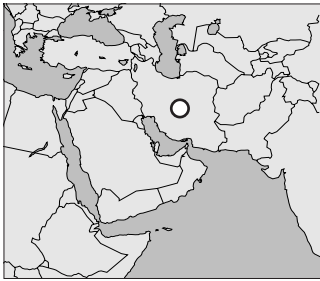


Further significant extensions of migrant distribution and breeding and wintering ranges in Iran for over sixty species

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Further to range extensions in Iran published in 2004, we have assessed critically many of the subsequent ornithological records we made in Iran during 2000 to 2005. We have also examined a number of informal records that we would like to see published or at least scrutinised further. The formal records that emerged from our assessment suggested extensions of breeding or winter ranges and of passage migrant distributions for over sixty species and the results are summarised here. We estimate the distances of these observations from previously known ranges or distributions. In addition to these records, we present additional information on some of these and on other species from many other sources, some of which come from the 1970s. We have also amended the distributional information for some other species, mostly migrants or vagrants.

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During the past decade, first records for a number of bird species have been published for Iran, including Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (Scott 1994), Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* (Duquet & Richardson 2000), Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* (Kirwan 1998; [ir = informal record]), Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* (Bradshaw & Kirwan 2000; [ir]), Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina* (Roth *et al* 2005), and two Indian River Terns *Sterna aurantia* in Emer Ab-bandan (Foekens & Schlevs 2006), A Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* appeared on the Caspian Sea coast of Babolsar-Khazar Abad, Mazandaran during the mid-winter Waterbirds Census in 2005 (Amini *et al* 2005). Sometimes, despite the best efforts of the observers, confirmed identifications are not attained; eg Asian Brown Flycatcher *Ficedula dauurica* (Sehhatisabet, this issue)

Khaleghizadeh and Sehhati (2004) mentioned range extension for species such as *Pterocles alchata*, Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*, Collared Dove *S. decaocto*, Barn Owl *Tyto alba* and White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*. Here we present significant range extensions, changes in migrant distribution and the occurrences of some vagrants in Iran, involving over 60 species.

METHODS

Our ornithological observations were made throughout Iran during from 2000–2005 inclusive. Some of the extensions of migrant distribution and breeding and wintering ranges we recorded are the first known for Iran; others represent extensions beyond that already reported. **Table 1** lists the species recorded, their numbers, each location's geographical coordinates and Iranian province concerned, the date or period of each occurrence, the observer(s) and the distance from the previously known range (Scott *et al* 1975, Mansoori 2001). Areas were visited on foot, by car and sometimes by boat. We identified and studied the birds with binoculars and telescopes and we recorded the geographical coordinates via a Global Positioning System (GPS) (Etrex, Vista). The province map at **Fig 1** will help orient readers unfamiliar with Iran.



Figure 1. Iran's provincial map (taken from <http://www.key2persia.com/iranmap.htm> with some corrections by Abolghasem Khaleghizadeh according to recent changes of Khorasan Province). Numbers indicate name of provinces, respectively:
1. Tehran, 2. Qom, 3. Markazi, 4. Qazvin (Ghazvin), 5. Gilan, 6. Ardabil, 7. Zanjan, 8. East Azarbaijan, 9. West Azarbaijan, 10. Kurdistan (Kordestan), 11. Hamadan, 12. Kermanshah, 13. Ilam, 14. Luristan (or Lorestan), 15. Khuzestan, 16. Chahar Mahal & Bakhtiari, 17. Kohkiluyeh & Buyer Ahmad, 18. Bushehr, 19. Fars, 20. Hormozgan, 21. Seistan & Baluchestan, 22. Kerman, 23. Yazd, 24. Esfahan (or Isfahan), 25. Semnan, 26. Mazandaran, 27. Golestan, 28. North Khorasan, 29. Khorasan Razavi, 30. South Khorasan.

DISCUSSION

Some of the species below are additional to those recorded in **Table 1**.

