

## Rare Birds in Iran During the Period 2011–2015

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### Abstract

Rare birds are of great interest in every country. There have been three published papers covering the records of rare birds in Iran from the 1870s to 2010. To continue this series, the present review covers the period from 2011 to 2015. The review also includes reports of locally common species. We have collected 123 records of 51 species which are currently listed as rarities in Iran. During the period, seven new species were added to the Iranian list, namely Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*, Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*, Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*, Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*, Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*, Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* and Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum*. We also summarize reports of 28 locally common species during the period, and discuss the current status of some of these. In our checklist of the birds of Iran, we have moved Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* to the the list of rarities, and added Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii* and Kurdish Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrna* to locally common species.

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## 1. Introduction

All the information available to date on rare birds in Iran has been published in three papers covering three consecutive periods: 1880s–1960s (Roselaar & Aliabadian 2009), 1967–1978 (Scott 2008) and 1980–2010 (Khaleghizadeh *et al.* 2011).

Since the publication of Khaleghizadeh *et al.* (2011), a number of interesting records from the period 1980–2010 have appeared in the published literature. These include the first confirmed records in Iran of White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (Stalling *et al.* 2015), Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* (Khaleghizadeh *et al.* 2017), Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* (Ayé *et al.* 2014a), Pale Martin *Riparia diluta* (Kirwan & Grieve 2013), Western Orphean Warbler (Khaleghizadeh *et al.*

2017) and Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* (Ayé *et al.* 2014b).

Here we summarize information on the rarities recorded in Iran during the period January 2011 to December 2015. Records have been obtained from the published literature as well as from numerous birdwatchers who have submitted details of their personal observations to the Iran Bird Records Committee.

## 2. Systematic list

### 2.1. Rare birds

The taxonomic sequence and nomenclature of species follow the current IOC list (Gill & Donsker 2020). This systematic list presents a total of 123 records of 51 species. The numbers in brackets after the species' names are the number of records up to the end of 2010 and the number of records during the period 2011 to 2015, respectively.

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Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (30, 4)

- \* one individual in Hasanlu wetland, Naghadeh, West Azarbaijan province, in late October 2012 (S. Piri).
- \* 15 individuals, one hunted by a raptor, at Gomishan wetland, Golestan province, on 20 November 2012 (H. Galeshi, B. Galeshi & B. Galeshi; photographed).
- \* five individuals at Lake Zaribar, Kordestan province, on 25 November 2014 (M. Safrang & J. Gholami).
- \* one individual along the Aras river on the Iran border, West Azarbaijan province, on 2 February 2015 (S. Sadeghi-Zadegan).

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* (8, 1)

- \* one individual at Mamloo dam, Tehran province, in the winter of 2014/2015, last recorded on 7 March 2015 (A. Hashemi & D. Mojab; photographed).

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* (7, 3)

- \* one individual on Farur Island, Hormozgan province, on 1 February 2011 (M. Ghasemi).
- \* two individuals along the Shole-Kesh road at the boundaries of Ilam, Lorestan & Kermanshah provinces on 2 April 2015 (Y. Sadafzadeh).
- \* two adults and one juvenile in Badreh, Ilam province, during spring 2015 (H. Parvari; photographed).

Jacobin Cuckoo *Oxylophus jacobinus* (4, 1)

- \* two individuals in Chabahar, Sistan & Baluchestan province, on 21 July 2011 (A.A. Hosseini; photographed).

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* (4, 5)

- \* two adults and a juvenile in a garden in Jask city, Hormozgan province, on 1 January 2011 (S.B. Musavi & M. Ghasemi).
- \* one female in Qeshm, Hormozgan province, on 27 November 2012 (M.V. Bameri; photographed).
- \* one individual in Chabahar, Sistan & Baluchestan province, on 25 December 2013 (A. Sangchooli).
- \* one individual in Chabahar-Konakar Sweetwater, Sistan & Baluchestan province, on 28 December 2013 (A. Sangchooli & S. Mokhtari; photographed).
- \* a male and a female in a date palm in a small village, c. 130 km east of Jask, Hormozgan province, on 26 January 2015 (M. Tohidifar; photographed).

