

## PLATE 3: ISABELLINE SHRIKE

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### 4 Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

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Mainly breeding in Central Asia and wintering south of the Sahara in north-east Africa, in the south of the Arabian Peninsula and from southern Iraq east to north-west India. Occurs in open country with scattered bushes, particularly in semi-deserts, but also in cultivated and sometimes marshy areas.

- 4a **Adult male** (n nominate; north-western China) Typical bird. Pallid appearance with uniform sandy-grey upperparts; poorly defined head pattern with just a small dark brown spot on lores; small white primary patch. Tail generally less rufous than in next race (variable).
- 4b/c **Adult male** (*phoenicuroides*; western part of range, from Iran to Xinjiang) Typical, well-contrasted individual with well-marked head pattern showing rather large, jet black facial mask extending to lores, and distinct white supercilium. Rufous crown and tail contrast with grey-brown back. Small but distinct white primary patch. Underparts almost pure white in bird shown; can be tinged vinous-pink.
- 4d **Adult male** (*phoenicuroides*) Less typical individual with greyer upperparts and a weaker face pattern, the supercilium being less pronounced and buff.
- 4e **Adult male** (*speculigerus*; Mongolia, north-central China) Intermediate between *isabellinus* and *phoenicuroides*. Particularly resembles greyer individuals of the latter race with its typical drab grey upperparts. Note well-defined facial mask, prominent white primary patch and dark wings, all reminiscent of *phoenicuroides*, but also subdued supercilium and creamy underparts, which recall *isabellinus*.
- 4f **Adult female** (*phoenicuroides*) Browner and smaller facial mask than in male; lores paler and supercilium less well defined; upperparts somewhat browner and primary patch only faintly indicated.
- 4g **First-winter** (*phoenicuroides*) Rather pallid appearance. Note plain mantle; barring has disappeared (or is sometimes limited to crown and rump). More and more such birds are being found in western Europe in autumn. See text for differences with juvenile Red-backed Shrike.
- 4h **Juvenile** (*phoenicuroides*) Very similar to Red-backed Shrike, but somewhat paler with a more rufous tail (though this can also occur in young *collurio*: see text).
- 4i **Hybrid** Dark individual, presumably a hybrid between *phoenicuroides* and Red-backed Shrike. Hybrids are extremely variable, which explains the description by Russian ornithologists of six new 'species' and two new 'races' in a 17-year period towards the end of the last century. In the bird illustrated here note the blackish tail reminiscent of a male Red-backed Shrike, dark grey upperparts and small white primary patch.

