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NOTE

**FIRST RECORD OF MIGRATORY GREY-NECKED BUNTING
EMBERIZA BUCHANANI BLYTH, 1844 (AVES: PASSERIFORMES:
EMBERIZIDAE) AS A WINTER VISITOR IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI
DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU, INDIA**

T. Siva & P. Neelananarayanan

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FIRST RECORD OF MIGRATORY GREY-NECKED BUNTING *EMBERIZA BUCHANANI* BLYTH, 1844 (AVES: PASSERIFORMES: EMBERIZIDAE) AS A WINTER VISITOR IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

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The Grey-necked Bunting or Grey-hooded Bunting belongs to the family Embrizidae. Published information available on this bird in India is very limited. The species is found in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Nepal, China, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (BirdLife International 2017). Besides, this bunting is also reported from Africa, West Asia and South Asia during winter (Yosef 2001). It breeds in Baluchistan, Pakistan and winters mainly in Pakistan and central and western India, especially in Gujarat (Grimmett et al. 2011). It has been regularly recorded moving through Gujarat from September to March (Madge 2017). The Grey-necked Bunting is considered one of the Least Concern birds due to its range and population. The population is suspected to be stable in the absence of evidence for any declines or substantial threats (BirdLife International 2017). The Grey-necked Bunting is mainly found in dry, open habitats, scrubby areas, and small hillocks

covered with low thorn scrub. The food habit of the species is seeds, plant shoots and during breeding season the chicks are fed with small invertebrates particularly insects such as weevils, beetles, bugs, ants, grasshoppers and snails (Madge 2017). The nest is built by the female and is well hidden under vegetation or a sheltering boulder, on the ground.

First sighting at Tiruchirappalli District: Devanoorputhur (11.10638889 N & 78.42694444 E) is a village in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamil Nadu. This area has many rocky hillocks which are situated mostly in the dry and open habitats. The locality's altitude is between 100 and 260. We observed and recorded a pair of Grey-necked Buntings for the first time on 21 November 2015. The birds were sitting on a branch of a thorn shrub *Flueggea leucopyrus*. The area is mainly dry with open habitats, scrubby areas and small hillocks covered with low thorn shrubs. The birds were photographed and later identified using a field guide (Grimmett et al. 2011) as Grey-necked Bunting. Later, this first sighting was recorded and entered in the ebird checklist (www.ebird.org-http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S25959736). The second sighting of Grey-necked Bunting was on 20 January 2017. The birds were observed and recorded on the same shrub species (*Flueggea leucopyrus*) as the first sighting. It may be construed that it is a suitable place for this winter migrant species as during two consecutive winters this species visited this area. Studies on the ecology and biology of this bird from this study area are required.



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Images 1 & 2. Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani* is seen on *Flueggea leucopyrus*



Image 3. A typical habitat where we could observe and record Grey-necked Bunting near Devanoorputhur Village, Tiruchirappalli District.

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