

Isabelline Wheatear in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu, India



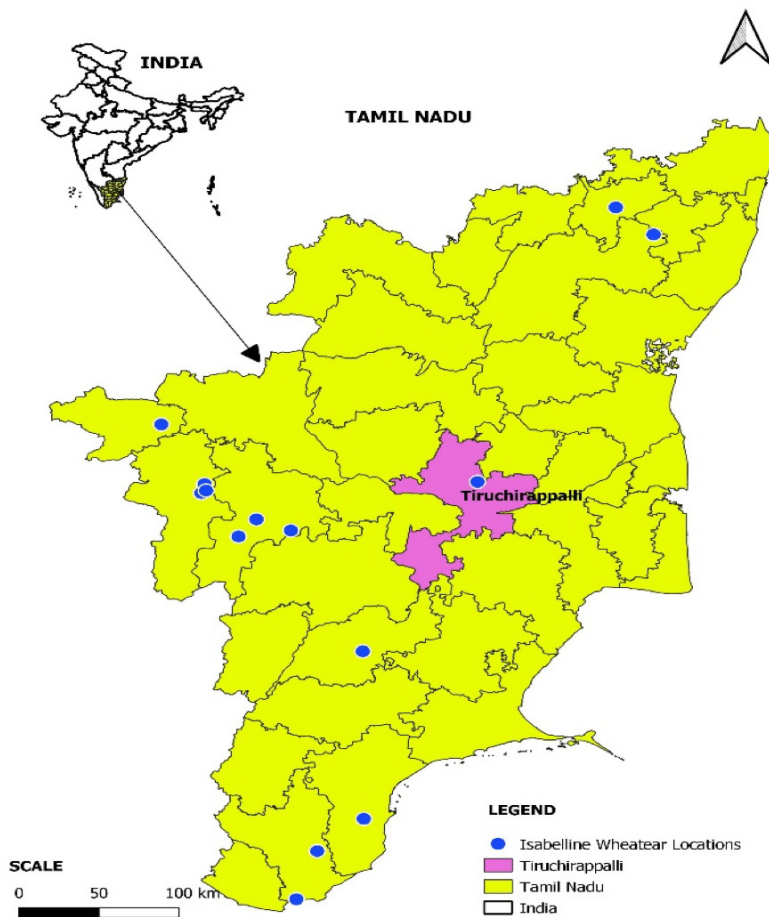
The Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabelline* is a migratory insectivorous bird species belongs to the family Muscicapidae. The species has a wide distribution range, breeding in Northern Hemisphere and wintering in Africa and India (Cramp 1988; Zheng 2002; Birdlife International 2021). It is mainly found in arid, open vegetated country, dry plains, semi deserts and grasslands habitats. The diet consist of invertebrates, particularly insects such as beetles and ants and vegetable matter (Collar 2015). The Isabelline Wheatear is plain sandy-brown in colour, head and bill look rather large

and have a long legs. The tail is shorter more white at base and sides. The wings sandy-brown with constrastingly dark alula (Grimmett et al. 2011).

It is considered as a rare winter migrant, previously reported from Sri Lanka (Kaluthota & Kotagama 2009), Konkan & Goa (Pande et al. 2003), Andhra Pradesh in 2003 (Pittie & Ulla 2006), Raichur District from Karnataka (Ghorpadé et al. 2011), Kannur & Kottayam districts of Kerala (Sashikumar et al. 2011), and Tirunelveli & Thoothukudi districts from Tamil

Table 1. Districts wise Isabelline Wheatear records in Tamil Nadu.

	Districts	Year	Number of locations	Number of observations
1	Coimbatore	2017, 2018, 2019	3	19
2	Madurai	2021	1	1
3	The Nilgiris	2019	1	1
4	Thoothukudi	2013	1	1
5	Tirunelveli	2011, 2012, 2016, 2019	2	4
6	Tiruppur	2018, 2020	4	7
7	Tiruvannamalai	2019	1	2
8	Vellore	2020	1	1
9	Tiruchirappalli	2021	1	1



(11.04548 N & 78.66909 E and elevation of 117 m). At 8.05 am, we observed a single bird perching on large stones. The bird colour, shape, size and patterns were observed.