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus* (4, 2)

- \* three mounted specimens obtained from east of Gomishan, Golestan province, in autumn and winter 2010/2011. Local experts state that a few individuals have been seen together with Pin-tailed Sandgrouse in every winter in recent years (M. Shakiba, per M. Tohidifar).



**Fig. 1.** One Pallas's Sandgrouse with Pin-tailed Sandgrouse in Gomishan on 31 December 2015, A. Sangchooli.

- \* one individual in Gomishan, Golestan province, on 31 December 2015 (A. Sangchooli & S. Mokhtari; Fig. 1).

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* (2, 4)

- \* one individual at Kataleh-Khor cave, Garmaab, Zanzan province, on 2 May 2015 (A. Sangchooli & S. Mokhtari).
- \* one adult in Bandali-Khan, Tehran province, on 20 May 2015 (E. Shafi'zadeh & H. Amini).
- \* one individual in Band-Ali Khan, Tehran province, in July 2015 (P. Bakhtiari).
- \* one adult on Kish Island, Hormozgan province, on 9 and 14 October 2015 (S.A. Jebeli).

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (1, 2)

- \* one found dead at the Mugger Crocodile Conservation Center at Rikokes, Gandu, Sistan & Baluchestan province, on 27 December 2013 (A. Sangchooli & S. Mokhtari).
- \* one individual around freshwater factory, Chabahar bay, Sistan & Baluchestan province, in November 2015 (A.A. Hosseini).

Siberian Crane *Leucogeranus leucogeranus* (37, 5)

- A single individual known as Omid returned each year during the period 2011–2015 to spend the winter in Mazandaran (P. Bakhtiari, H. Habibi Azad *et al.*).

Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo* (13, 3)

- \* 170 individuals near Golmankhaneh, Urumiyeh, West Azarbaijan province, on 2 April 2011 (A.M. Ebrahimi). Later one individual was observed at the same place in mid-April 2011 (S.B. Musavi).
- \* 34 individuals at riverside around Boukan, West Azarbaijan province, in mid-April 2011 (Mr Ahmadi, Head of Boukan, DOE; photographed).



**Fig. 2.** Demoiselle Cranes at Qare-Qeshlaq in December 2013, N. Rahimnia, Y. Mokhtari & M. Bashiri.



**Fig. 3.** Solitary Snipe in Kiasar near Sari on 7 December 2011, K. Rabiei.

- \* 24 individuals in Qara-Qeshlaq wetland, West Azarbaijan province, in December 2013 (N. Rahimnia, Y. Mokhtari & M. Bashiri, per J. Gholami; Fig. 2).

Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* (34, 3)

- \* 14 individuals in Abarkuh, Yazd province, in December 2013 (M. Akbari; photographed).
- \* three individuals in Bujagh National Park, Gilan province, on 24 October 2014 (F. Naziri & A. Ashoori; photographed).
- \* one individual in Chokam Wildlife Refuge, east of Anzali wetland, in November 2015 (A. Ashoori).

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (27, 6)

- \* three individuals between Bandar Abbas and Bandar-e Khamir, Hormozgan province, in January 2011 (A. Khani & M. Ghasemi).
- \* three individuals at Tabl, Qeshm, Hormozgan province, on 17 January 2011 (M. Ghasemi).
- \* two individuals on Kish Island, Hormozgan province, in April 2011 (S.A. Jebeli).
- \* one individual at Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, on 18 May 2011 (M. Ghasemi).
- \* two individuals at Velayat park, Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, on 16 January 2015 (A. Sangchooli).



