

# Olive-backed Pipits *Anthus hodgsoni* in Hormozgan, south Iran, January 2016

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In January 2016 we birded in Hormozgan, south Iran, together with Per Øystein Klunderud and Babak Musavi. On 25 January 2016 we visited Bahmani near Minab (27.18300° N, 57.04076° E) where we found two Olive-backed Pipits *Anthus hodgsoni* and later two more c500 m from the first two. The following day, 26 January, we visited Jihad park near Bandar Abbas (27.26071° N, 56.41677° E) where we found another 2 Olive-backed Pipits. Interestingly, we did not record any Tree Pipits *A. trivialis* or Red-throated Pipits *A. cervinus* during our 10-day stay in Hormozgan. In Bahmani the birds appeared in cultivations with short grass (1–2 decimetres high) and bushes and trees (Plate 1). In Jihad park they visited similar habitat: short grass and quite sparse trees. The birds were mainly feeding in the grass and invisible to us until they took flight a few times, either disappearing or settling in a bush (Plate 2) or a tree (Plates 3, 4). This would appear to be suitable wintering habitat.

Our photos (of at least three individuals) show birds with very faint upperparts streaking, confirming that they belong to the subspecies *A. h. yunnanensis*, which breeds throughout much of Siberia, northern Mongolia *etc* and winters from India to southeast Asia. When you are lucky to find a rare passerine you often first notice the bird by call before actually seeing it—and this was the case in each of these three instances. The call of Olive-backed Pipit is sometimes compared to Tree Pipit, but although they are a bit



**Plate 1.** Four Olive-backed Pipits *Anthus hodgsoni* were feeding in the grass between the bushes and trees in the gardens of Bahmani, Hormozgan, Iran. © Magnus Ullman



**Plate 2.** An Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*, Bahmani, Hormozgan, Iran, 25 January 2016. © Mattias Ullman



**Plate 3.** Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*, Jahad park, Hormozgan, Iran, 26 January 2016. © Magnus Ullman



**Plate 4.** Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*, a different individual from that in Plate 3, Jahad park, Hormozgan, Iran, 26 January 2016. © Mattias Ullman

similar, Olive-backed's is quite distinctive. To say that it is somewhere between the calls of Tree Pipit and Red-throated Pipit might give a hint of its quality. It is a thin, somewhat squeezed *tzzi*, thinner and fainter than Tree Pipit. At times you may even be more likely to disregard it as a feeble Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* than a Tree Pipit.

There are two previous records in Iran (Khaleghizadeh *et al* 2011): one on 21 January 1992 in a public park in Zabol, Sistan & Baluchestan, and one on 27 March 2001 in Nik-Shahr, also Sistan & Baluchestan. Considering the apparent rarity of Olive-backed Pipit in Iran our 6 birds were a surprise.

#### **LITERATURE CITED**

Khaleghizadeh, A & 14 others. 2011. Rare Birds in Iran in 1980–2010. *Podoces* 6: 1–48.

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