

# **New record of the Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Linnaeus, 1758 in South Khorasan Province, Iran**

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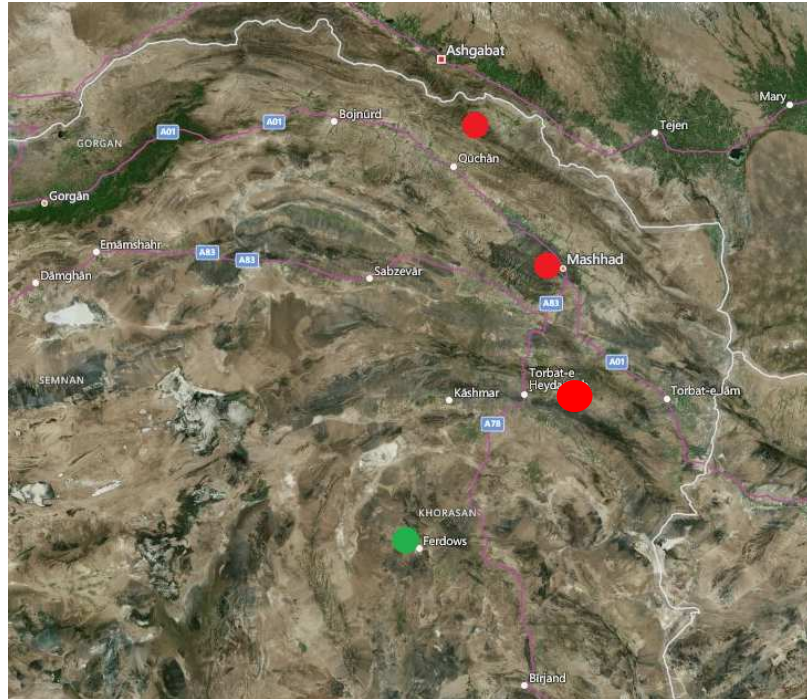
The Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* was recorded as a rare bird in Iran (Scott *et al*, 1975; Scott& Adhami, 2006; Mansoori, 2008; Khaleghizadeh *et al*, 2011). There were previously six records of this species in the 1890s near Emam-Qoli in the Kopet Dagh Mountains in northern Khorasan (Roselaar& Aliabadian, 2009). It had been thought that the Long-tailed Shrike was possibly breeding in northeastern Iran in the 1890s (Zarudny, 1911) but later assumed to be extinct in Iran because of no record since that (Scott, 2008). This species was also recently observed by Ali Khani near Mashhad on 10 August 2013 (Khani *et al*, 2016); and by Seyed Mehdi Mirsayyar in Fariman dam on 2013(Unpublished report).

During field trip observations on 27 July 2015 around Bideskan village (34°3'31.08" N, 58°25'43.41" E; 1975 m a.s.l.) in Ferdows township in South Khorasan province, I saw three specimens of the Long-tailed Shrike, a male and a female with one juvenile (Figs. 1-4). Following this interesting record, the area was surveyed again on 3 and 5 August 2015 and these three shrikes were observed again.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Based on field observations, adults had white chin, grey forehead and crown, orange-buff on belly, flanks, rump and back (not orange-buff on Juvenile or very orange-buff on flanks) but orange-buff wash in female. Also upper tail coverts was orange-buff in male and female; vent orange-buff in male and orange-buff wash in female; tail was also long and tail feathers black.

**DIET AND BEHAVIOR:** Based on field observations, this species was found in the morning and evening. Compared to the Southern grey shrike, the parents of the Long-tail Shrike do not abandon their juvenile. When threatened, one of the male or female fly to other trees with loud noise (at intervals of 10 to 15 meters) in order to misguide the intruder and create the opportunity to escape the juvenile. The other sex of parents stays and warns the juvenile with loud noise. Then it flies to the opposite direction of the first individual of parents (at intervals of 20 to 30 meters). Then the juvenile flies but does not leave its parents as it is not capable to fly longer distances. Finally, they join together. Parents and juvenile use shrubs for camouflage and hiding instead of high trees (shrubs in the habitat were sumac). Unlike the Lesser and Great Grey Shrikes that sit at the top of upper branches of trees for preying, adults of this species are more cautious and prefer lower branches. Based on my observations, insects such as grasshopper are part of the diet of this species.

**STATUS:** Based on field observations, this species was observed in the foothills of Bideskan village with sparse vegetation, including trees such as berries, apricots, almonds, walnuts and shrubs such as Sumac. This report is the ninth record and the first breeding record of this species for Iran and new distribution of Long-tailed Shrike in East Iran. It is suggested that additional information be obtained on this species and consider conservation measures of this species in Khorasan Provinces.



**FIGURE 1.** The Map of East and Northeast Iran shows the new locality record for Long-tailed Shrike (Green circle) and previous records (Red circle).



**FIGURE 2.** The male Long-tailed Shrike in Ferdows, South Khorasan © Hamed Ostovari.



**FIGURE 3.** The female Long-tailed Shrike in Ferdows, South Khorasan © Hamed Ostovari.



**FIGURE 4.** The juvenile Long-tailed Shrike in Ferdows, South Khorasan © Hamed Ostovari

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