**Fig. 4.** Red Knot in Nayband, Bushehr province, in October 2015, E. Abbasi.



**Fig. 5.** Black-winged Pratincole in Kabudar-Ahang, Hamedan province, on 3 May 2015, J. Rostami.

- \* a few on the shore east of Jask, Oman Sea, Hormozgan province, during January 2015 (M. Tohidifar).

Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria* (11, 1)

- \* one individual in Kiasar, south of Sari, Mazandaran province, on 7 December 2011 (K. Rabiei; photographed; Fig. 3).

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (11, 2)

- \* one individual in spring plumage at Bandar Abbas coast, Hormozgan province, on 18 May 2011 (M. Ghasemi; photographed).
- \* one individual in winter plumage in Nayband, Bushehr province, in October 2015 (E. Abbasi; photographed; Fig. 4).

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* (1, 1)

- \* one individual at Dowlat Park in the Golshahr area, Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, on 17 May 2012 (M. Ghasemi). This is the first record of this species in Iran since 1941 (Kirwan 2007, Ghasemi & Khaleghizadeh 2015).

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* (14, 4)

- \* two individuals among Collared Pratincoles at Pishva, Varamin, Tehran province, on 9 May 2011 (F. Eskandari; photographed).



**Fig. 6.** Black-legged Kittiwake at Beris port on 26 December 2013, A. Sangchooli.

- \* 3–4 individuals at Bamdezh, Khuzestan province, in April 2015 (S.B. Musavi and a group of Swedish birdwatchers).
- \* 22 individuals in Kabudar-Ahang, Hamedan province, on 3 May 2015 (J. Rostami; Fig. 5).
- \* 10 individuals at Zarabad dam, Varzaghan, East Azarbaijan province, in October 2015 (S. Shiri; photographed).

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* (1, 1)

- \* one individual on Sheedvar Island, Hormozgan province, on 8–9 June 2011 (M. Ghasemi, F. Goudarzi & B. Nezami; Ghasemi *et al.* 2011).
- \* one individual on Sheedvar Island, Hormozgan province, on 11–12 July 2011 (M. Ghasemi, A. Barati, F. Etezadifar & N. Sadeghi; Ghasemi *et al.* 2011).

These two records, which doubtless relate to the same individual, were the first records of this species in Iran since 1877.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* (6, 1)

- \* one first-winter bird at Beris port, Sistan & Baluchestan province, on 26 December 2013 (A. Sangchooli; Fig. 6).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* (0, 1)

- \* one first-winter bird at shrimp ponds at Tiab, Hormozgan province, on 22 January 2015 (M. Ghasemi, A. Sangchooli & B. Nezami; Fig. 7).

This constitutes the first record of this species in Iran.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* (20, 1)

- \* one captured at Fereidoun-Kenar, Mazandaran province, in March 2015 (M.A. Allahgholi).

Persian Shearwater *Puffinus persicus* (20, 2)

- \* one individual between Qeshm and Hengam, Hormozgan province, in January 2011 (S.B. Musavi).



**Fig. 7.** Glaucous Gull in Tiab on 22 January 2015, M. Ghasemi, A. Sangchooli & B. Nezami.



**Fig. 8.** Persian Shearwater on Farur Island on 6 July 2012, M. Ghasemi.

- \* two individuals on Farur Island and in Bandar Bostaneh, Hormozgan province, on 6 July 2012 (M. Ghasemi; Fig. 8).

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* (39, 4)

- \* one individual at Khalasi Khoor, Hormozgan province, in January 2011 (S.B. Musavi).
- \* one individual in Hour-al-Azim, Khuzestan province, in February 2013 (F. Eskandari).
- \* one individual on the Dez River, Khuzestan province, on 18 April 2014 (J. Stratford).
- \* one individual in Hour-al-Azim, Khuzestan province, on 8 August 2015 (A. Savari & A. Momtaz; Fig. 9).

