

Occurrence of White Wagtail in the Suheli Par Island of Lakshadweep Archipelago, India

The White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* Linnaeus, 1758 is a small passerine bird belonging to the family Motacillidae of the order Passeriformes. It is distributed throughout Asia, Europe and parts of northern Africa (BirdLife International 2022). The bird is extremely variable, its head has a black-and-white pattern, and its plumage is composed of white, black, grey, yellow, and green feathers (Grimmett et al. 2011). It is primarily found in open country side near water habitation and is adapted to foraging in urban areas. Being an insectivorous bird, bare areas are often the preferred habitat for feeding (Dickinson 2003).

On 17 January 2022, a faunal expedition was conducted by the Zoological Survey of India, at the Suheli Par Island of Lakshadweep Archipelago, India. The Suheli Par Island (10.037°N, 72.281°E) is a very small island (2,100 m long), located about 65 km to the south-west of Kavaratti Island. The island is uninhabited



White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* on seashore of Suheli Par Island of Lakshadweep Archipelago. © M. Kamalakannan.

except for the forest and police security posts and therefore is naturally safeguarded. The coconut plantations are the main vegetation of this island. During the survey along the

seashore (10.043°N, 72.283°E), a total of six individuals of birds were sighted and photos captured while foraging. Based on the distinctive black and white plumage, and

characteristic behaviour of constantly bobbing up and down the tail, the bird was identified as White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*.

A single record of this species has been reported from Kavaratti Island of the Lakshadweep Archipelago which has been posted on social media by Krishnan (2017). Based on this record, Aju et al. (2021) also listed this species in the checklist of birds of the Lakshadweep Archipelago. This species has not been sighted or reported yet from Suheli Par Island of the Lakshadweep archipelago. Hence, we report the first record of White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* with photographic evidence from Suheli Par Island of Lakshadweep Archipelago. The present locality record of this species is about 65 km to the south-west of Kavaratti Island (the nearest and only known locality of this species) and extends the distribution range of this species in the Lakshadweep Archipelago. This bird record has also been considered as an additional or second record to the Lakshadweep Archipelago.

References

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- Citation:** Kamalakannan, M., J. Palot & D. Banerjee (2022). Occurrence of White Wagtail in the Suheli Par Island of Lakshadweep Archipelago, India. Bird-o-soar #187, In: *Zoo's Print* 37(12): 27–28.