

A Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* in Khorasan-e Razavi province, northeastern Iran

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The Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* breeds to the east and northeast of Iran in Turkmenistan and Afghanistan (Ayé *et al* 2012) and is a vagrant in Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Turkey and UAE (Porter & Aspinall 2010). Long-tailed Shrike occurs as a rare migrant in northeast Iran (Mansoori 2008). Roselaar & Aliabadian (2009) in their review of rare birds in Iran wrote of the Long-tailed Shrike, "Noted by Zarudny (1900) in the Kopet Dagh Mountains of northern Khorasan near Emam-Qoli on 5 Apr. 1896, at Kjardy on 2 Aug. 1896 and a few days later on the Marish river near Muzdaran Mountain and near Khakestar; Zarudny assumed they bred there. As Radde observed birds at Garmab in the breeding season (4 Jun. 1886) and collected an adult male then (Radde & Walter 1889), this assumption may be right. Though Garmab is a mountain village in Turkmenistan, the habitat of open juniper forest there extends across the border into Iran 10 km away. Zarudny also observed one bird on the next voyage: a male collected at Kalat (Khorasan) on 25 Apr. 1898, but he found no evidence of breeding here (Zarudny 1903). *L. s. erythronotus* is listed as common breeder and migrant in northern Great Khorasan and as a rarer breeder and migrant for southern Great Khorasan (Zarudny 1911), but other data than those given above are not in Zarudny's travel reports for these areas." Khaleghizadeh *et al* (2011) mentioned in their table 1 some unaccepted records of Long-tailed Shrikes in Iran.

On 10 August 2013 at c10.00 h, while we were carrying out a bird survey in agricultural land of the mountainous region of Kooch Bazangan protected area, we recorded a Long-tailed Shrike at Mamor-Abad (36° 25' 45" N, 60° 02' 59" E), Mashhad county, Khorasan-e Razavi province and near the protected area. The bird was hunting insects and sitting on sunflower plants (Plate 1a,b). There was no indication of its breeding. We watched the bird for about an hour, the weather was sunny.

The Long-tailed Shrike may have been a scarce breeding bird and passage migrant in northeastern Iran throughout the 20th century and was simply overlooked, as this is one



Plate 1a,b. The Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* watched near Kooch Bazangan protected area, northeast Iran. © Ali Khani

of the least well known parts of Iran bird-wise. Clearly more ornithological investigations are needed for the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank our colleagues Mohsen Jahan Poor, Mojtaba Ghafoori and Abass Ashoori. Abolghasem Khaleghizadeh assisted with the manuscript. Comments by a reviewer were of considerable help.

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