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* (7, 1)

- \* an injured bird at Tola, west of Qeshm Island, Hormozgan province, on 13 June 2011; the bird was taken into captivity, treated and released by the local people (per M. Ghasemi).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* (35, 1)

- \* one juvenile in the mountains between Golpayegan and Aligoudarz, between Esfahan and Lorestan provinces, on 23 October 2015 (M. Mardanian; Fig. 10).



**Fig. 9.** Goliath Heron in Hour-al-Azim, Khuzestan province, on 8 August 2015, A. Savari & A. Momtaz.



**Fig. 10.** Red Kite with Black Kite between Golpayegan and Aligoudarz on 23 October 2015, M. Mardanian.



**Fig. 11.** Brahminy Kite in Baku Kalat Protected Area in mid-October 2013, A.H. Aghaei.



**Fig. 12.** White-eyed Buzzard in Minab, Hormozgan province, in February 2014, A. Habibi-Azad, M. Ghasemi & A. Moosavian.

Brahminy Kite *Haliaeetus indus* (0, 1)

\* one individual in Bahu Kalat P.A., Sistan & Baluchestan province, in mid-October 2013 (A.H. Aghaei; Fig. 11).

This constitutes the first record of this south and east Asian species in Iran.

Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (13, 1)

\* one individual at Khour-e Tiab, Jask, Hormozgan province, on 27 December 2011 (J. Stratford) .

White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* (24, 1)

\* one juvenile in Minab, Hormozgan province, in February 2014 (A. Habibi-Azad, M. Ghasemi & A. Moosavian; Fig. 12).

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* (23, 3)

\* one individual at Dousti Dam and Bazangan lake, Sarakhs, Khorasan-e Razavi province, on 8 January 2011 (A. Khani).

\* one individual in Zardanj, Esfahan, Esfahan province, on 31 May 2014 (M.J. Parastegari; Fig. 13).