At least 200 Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* were present at Bouralan, West Azarbaijan and 180 were at Shorabil in mid-winter 2002. Four were at Ghareh Boulagh Wetland, West Azarbaijan and a further three were at Lake Alagol in 2000 (Results of Mid-winter Censuses). The only previous record of Shikra *Accipiter badius* near the area (see also **Table 1**) was of one seen on Qeshm Island on 3 Dec 99, which may represent the southernmost record in Iran (Bradshaw & Kirwan 2000 [ir]). Two Common Crane

Grus grus were observed in Boujagh National Park, Kiashahr, Gilan on 15 Feb 2001 (A Pasokhi pers comm). There was a report of a Corncrake *Crex crex* from Lahijan Market in 2000 (H Yazdandad pers comm) – it is a common species and is often hunted, sometimes being sold live in Lahijan market (B Nezami pers obs). Some 25 Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* were in Gori Gol, Tabriz, East Azarbaijan on 14 Sep 2000 (Jalving & Vos 2003) and 21 others were in Harat Cheshmeh shour, Khatam, Yazd on 26 Apr 2001 (Neve & Pailat 2002). One Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* was seen beyond its known migration locations in northern Lake Oroumīyeh on 22 Sep 2000 (Jalving & Vos 2003) and another was identified between the south Caspian sea and Hashtpar-Anzali in Jan 2004 (P de Boer pers obs).

Two Eurasian Collared Doves *Streptopelia decaocto* recorded north of Lake Oroumieh, West Azarbaijan on 28 Sep 2000 (Jalving & Vos 2003) were new for the area. Eight Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* were observed in the Harat area between 25 Apr–4 May (Neve & Pailat 2002) probably representing the first confirmation of an already existing breeding range. Although Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* is widespread in the Tehran area (Mansoori 2001), it has spread from naturalised commensal populations. However, records of non-commensal individuals cover 5 birds at Niavaran and Sa'd Abad Palaces, north of Tehran (Khaleghizadeh 2004). A colony in a palm garden, in Bam, Kerman province (B Musavi pers obs) is of uncertain origin. The recent observations of the species in Karaj and Lashgarak (A Khaleghizadeh pers obs) are thought to comprise further natural spread from the fairly small Tehran naturalised population, a range increase of c50km. Similarly, recent records of White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* in these locations suggest a naturalised range in a radius of c60km around Tehran.

Subsequent to the Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* records in **Table 1**, the species disappeared until 2004 due to the intervening drought, at which time it reappeared scattered around the Jiroft area, especially near a mud dam at 28°40'40"N, 57°41'43"E. In the case of Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*, we note additional records from Scott (1973) in the Lashgarak area, Dayani & Behrouzi-Rad (1991) at Kheirud Kenar and von Petutschnig *et al* (2002) in Golestan; another record came from Jalving & Vos (2003) at Rashakan, west of Lake Oroumieh, West Azarbaijan in Sep 2000. We note that some other older records occurred beyond Mansoori's mapped area (2001) for Wryneck. For example, Sturhan (*in litt*) mentions early records at Evin, Rogers (2001) notes ringing records of nine birds in the Lar valley in the 1970s, and Passburg (1959) had several records on the Caspian slope and coast in Aug and Sep and one south of Elburz on 6 Apr at Robat Karim, Tehran. These records suggest that the species' range covered the provinces of Mazandaran, Golestan, Tehran and West Azarbaijan and that Wryneck was also a summer visitor in the north of Gilan, Ardebil and East Azarbaijan provinces and a winter visitor to Sistan and Hormozgan provinces (Mansoori 2001).

Additional observations we know of in Iran of wheatears were of a Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* by Rezaei (*in litt*) in the Noor area and a Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* in Islam Abad Wetland, Naghadeh, West Azarbaijan on 30 Sep 2000 (Jalving & Vos 2003). Three Greenish Warblers *Phylloscopus trochiloides* were in mountain forest and suburban gardens and habitation, Khatam, Yazd on 4–5 May 2001 (Neve & Pailat 2002), one in Fasandoz, Mahabad on 24 Sep 2000 and another on Islami Island, West Azarbaijan on 26 Sep 2000. One Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* was observed on Kabudan Island, Lake Oroumieh on 22 Sep 2000 (Jalving & Vos 2003), and one was in mountain forest on 4 May 2001 (Neve & Pailat 2002) and earlier one had been recorded in the Lashgarak area (Scott 1973). Scott *et al* (1975) had not included it. Mansoori's map (2001) placed the species only

Table 1. Below are details of species, numbers of birds, physical locations, geographical coordinates and dates of records, observers and distances from known ranges (breeding or wintering) or migration distribution for about 60 species birds in Iran. Data have been extracted from the results of many field trips in Iran from 2000–2005 inclusive.

