white with narrow, distinct black streaking on breast and flank. We compared our photographs with our field guide (Grimmett et al. 2011) and found out that it is a Little Bunting. As this was a lifer for us, we reverified the identification with others and obtained confirmation as to this species (Pravar Mourya, *in litt.* 28 March 2025).



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282. Little Bunting showing chestnut ear-coverts, dark eye-stripe behind the eye curving downwards to surround the ear-coverts, dark moustachial stripe, and streaked breast.

Our sighting constituted the first photographic record of Little Bunting for the state of Gujarat, India. A pair of Little Buntings has been reported from Jasdan near Rajkot, Gujarat but further identification details were not documented (Khacher 1996). This has been the evidence used to list the species in Gujarat (Ganpule 2016; Ganpule et al. 2022). Ours will be the first independently verifiable evidence of its occurrence in the state. The habitat of the area where the bird was spotted was an agricultural land, currently used as organic garden of the Aramnesh resort. This habitat contains small stretches of Mango *Mangifera* sp., Lemon *Citrus* sp., Sapota *Malinkara zapota*, Sitafof *Annona squamosa*, Indian Jujube *Ziziphus mauritiana*, and Teak *Tectona grandis* amongst other grasses and shrubs.

We would like to thank Mr. Pravar Mourya for helping us to reconfirm the identification the Little Bunting. We would also like to thank Mr. Jimmy Patel and Mr. Parikshit Rathore for encouraging us continuously and giving permission to do birding inside the lodge premises.

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## Wall-making behaviour by a Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctornis athertoni* nestling

The family Meropidae comprises 31 species of bee-eaters, distributed across three genera in the Old World (Winkler et al. 2020). The genus *Nyctornis* is represented by two species; the Red-bearded Bee-eater *N. amictus* and the Blue-bearded Bee-eater *N. athertoni*. The Blue-bearded Bee-eater is the largest of all bee-eaters, characterized by its predominantly green plumage and distinctive beard-like blue throat feathers. It is a resident of secondary evergreen and moist deciduous forests in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia (Ali & Ripley 1987; Praveen 2025). Blue-bearded Bee-eaters are cavity nesters that excavate nest tunnels in vertical banks (Ali & Ripley 1987). In this note I report a hitherto unrecorded instance of wall-making behaviour by a Blue-bearded Bee-eater's nestling in a nest tunnel, an apparent anti-predatory behavior, observed in Oros, Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra, India. This behaviour occurred daily during the feeding season, with wall construction at dusk and dismantling at dawn, using its bill as the primary tool.

I opportunistically observed a Blue-bearded Bee-eater nesting site in Oros village (16.107°N, 73.697°E), Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra. I made my observations during the period