- \* one individual at Lake Zaribar, Kordestan province, on 29 August 2015 (M. Safrang & J. Gholami).
- Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* (9, 5)
- \* one hunted near Farashband, Fars province, in May 2011 (M. Hadadi).
  - \* one found dead near Jam, Bushehr province, in August 2011 (M. Hadadi).
  - \* feathers obtained at Khodobast valley, Bashagard, northeast of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, on 12 April 2012 (E. van Maanen).
  - \* two individuals at Dez dam, Khuzestan province, in September 2013 (F. Eskandari).
  - \* one individual in Bashagard mountains, northeast of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, on 9 September 2015 (G. Ghaderi; photographed).
- Omani Owl *Strix butleri* (1, 3)
- \* one individual in Mashhad, Khorasan-e Razavi province, on 21 January 2015 (S.B. Musavi & A. Khani; Musavi *et al.* 2016).
  - \* one individual in Jam, Bushehr province, in July 2015, reported by the staff of Jam DOE station (Musavi *et al.* 2016).
  - \* one individual in Mehriz, Yazd province, on 13 October 2015 (T. Ghadirian; photographed by camera trap, Fig. 14).
- Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* (15, 2)
- \* one individual along the Shahid Kalantari road, Urumiyeh Lake, West Azarbaijan province, on 23 March 2011 (A.M Ebrahimi).
  - \* one individual near the bridge over Lake Urumieh, West Azarbaijan province, on 22 March 2012 (A.M. Ebrahimi).
- Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* (5, 5)
- \* one individual on Nakhilu Island, Hormozgan province, in June 2011 (M. Moazeni).
  - \* one individual in Damavand, Tehran province, in August 2013 (M.R. Kashfi; Kashfi *et al.* 2019).
  - \* one adult in Bandar-e Dayyer, Bushehr province, in October 2013. Video recording of a bird captured by a local falcon trapper (per M. Tohidifar).
  - \* one injured individual in Zarrin-Abad, Dehloran, Ilam province, in November 2014 (F. Bavir; photographed).
  - \* one individual in Damavand, Tehran province, in July 2015 (M.R. Kashfi; Kashfi *et al.* 2019).
- Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* (11, 1)
- \* one around Jask, Hormozgan province, on 25 January 2012 (M. Ghasemi & S.B. Musavi; photographed; Fig. 15).
- Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* (6, 3)
- \* one male and one female at Fariman historical dam, Khorasan-e Razavi province, on 21 May 2013 (S.M. Mirsayyar).
- \*one individual in Kooch Bazangan Protected Area, in Mamor-Abad, 45 km north-east of Mashhad, Khorasan-e Razavi province, on 10 August 2013 (Khani *et al.* 2016).
  - \* one male, one female and one juvenile at Bideskan village, Ferdows district, South Khorasan province, on 27 July 2015 (H. Ostovari). Again one male, one female and one juvenile at Bideskan village, Ferdows district, South Khorasan province, on 3–5 August 2015 (H. Ostoveri). The first confirmed breeding record of this species in Iran (Ostovari 2017).
- Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* (0, 1)
- \* 3-4 individuals at Minab tower, Hormozgan province, on 19–20 February 2014, (L. Khil; photographed).
- This constitutes the first confirmed record of this south and east Asian species in Iran.
- Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* (4, 6)
- \* one individual on Kish Island, Hormozgan province on 1–15 December 2011: observed at least three times (S.A. Jebeli).
  - \* two individuals in Minab, Hormozgan province, on 27 December 2011 (J. Stratford).
  - \* one individual on Kish Island, Hormozgan province, in January 2012 (B. Shahandeh; photographed).
  - \* one individual in Biarjomand, Semnan province, in September 2013 (F. Eskandari; photographed).
  - \* one individual in Chabahar, Sistan & Baluchestan province, on 25 December 2013 (A. Sangchooli & S. Mokhtari).
  - \* one individual in Minab, Hormozgan province, on 11 December 2014 (S. Bartosz).
- Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* (0, 1)
- \* one individual at the village of Alayie, some 40 km from the coast, north of Lirdaf, a small town in Hormozgan province on 13 February 2011 (A. Alieslam; photographed; Alieslam 2014).
- This constitutes the first record of this south and east Asian species in Iran.
- Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus* (7, 2)
- \* one individual in Astara, Gilan province, in the winter of 2014/2015 (A. Valipour per F. Naziri; photographed).
  - \* two individuals at Soustan lake, Lahijan, Gilan province, in October 2015 (K. Naderi).
- Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus* (25, 5)
- \* two individuals in Boralan, Soraya spring, Maku, West Azarbaijan province, on 3 June 2013 (A. Sangchooli).



**Fig. 13.** Rough-legged Buzzard in Zardanj, Esfahan province, on 31 May 2014, M.J. Parastegari.



**Fig. 15.** Lanner Falcon, Jask on 25 January 2012, M. Ghasemi & S.B. Musavi.



**Fig. 14.** Omani Owl in Mehriz, Yazd province, on 13 October 2015, T. Ghadrian.

- \* 11 individuals in Kani-Barazan, West Azarbaijan province, on 4 June 2013 (A. Sangchooli; photographed).
- \* 10 individuals in Garous wetland, Naghadeh, West Azarbaijan province, in 5 June 2013 (A. Sangchooli).
- \* approximately 50 individuals in Kani-Barazan, West Azarbaijan province, on 21 March 2014 (P. Bakhtiari; photographed).
- \* At least two individuals in Solduz wetland, West Azarbaijan province, on 30 October 2014 (A. Ozar; photographed).

White-winged Lark *Melanocorypha leucoptera* (25, 1)

- \* approximately 20 individuals in Bujagh National Park, Gilan province, in January 2013 (P. Bakhtiari).

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* (0, 1)

- \* two juveniles at Aji-Gol wetland, Golestan province, on 27 December 2015 (H.-R. Rezaie; Fig. 16).