NB - In the 'Distance' column, figures represent distances (in km) from **known** areas, thus: br= breeding range, wr=wintering range and md=migration distribution. Other abbreviations are: vc=very common, wbc=waterbird census, WR=Wildlife Refuge, NP=National Park and PA=Protected Area

Species	Totals	Location	Province	Date or period	Observer	Distance from breeding range or md
Red-breasted Goose <i>Branta ruficollis</i>	1	Miankaleh	Mazandaran	Dec 2002	PB	Near
	1	Freidoonkenar ab-bandan	Mazandaran	Dec 2002	PB	100 wr
Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	6	Miangan wetland, Izeh	Khuzestan	Jan 2005	PB	700 wr
	3	Freidoonkenar ab-bandan	Mazandaran	Jan 2001	PB	400 wr
Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	2	Cheshmeh Majerad, Touran, Shahroud		Semnan	Sep 2001	PB 200
Long-tailed Duck <i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	1	The pond in the city of Lahijan	Gilan	5 Jan to mid-Feb 2005	BN	100 wr
White-headed Duck <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	3	Gandoman wetland	Chahar Mahal & Bakhtiari	Mar 2000	PB	50 wr?
Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	3	Dariache-e-mahi (Manmade shrimp <i>Artemia</i> sp wetland 70km from Rafsanjan, 31°07_25'N, 55°27_31'E	Kerman	winter 2000	DM	200 wr
	8	Dariache-e-mahi	Kerman	spring 2000	DM	200
	9	Dariache-e-mahi	Kerman	summer 2000	DM	200 br?
	5	Kabutarkhan ab-bandan	Kerman	winter 2001	DM	200
	3	Shekarab dam (incomplete, started in 2001), Khabr NP	Kerman	winter 2004	DM	250 wr
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>	6	Angouran WR & PA, Mahneshan	Zanjan	29 Sep 2002	SS	25
	17	Along Ghezel Ozan River	Zanjan	23 Sep 2001	SS	25
	2	Angouran WR	Zanjan	25 Jun 2003	SS	25 br
Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	2	Takht-e-Soleiman	Zanjan	May 2002	PB	60
Eurasian Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	1	Reedbeds of Hozche Zogal Shoi, c5km from Zarand	Kerman	late spring 2001	DM	200 br
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	6	Angouran WR & PA, Mahneshan	Zanjan	23 Sep 2001	SS	70
Great White Pelican <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	2	Kabutarkhan Abbandan 30°12_17'N 56°19_28'E, 60km from Kerman (pistachio irrigation)	Kerman	Winters 2001-02, briefly	DM	300 wr
Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>	1	Bamdej wetland	Khuzestan	Jan 2005	PB	70 wr
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1	Vahdat Dam, Sanandaj	Kurdistan	22 Sep 2001	SS	50 md
Crested Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	1	Chabahar	Seistan & Baluchestan	Sep 2003	PB	480 md

Black-winged Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	1	Celmir in Tandureh national park	Khorasan Razavi	27 Mar 2005	BM	1100 (vagrant)
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	1	Chah Mil Plain, Orzoiyeh, Baft	Kerman	23 Nov 2004	SS	350 wr
	3	Manzel Abad Plain, Shahr Babak	Kerman	26 Dec 2004	SS	300 wr
	1	Firuz Abad Plain, Rayen	Kerman	29 Nov 2004	SS	200 wr
	1	Hendijan plain, Mahshahr	Khuzestan	25 Nov 2000	SS	170 wr
Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>	1 dead	Karaj city	Tehran	9 Jul 2005	AK	Rare, but found in former range
Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	5	Breeding on tall druce <i>Prosopis cineraria</i> tree in military area in Bandar Abbas city & another nest in another military area	Hormozgan	4 Apr 2004	BM	On limit of known br
Little Bustard <i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	1	Langarud Market	Gilan	Jan 2004	BN	200 wr
Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i>	1	Radar Poshteh, Siahkal, Lahijan	Gilan	25 Sep 2002	SS	50 md
	5	Paddy fields, Lasht Nesha, E of Rasht	Gilan	Sep–Dec, after rice harvest	BN	100 md?
Little Crake <i>Porzana parva</i>	1	Omidiyeh wetland	Khuzestan	Jan 2005	PB	400 md?
Common Crane <i>Grus grus</i>	8	Allah Abad plain, Bouein Zahra	Ghazvin	23 Jan 2001	SS	350 wr
	1imm	Sorkhrud Damgah, Fereidounkenar	Mazandaran	13 Jan 2003	SS	100 wr
	c1500	Meighan wetland, 17km northwest of Arak	Markazi	Jan 2001	PB	200 wr
	90	Tarom and Tashkouiyyeh, Hajiabad	Hormozgan	Feb 2004	NH	200 wr
	80+	Tarom and Tashkouiyyeh, Hajiabad	Hormozgan	Jan 2005	SS	200 wr
Sociable Lapwing <i>Vanellus gregarius</i>	9	Boujagh NP, Kiashahr	Gilan	15 Aug 2001	SS	20 md?
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	2	Boujagh NP, Kiashahr	Gilan	15 Aug 2001	SS	Rare, but in former range
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	4	Hozche Zogal Shoi, c5km from Zarand, 30°47'22"N, 56°34'35"E	Kerman	Late spring 2000	DM	350 md
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	1	Boujagh NP, Kiashahr	Gilan	30 Jul 2001	SS	W Iran border, Caspian coast
	20	Islam Abad Wetland, Oroumieh	West Azarbaijan	7–11 Jul 2002	SS	Previous range, but rare
	13	Hozche Zogal Shoi, c5km from Zarand	Kerman	Late spring 2001	DM	300 md
Collared Pratincole <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	1	West of Charak city, Seraj PA	Hormozgan	Apr 2005	NH	250 md
Slender-billed Gull <i>Larus genei</i>	800bp	Tashk lake	Fars	7 Jun 2004	SS	250 br
	1500 pulli 4500ind 2500 pulli	Tashk lake	Fars	21 Jun 2005	SS	250 br