The bird was photographed and later identified with the help of a field guide (Grimmett et al. 2011) as Isabelline Wheatear. This is the first ever record in Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu. Later, this first sighting was recorded and entered in the ebird checklist (<https://ebird.org/checklist/S97602461>).

The previous records of Isabelline Wheatear from Tamil Nadu are very few and mostly restricted to the northern, western, and southern districts of the state. There are nine districts reported to record the

Location of Isabelline Wheatear recordings in Tamil Nadu.

Nadu (Muthunarayanan et al. 2013). On 14 November 2021, we went for a bird watching at Omanthur village

in Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu. The surrounding village landscape comprises of grasslands and scrub habitats

bird as per the ebird portal including our record (Table 1).

From 2011 onwards Isabelline Wheatear is reported 37 times. Maximum observations are from Coimbatore district and the nearby Tirupur district. There are no details on its ecology & behaviour and publications are also very limited.

References

- BirdLife International (2021).** Species factsheet: *Oenanthe isabellina*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 25/11/2021. Recommended citation for factsheets for more than one species: BirdLife International (2021) IUCN Red List for birds. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 25/11/2021.
- Collar, N. (2015).** Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*). In: del Hoyo, J., A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D.A. Christie & E.de Juana (eds), *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Cramp, S. (1988).** *Handbook of the birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: the birds of the Western Palearctic. Volume V, Tyrant flycatchers to thrushes*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1063 pp.
- Ghorpadé, K. & R. Loksha (2011).** A prefatorial survey of birds in the Raichur Doab, with reference to the Bhima river valley, Deccan Plateau. *Humea* 5: 1–19.
- Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (2011).** *Birds of Indian Subcontinent*. Princeton University Press, India, 528 pp.
- Kaluthota, C.D. & S.W. Kotgama (2009).** Revised avifaunal list of Sri Lanka. Occasional Paper No. 2 of the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka. FOGSL, Colombo, 25 pp.
- Kazmierczak, K. (2000).** *A Field Guide to the Birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. 1st ed. Om Book Service, New Delhi ,352 pp.
- Muthunarayanan, K., P.J. Vasanthan, S. Chandrasekaran & G.V.A. Vinoba (2013).** Occurrence of Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts, Tamil Nadu, India. *Indian Birds* 8(3): 75–76.
- Pande, S., S. Tambe, M.C. Francis & N. Sant (2003).** *Birds of Western Ghats, Kokan and Malabar (Including birds of Goa)*. 1st ed. Bombay Natural History Society, Oxford University Press, Mumbai.
- Pittie, A. & M.S. Ulla (2006).** Occurrence of Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* and Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* in Mahbubnagar district, Andhra Pradesh. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 102 (2): 234–235.
- Sashikumar, C., J. Praveen, M.J. Palot & P.O. Nameer (2011).** *Birds of Kerala: Status and Distribution*. 1st ed. DC Books, Kottayam, 835 pp.
- Zheng, G.M. (2002).** *A checklist on the classification and distribution of the birds of the world*. Science Press, Beijing, 456 pp.

T. Siva¹, A. Muthusamy², G. Lakshmanan³ & N. Gopinath⁴

¹⁻³ Research Department of Zoology, Nehru Memorial College, Puthanampatti, Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu 621007, India.

⁴ No. 17/39, North Madhulakolai Street, TT Road, Woraiyur, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu 620003, India. Emails: ¹sivanaturewild@gmail.com (corresponding author), ²muthusamy9514@gmail.com,

³gvlakshmanan1708@gmail.com, ⁴hornbill.gn@gmail.com

Citation: Siva, T., A. Muthusamy, G. Lakshmanan & N. Gopinath (2022). Isabelline Wheatear in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu, India. *Bird-o-soar* #188, In: *Zoo's Print* 37(12): 29–31.