**Fig. 16.** Wire-tailed Swallows in Aji-Gol wetland on 27 December 2015, H.R. Rezaie.

This constitutes the first record of this species in Iran.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* (0, 1)  
\* one individual at Shand valley, Naybandan Wildlife Refuge, South Khorasan province, on 27 October 2013 (S.A. Talebi Gol; Gol *et al.* 2014).

This constitutes the first record of this species in Iran.

Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (38, 1)

\* one individual in Jolfa, West Azarbaijan province, on 2 June 2013 (A. Sangchooli).

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* (40, 1)

\* several individuals possibly breeding in Anzali wetland, Gilan province, on 16–19 June 2015 (A. Ashoori; Ashoori 2019).

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* (52, 5)

\* two individuals at Ghor-Gol, East Azarbaijan province, on 31 May 2013 (A. Sangchooli).

\* two individuals at Zangelab, Minoodasht, Golestan province, on 9 May 2014 (A. Sangchooli).

\* two individuals at Katalah-Khor cave, Garmaab, Zanzan province, on 2 May 2015 (A. Sangchooli & S. Mokhtari).

\* two individuals along the old road from Shiraz to Yasuj, between Fars and Kohgiluyeh & Buyer-Ahmad provinces, on 15 May 2015 (A. Sangchooli).

\* one individual in Tehran, Tehran province, on 27 August 2015 (A. Sangchooli).

Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum* (0, 2)

\* one individual in Bandar-e Lengeh, Hormozgan province, on 13 January 2013 (S.A. Mohtarami).

\* one individual at Mahoor village, 45 km northeast of Neyriz, Fars province, in October 2014 (A. Azadi, per S.B. Musavi).

These constitute the first records of this south and east Asian species in Iran.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* (19, 2)

\* one individual at Mazrae Seh, Khuzestan province, on 20 April 2013 (Ullman 2013).

\* one individual in Gomishan, Golestan province, in the third week of February 2015 (A. Hashemi, H. Amini, P. Lampila & T. Eskelin).

Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* (29, 3)

\* one individual at Jamshidieh park, Tehran, Tehran province, in the winter of 2010/2011 (the late A. Mirzaei, per A. Hashemi).

\* one individual at Balan village, Khoda-Afarin, East Azarbaijan province, on 6 May 2011 (A. Sangchooli).

\* one individual at Verge-Darreh, Asalem, Gilan province, on 17 July 2015 (A. Sangchooli).

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* (3, 2)

\* over 100 individuals in Marivan City, Kordestan province, on 10 May 2013 (M. Safrang & J. Gholami).

\* one individual in Bahram-e Gur, Fars province, in autumn 2013 (J. Rasouli, per L. Joulaee).

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea* (18, 4)

\* two individuals in Bowli, on the Iran-Iraq border in Ilam province, on 30 March 2012 (M. Mansoori & M. Nourmohammadi; photographed).

\* 3–4 individuals in Khaeez P.A., between Dehdasht and Behbahan, Kohgiluyeh & Buyer-Ahmad province, in April 2014 (A. Shafaeipour).

\* 2–3 individuals in Kuh-Sorkh P.A., west of Gachsaran, Kohgiluyeh & Buyer-Ahmad province, in April 2014 (A. Shafaeipour).

\* 5 individuals in Kuh-Sorkh P.A., west of Gachsaran, Kohgiluyeh & Buyer-Ahmad province, in April 2015 (A. Shafaeipour & M. Khademi).

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* (7, 1)

\* one individual in Shirvan, North Khorasan province, in October 2014 (B. Ghavidel-Namanlu, per S.B. Musavi; photographed).

## 2.2. Locally common species

Table 1 summarises information on the occurrence of 29 species of locally common birds during the period 2011–2015. Only the places of observation are mentioned because of their importance in our understanding of the distribution of species.