Lesser Crested Tern <i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	1	Ghabr-e-Nakhoda, Khour Musa	Khuzestan	Jan 2005	PB	130 md? wr?
Swift Tern <i>Sterna bergii</i>	2	Ghabr-e-Nakhoda, Khour Musa	Khuzestan	Jan 2005	PB	130 md? wr?
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	1	Ghabr-e-Nakhoda, Khour Musa	Khuzestan	Jan 2005	PB	130 md? wr?
Pomarine Skua <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	1	Boujagh NP	Gilan	Dec 2004	BN	100 wr?
Crowned Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles coronatus</i>	25	Allah Abad plain, Bouein Zahra	Ghazvin	23 Jan 2001	SS	200 wr
Eurasian Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	2	Allah Akbar plain, Dehloran	Ilam	21 Nov 2000	SS	100 wr
	7	Allah Akbar plain, Dehloran	Ilam	13 Feb 2001	SS	100 wr
	52	Shoush plains, Shoush	Khuzestan	23 Nov 2000	SS	50 wr
Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1	Lakes Tash and Bakhtegan	Fars	Apr 2001	PB	100 br
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	2	South of Shahriyar city	Tehran	Apr 2001	PB	Within br
	1	Zaviyeh city	Markazi	May 2002	PB	50 br
Spotted Owlet <i>Athene brama</i>	1	Choghazanbil	Khuzestan	Apr 2004	PB	300 br
Indian Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	1	Kahur town, Chabahar	Seistan & Baluchestan	Sep 2003	PB	1000 (vagrant)
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	vc	Around Minab freshwater canal and entire mangrove area in Sirik	Hormozgan	In winter quarters	BM	100 wr
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	2	Kani Borazan Wetland, Naghadeh	W Azarbaijan	6 Nov 2003	SS	250 wr
	Colony c100	Edge of Halil rud River, Doboneh village, near Jiroft	Kerman	Mid-winter wbc 2000DM		350 wr
Eurasian Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	1 dead	Noor plain forests	Mazandaran	1999	SS	300
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	1	Dez Wildlife Refuge	Khuzestan	Apr 2004	PB	270 md? br?
Eurasian Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1	In garden, Mazar village 60k S of Baft city, Khabr NP, 28°48_47'N, 56°20_37'E	Kerman	Spring 2002	DM	400 br
	3?	Nakhiloo village, west to city of Charak	Hormozgan	Jul 2004	NH	400 br
Eurasian Nutcracker <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	1	Forest around Fouman	Gilan	Mar 2005	PB	Very rare (Mansoori)
Desert Lark <i>Ammomanes deserti</i>	25	Angouran WR & PA, Mahnesan	Zanjan	22–26 Jun 2003	SS	300 br?
	14	Angouran WR & PA, Mahnesan	Zanjan	29 Sep–5 Oct 2002	SS	300 br?
Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	14	Shoush Plains	Khuzestan	23 Nov 2001	SS	250 wr?
Eurasian Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	vc	Tarom and Tashkuiye plains near Haji Abad town	Hormozgan	16 Feb 2005	BM	100 wr

