

Additional records of White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* in Iran after more than a century

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The White-crowned Wheatear, or White-crowned Black Wheatear, *Oenanthe leucopyga* is distributed across North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula (BirdLife International 2019). It is listed in the IUCN Red List as 'Least Concern' and the population trend of the species is stable, with no evidence of declines and no significant threats (BirdLife International 2019). In Asia, the species is a native resident in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Jordan, Palestine and Israel (Porter & Aspinall 2010, BirdLife International 2019). It is a vagrant to many European countries (eg Italy, Denmark, Poland, Portugal, France, Croatia, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Germany and the United Kingdom), in to some Middle Eastern countries (eg Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates), also in Nigeria (Sorace 1996, Muzinic 2002, Porter & Aspinall 2010, Salim 2010, Förschler *et al* 2018, BirdLife International 2019).

The first confirmed record of this species in Iran was recorded by Zarudny in the Jebel-Tnue ridge near Ahwaz, Khuzestan province on 10 March 1904 (Figure 1; Zarudny

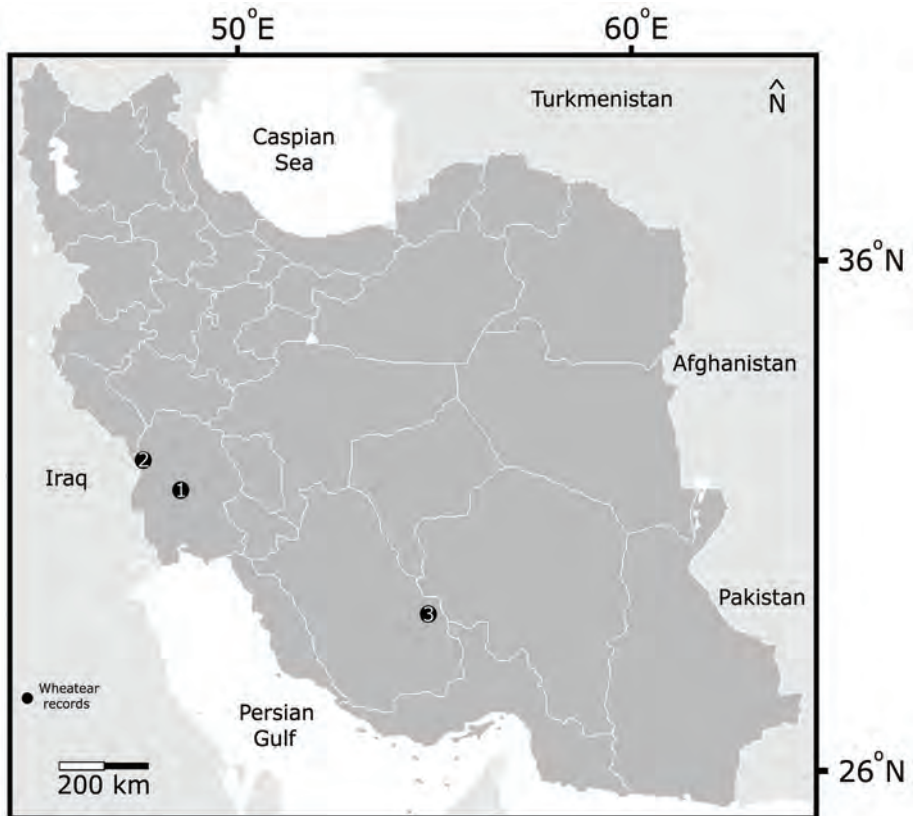


Figure 1. Records of White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* in Iran in 1904, 2016 and 2019. Number 1 represents Zarudny's record on the Jebel-Tnue ridge near Ahwaz in 1904, number 2 is SB Mousavi's record in Fakkeh area, Iran-Iraq border in 2016, and number 3 is the record in Ghatrouiyeh National Park, southern Iran in 2019.

1911, Roselaar & Aliabadian 2009). This note summarizes two new records of the species in Iran after an absence of sightings of 112 years. The second and third records of the White-crowned Wheatear occurred respectively, on 30 December 2016 in the Fakkeh area (32.0611° N, 47.6819° E), located near the Iran-Iraq border in Khuzestan province, and 14 February 2019 (Plate 1) in Ghatrouiyeh National Park (29.332395° N, 54.656377° E) in Fars province. Both recent records were confirmed by Iran Bird Records Committee (IBRC).

The Fakkeh area is a desert habitat with low density of vegetation and sandy hills located near Mishdagh Protected Area. The Ghatrouiyeh National Park is a semi-desert and steppe habitat and an important bird and biodiversity area (IBA) in the country (Evans 1994). The main threat of the species is habitat loss by overgrazing, farming and invasive soil conservation methods by government such as petroleum mulching (Plate 2) in the country, especially in Khuzestan.

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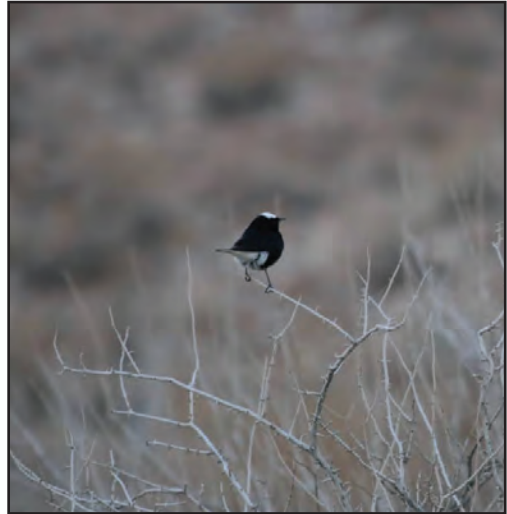


Plate 1. A White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* in Ghatrouiyeh National Park, Fars province on 14 February 2019 (Number 3 in Figure 1) © M Mohammad Rahimi



Plate 2. Petroleum mulch has high potential for destroying everything in natural areas, Khuzestan, Iran, February 2019. © SB Mousavi

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