**Table 1.** Locally common species in Iran and their places of observation during the period 2011–2015.

Species	Places observed
Caucasian Grouse <i>Tetrao mlokosiewiczi</i>	Although there were no confirmed records of this species during the period, subsequent reports confirm its continued occurrence in Iran.
Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	Gori-Gol, East Azarbaijan province; Dibaklou heights, Sabalan mount, Meshkin-Shahr, Ardabil province; between Tonekabon & Ramsar, and Palang-Darreh, Shirgah, Mazandaran province; Kharaghan No-hunting Area, Markazi province
Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles lichtensteinii</i>	Although there were no confirmed records of this species during the period, subsequent reports confirm its continued occurrence in Iran.
Spur-winged Lapwing <i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	Hour-al-Azim, Khuzestan province; Bonab-Malekan road, East Azarbaijan province; Lake Zaribar, Kordestan province; Abyek, Qazvin province; Meyghan wetland, Markazi province; Kanibarazan wetland, Sharafkhaneh, Lake Urumiyeh, Garous wetland West Azarbaijan province.
Great Knot <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	Velayat park, Bandar Abbas, Khor-e Tiab, Kolahi, shores east of Jask in Oman Sea, Tiab & Minab Protected Area, all in Hormozgan province
Sooty Gull <i>Larus hemprichii</i>	Nakhilu Island, Bushehr province (Fig. 17)
Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Boukan Dam, Seiran-Goli wetland, West Azarbaijan province; Bujagh N.P., coast between Anzali and Zibakenar, Gilan province. A colony of 40 nests was found at Shahid Kazemi dam, Bookan, West Azarbaijan province, on 3 June 2014 (H. Amini)
African Sacred Ibis <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	Dez river, Khuzestan province
Striated Heron <i>Butorides striata</i>	Chabahar, Sistan & Baluchestan province; Khor-e Azini, Khor-e Tiab, Minab and Jask, Hormozgan province
Socotra Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax nigrogularis</i>	Sheedvar Island, Hormozgan province; shores of Bushehr city, Bushehr province
Black-winged Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Ali Chaab, Sade Shavor, Mazrae Seh, Khuzestan province (Ullman 2013).
Pallid Scops Owl <i>Otus brucei</i>	Mahshahr, Khuzestan province, Dare-bagh no-hunting area, NE Bavanat, Fars province, Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh & Buyer-Ahmad province
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	Marghob Ab-bandan and forest of Ferirud & Zilakirud, Gilan province; Chort village, Sari, Shirgah, Amol forest, Mazandaran province; Sarvak village, Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh & Buyer-Ahmad province
Black Woodpecker <i>Dryocopus martius</i>	Namak-Abrud mountains, Amol forest, high forests of Now-Shahr and Tonekabon, Mazandaran province; Parvar, Semnan province; Arousak valley, Minoodasht, Golestan province; forests south of Imamzadeh Hashem, known as Ferirud and Zilakirud, Gilan province
House Crow <i>Corvus splendens</i>	Bandar Abbas, Qeshm, Kish Island, Bandar-e Khamir, Hormozgan province; Bandargah, Bushehr province
Hyrcanian Tit <i>Parus hyrcanus</i>	Highland forests of Imamzadeh Hashem, known as Ferirud and Zilakirud, Gilan province; forests of Kelardasht, Eshkevarat and Tonekabon, Dohezar & Sehezar forests, Noor (Fig. 18), Mazichal, Amol, Aju, Rudbarak, Kelardasht, Mazandaran province; Parvar and Moladeh road, Semnan province
Black-headed Penduline Tit <i>Remiz macronyx</i>	Seyed Mahalleh, Lapoo Zaghmarz, Bahnamir, Babolsar, Mazandaran province
Black-crowned Sparrow-lark <i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i>	Kish Island, Hormozgan province
Red-vented Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Kish Island, Hormozgan province
Zitting Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	Shadegan wetland, Khuzestan province (Fig. 19)