Scrub Warbler <i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>	2	Angouran WR and PA, Mahneshan	Zanjan	29 Sep–5 Oct 2002	SS	250 br
Booted Warbler <i>Iduna [Hippolais] caligata</i>	15	Angouran WR and PA, Mahneshan	Zanjan	21–25 Jun 2003	SS	200 br
Green Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides nitidus</i> (Rheindt 2006)	1	Chahkin Plain, Zarand	Kerman	29 Nov 2004	SS	550 md?
Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides viridanus</i> (Rheindt 2006)	1	Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve, Kalibar	E Azarbaijan	10 Jul 2003	SS	Previous range, but rare
Eurasian Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	vc	Manesht and Ghilarang PA, especially around oak forest on mountains	Ilam	21–23 Apr 2005	BM	450 md?
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	1	Chahkin Plain, Zarand	Kerman	29 Nov 2004	SS	250 md?
Lesser Whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i> Plate 1	8–13	Around and near Bazangan lake, on <i>Tamarix</i> trees, between Sarakhs and Mashhad city c125km from Sarakhs	Khorasan Razavi	28 Apr 2005	BM	400, but see range in Porter <i>et al</i> (1996) br
Eastern Orphean Warbler <i>Sylvia [hortensis] crassirostris</i> Plate 2	3	Banks of River Jegin (Jegin dry woodland), near Jask; mostly <i>Tamarix</i> and <i>Acacia</i> spp	Hormozgan	21 Jan 2005	BM	220 md?
Oriental White-eye <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i> Plate 3	4	Khalasi lagoon, East to Jask	Hormozgan	July 2005	NH	Second record for Iran (Vagrant or introduced?)
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	1	Angouran WR & PA, Mahneshan	Zanjan	1 Oct 2002	SS	Southern limit of Iran northern range
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	1	Near Gaz river (Sirik area) between Minab and Jask cities	Hormozgan	8 Apr 2004	BM	1100 br
Northern Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	3	Noor forests	Mazandaran	5 Apr 1999	SS	20 br
Common Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	1	Geno mountain (1720m asl)	Hormozgan	8 Nov 2004	BM	300 wr
Pied Wheatear <i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	23	Goude-Ghoul Non-hunting Area, Sirjan	Kerman	25–28 Mar 2002	SS	50 br
	4(1imm)	Geno mountain, Bandar Abbas (1400m asl)	Hormozgan	12 Feb 2005	BM	250 br
Desert Wheatear <i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	9	Zarivar Lake, Sanandaj	Kurdistan	6 Oct 2000	SS	450 br
	1	Islam-Abad, south of Lake Oroumieh	W Azarbaijan	30 Sep 2000	SS	450 br
	15	Around Lake Oroumieh	W Azarbaijan	7–11 Jul 2002	SS	500 br
	20	Islami Island, Lake Oroumieh	W Azarbaijan	7–11 Jul 2002	SS	500 br

Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	1	Geno mountain	Hormozgan	23 Feb 2005	BM	300 wr
Semi-collard Flycatcher <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	1	Chelmir area in Tandureh National Park	Khorasan Razavi	27 Mar v2005	BM	150 md
	1	Lavan Island	Hormozgan	Mar 2004	NH	850 md
White-throated Dipper <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	1	Ajgerak non-hunting area 29°14_N, 56°49_E, Rabar township 20km from Baft,	Kerman	2001 mid-summer	DM	300 br
Long-billed Pipit <i>Anthus similis</i> Plate 4	2	On Farur Island and near Bandar Abbas city, one in cultivated area	Hormozgan	17 Jan–Mar 2005	BM	300 wr
	4	In the city of Jask	Hormozgan	17 Jan–Mar 2005	BM	150 wr
	1	c23km N of Bandar Abbas in a cultivated area, between Hajiabad and Bandar Abbas	Hormozgan	17 Jan–Mar 2005	BM	100 wr
Eurasian Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	6	Bandar Abbas	Hormozgan	Feb 2005	NH	350 wr
Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	2	In rocky area near a road to Ilam city	Ilam	14 Apr 2005	BM	50 br

In the 'Observer' column, SS=ME Sehhati-Sabet, BM=Seyed Babak Musavi, PB=Parviz Bakhtiari, DM=Daryoush Moghaddas, NH=the late Nader Hamidi, BN=Bagher Nezami and AK=Abolghasem Khaleghizadeh.

in southwest Iran. Overall the numbers of records of Garden Warblers outside the mapped range suggest that subsequent maps need to be considerably revised. We note that the second record of Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* (**Table 1**) was not far from the first record east of Jask on 14 May 1978 (Reynolds 1978).

