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The Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* (Muscicapidae: Passeriformes) is a bird of arid and semi-arid region, and is locally abundant in barren rocky areas, sand dunes with scrub vegetation, cultivation, ravines, outside villages and nomadic encampments. It is a winter visitor to northwestern India, mainly the arid zones of Rajasthan and Gujarat, up to Madhya Pradesh and northern Maharashtra (Ali & Ripley 1983; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Further, there are sightings of this bird from Leh-Alchi (Jammu and Kashmir), Kangra (Himachal Pradesh), Haripur (Punjab), Chandigarh, South Delhi, Jhajjar (Haryana), Chambal (Uttar Pradesh), Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh), Raipur and Patan (Chhattisgarh) besides the number of records from Gujarat and Rajasthan (Ebird 2015; Migrantwatch 2015). Prasad (2003) has compiled some records of this bird from western Maharashtra particularly from Dhule, Nasik and Pune districts. Recently, Kasambe & Wadatkar (2007) reported a single bird from Amravati University campus, Amravati, Maharashtra.

A project has been undertaken by us since 2013 to study the bird diversity of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Tuljapur Campus and surroundings, a semi-arid area of Osmanabad District, Maharashtra. During the winter, we sighted a single male Variable Wheatear on 29 December 2014 at 08.30hr, near stone crusher

FIRST RECORD OF VARIABLE WHEATEAR *OENANTHE PICATA* (AVES: PASSERIFORMES: MUSCICAPIDAE) FROM OSMANABAD DISTRICT AND RANGE EXTENSION TO SOUTHEASTERN MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

Sanjay Thakur¹, Rajiv Pandit² & Anil Mahabal³

¹ Biome Conservation Foundation, 18- Silver Moon, S.No: - 1/2A/2, Bavdhan (Kh), Pune, Maharashtra 411021, India

² Jividha.A-20, Vijayashree towers, Near Global Hospital, Dattawadi, Pune, Maharashtra 411030, India

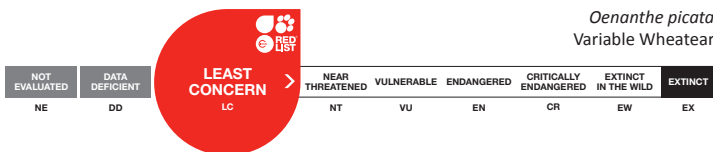
³ Scientist (Retd), Zoological Survey of India, WRC, Akurdi, Pune, Maharashtra 411044, India

¹sanjaythakur005@gmail.com (corresponding author),

²jividha.rajiv@gmail.com, ³mahabal.anil@gmail.com

(18°02'15.5"N & 76°03'15.7"E) close to TISS (Image 1). The bird was again sighted on 3 January 2015 at 17.20hr and on 18 January 2015 at 08.15hr in the same locality.

The species has not been reported from Osmanabad District by Narwade & Fartade (2011) or from the neighbouring districts of Solapur by Mahabal (1989) and Ahmednagar by Kurhade (1991, 1996) and by Jathar (2014). The present sighting of Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* is the first record from Osmanabad District, Maharashtra and constitutes a range extension to southeastern India.



Oenanthe picata
Variable Wheatear



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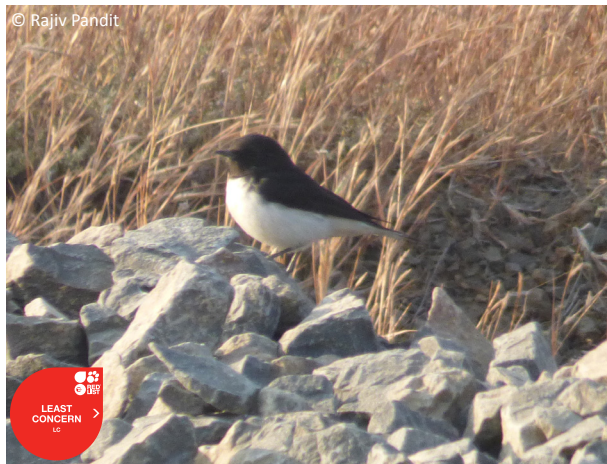


Image 1. Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* close to TISS Tuljapur Campus, Osmanabad District, Maharashtra, India.

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