Species	Places observed
Mountain Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus (sindianus) lorenzii</i>	Although there were no confirmed records of this species during the period, subsequent reports confirm its continued occurrence in Iran.
Basra Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus griseldis</i>	Mazrae Seh and Mian-Ab, Khuzestan province
Iraq Babbler <i>Turdoides altirostris</i>	Shush, Arvand-Kenar, Dez, Sade Shavor, Mazrae Seh, Karkheh W.R., Khuzestan province
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	Forests of Amol, Dohezar & Sehezar, Tonekabon, Mazandaran province; Zangelab, Minoodasht, Golestan province
Oriental White-eye <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	Khour-e Azini, Hormozgan province
Kurdish Wheatear <i>Oenanthe xanthopyrna</i>	Oraman, Kordestan province (Fig. 20)
Indian Silverbill <i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	Kahourestan, Bahu-Kalat P.A., Sistan & Baluchestan province; Gourband and Asheghan village, Lirdaf little town, Minab, Hormozgan province; Jam, Bushehr province; Larestan Fars province
White-winged Grosbeak <i>Mycerobas carnipes</i>	Gharchagheh, Ghuchan, Khorasan-e Razavi province; Parvar, Semnan province; Jahan-Nama Protected Area, Golestan province (Fig. 21)
Mongolian Trumpeter Finch <i>Rhodopechys mongolica</i>	Although there were no confirmed records of this species during the period, subsequent reports confirm its continued occurrence in Iran.



**Fig. 17.** Sooty Gull on Nakhilu Island in June 2011, M. Moazeni.



**Fig. 19.** Zitting Cisticola in Shadegan in February 2013, A. Sangchooli.



**Fig. 18.** Hyrcanian (Caspian) Tit in Noor forest, 2011, D. Mojab.



**Fig. 20.** Kurdish Wheatear in Oraman in September 2015, P. Bakhtiari



**Fig. 21.** White-winged Grosebeak in Jahan-Nama Protected Area in May 2012, H.Gh. Kami.

### 3. Discussion

Seven new species for Iran were recorded during the period under review, namely Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*, Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*, Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*, Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*, Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*, Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* and Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum* (Khaleghizadeh *et al.* 2017). After the publication of the Omani Owl *Strix butleri* records in 2015 (Musavi *et al.* 2015), one record was found from Jahrom, Fars province, on 5 April 2008 (M. Ghayedi), and this was confirmed as the first record of this species in Iran.

There were fewer records than might be expected for some locally common species during the period 2011–2015. This was especially true for the Caucasian Grouse *Tetrao (Lyrurus) mlokosiewiczii*, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Mountain Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus (sindianus) lorenzii* and Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Rhodopechys mongolica*, for which there were no records. Discussions with local experts and experienced birdwatchers suggest that although these species were not reported, they will doubtless be recorded again in Iran through further birdwatching activities in the appropriate areas.

When the list of Iranian rarities was first established, one of the most important criteria used in deciding if a species should be listed as a rarity in Iran was if that species had been recorded on fewer occasions than about once a

year (Khaleghizadeh 2009, Scott 2008). During the 2011–2015 period, the number of records of two species was higher than this criterion; Black Drongo with seven records and Pacific Golden Plover with six records. Also, the number of records of the following species exceeded this criterion with five records in the five-year period, namely Asian Koel, Siberian Crane, Bearded Reedling, Brown Fish Owl, Sooty Falcon and Marsh Warbler.

There were several reports of the Mountain Chiffchaff during the period under review, but none was accepted because of the similarities between this species and the Siberian form of the Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*. There is a great need for the publication of guidelines for the separation of these two species in the field. Guidelines are also necessary for a number of other species that pose identification problems for Iranian birdwatchers, such as Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, Red Knot, Lanner Falcon, Marsh Warbler, Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*, Iraq Babbler *Turdoides altirostris*, Kurdish Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna*, Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Rhodopechys mongolica* and Rustic Bunting.

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