Jalving and Vos (2003) also included mention of 9 Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* on the Oroumieh coast, two in Kabudan Island, one in Hasanlou Wetland and another in Islam Abad in the period 14 Sep to 1 Oct 2000 and of an immature in the Harat plains, Khatam on 4 May 2001. The observation of Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* in Harat, Yazd (Neve & Pailat 2002) suggests a new northernmost limit of the species in central Iran. Jalving and Vos (2003) recorded a Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* ssp *pallidirostris* ('Steppe Grey Shrike') on Fasandoz plain, south of Lake Oroumieh on 24 Sep 2000 and 7 Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* on Kabudan Island on 21–22 Sept 2000 and one on Islami Island on 26 Sep 2000; Neve and Pailat (2002) noted another in Harat Chashmeh Shour, Khatam, Yazd on 1 May 2001. Although Dayani and Behrouzi-Rad (1991) had recorded Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* at Kheirud Kenar, Nowshahr, on the south Caspian Sea coast, they did not categorise it as the first record for that region, whereas Mansoori (2001) did so for a record in Khuzestan region in Iran's southwest. Dayani and Behrouzi-Rad (1991) recorded Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*, Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*, Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus*, Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* and Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* at Kheirud Kenar, Nowshahr, Mazandaran. Barn Owl *Tyto alba* was recently recorded in the Kerman area, following the previous record in near Yazd (Khaleghizadeh & Sehhati 2004). Stop Press: c10 Ménétries Warbler *Sylvia mystacea* around Lake Alagol on 17 May 2006.

From time to time, translation of lists species names listed from one language to another leads to errors, particularly if, as in Farsi, names within a genus are very similar. For example, the Bay-backed Shrike attributed to Sehhatiasabet was more probably Red-

backed Shrike *L. collurio*. In a similar vein the informal record of Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* in Balmer and Betton (2004; [ir]) was an error in translation for Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* (MJ Blair pers comm). Furthermore, we recognise that the Bay-backed Shrike in Dayani & Behrouzi-Rad (1991) was insufficiently separated from Red-backed Shrike. These circumstances reinforce the need to scrutinise and question all records meticulously before they are submitted for formal publication.

We intend to apply strict but neutral scrutiny to all future records, no matter their origin so that evaluations can be re-examined in the light of subsequent observations. This way, unconfirmed observations would remain available for consideration, particularly where the historical records make no mention of the species concerned. For example, P Bakhtiari (pers obs) has details of Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps* in Iran's northwest – a species not mentioned by Scott *et al* (1975) nor by Mansoori (2001) in his field guides. We are also encouraged by analyses such as that by Kratochwill and Kirwan (2004) where careful examination of older data in the light of more recent information have enabled corrections to be made, an example being the observations of Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* in Khorasan Razavi province, seemingly a range extension, actually occurred in the range map given in the Middle



Plate 1. Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* near Bazangan lake between Sarakhs and Mashad on 28 April 2005. © Seyed Babak Musavi



Plate 2. Orphean Warbler *Sylvia [hortensis] crassirostris* in Jegin woodland (SE of Iran near the town of Jask on 21 January 2005. © Seyed Babak Musavi.



Plate 4. Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* in cultivated area near Bandar Abbas on 17 January. © Seyed Babak Musavi.



Plate 3. Two Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* observed at mangrove forest, east of Jask, July 2005. © the late Nader Hamidi.

East Field Guide (Porter *et al* 1996). Although as yet there is no established Records Committee in Iran for bird species, we intend to apply the criteria such a Committee would use as best we can to all records we examine for our studies and researches. Meanwhile, as a good means of encouraging reporting of unexpected sightings by inexperienced birdwatchers in Iran, we will continue to publicise the status of rare species in our national journals; for example Ghaemi (in press) and Ahmadzadeh & Khaleghizadeh (in press). We seek to increase awareness of subtle differences between subspecies and of the likelihood of a species being found outside its normal range.

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