



ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

c/o THE LODGE, SANDY, BEDFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND.

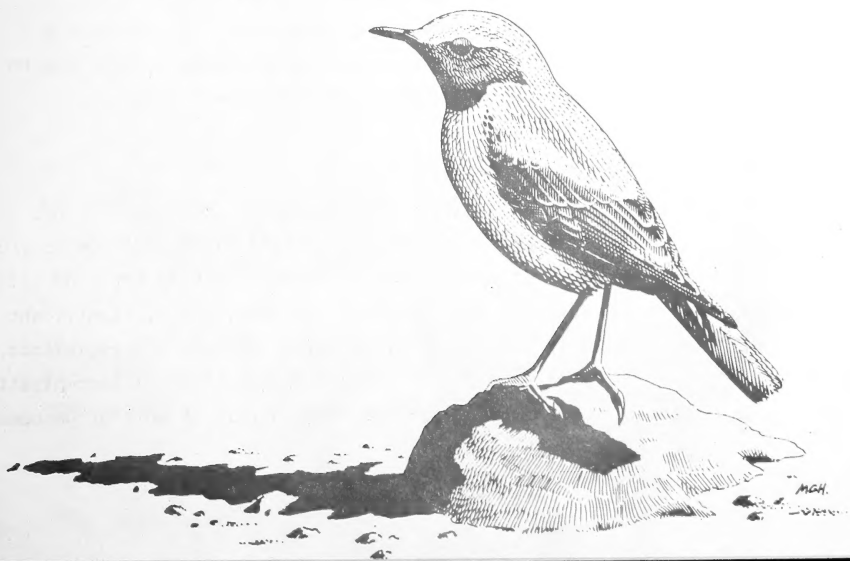
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EDITORS & PRODUCTION: C A HARBARD AND D J FISHER

EDITORIAL

With this issue of the Bulletin, OSME makes a series of important new commitments to the promotion of bird conservation in the Middle East. The Sites Register Scheme, announced by Richard Porter in the previous issue, now gets under way; and we are also announcing the establishment of a small fund to promote conservation-orientated projects on birds in the Middle East region. We see these initiatives, which are dealt with immediately below, as closely related pursuits of OSME's constitutional powers to help "towards the identification and solution of conservation problems concerning birds within the area". As a further measure, we have prepared a working list of conservation priorities to set before members for their consideration and comment and for use as guidelines to the likely important issues the Society will need to address in the coming years.



Although one of the themes of this development of OSME's activities is centralisation (the Sites Register), our major hope and intention is to mobilise the wide constituency of our membership into a more active role in the pursuit of bird conservation, and to provide better support for those members already thus involved. We see it, therefore, as a two-way process, where all parties - and in particular the birds themselves - benefit. We hope that these developments will be welcomed and understood as a genuine, if very small, attempt to contribute to the future welfare of the birds and their environments throughout the Middle East.

GUIDELINE NOTES FOR THE OSME SITES REGISTER

A register of sites important for birds in the Middle East is intended to fulfil an urgent need for baseline data in the planning and promotion of wildlife conservation throughout the region. Knowledge of the existence of sites, and of what they contain, is crucial if they are to stand a chance of survival in the long term; and even if, as seems inevitable, many of them are to disappear over the years, knowledge of this loss will provide greater strength to the case for saving the others. If nothing else, ornithologists a century or more from now will have some interesting archive material to stimulate and set against their own research.

The information we require is relatively simple. The Sites Register Scheme form is intended to be as flexible as possible while requesting all relevant bits of information. No-one can be expected to know a site completely, and some sites will only be known very incompletely. The essential thing is not to be discouraged if the form threatens to expose your ignorance! If you think a site deserves registering, it is better you send us an incomplete form than no form at all. An example of a completed form accompanies these notes.

What is a 'Site'?

How you decide what qualities make a site worth telling us about is a rather subjective process. What, to begin with, constitutes a 'site'? And how do you know other people will not be writing in about it anyway? Likely types of site are islands (in rivers and lakes as well as seas), marshes, lakes, significant parts of rivers or mountains (gorges, cliffs, valleys), forests and grasslands. What makes them important are things like a colony of waterbirds, a concentration of winter duck, a flow of migrating raptors overhead, a pair or more of uncommon

birds nesting, and so on. It is inevitable that we will receive several forms for the same site but several sets of observations can only enhance our knowledge of the site and confirm its importance. Obviously the larger a site the more likely it is to be known about by others, and beyond a certain size probably very few birdwatchers would feel comfortable attempting to describe it anyway. Very much as a rough guideline, most sites will probably be about 10 km² or less, though quite clearly where observations are made in a part of a much larger area (e.g. on one side of a large marsh or at a few points along an extensive valley) the site itself will be registered as the much larger entity. Nevertheless, it may be worth registering important smaller areas within a 'super-site' (a very big area like, e.g., the Basra marshes). OSME's Conservation Research Committee (CRC) will itself attempt to identify the well-known sites as well as the 'super-sites', but members are encouraged to send in material on these: it will be all welcome. Ultimately, the criterion to invoke in deciding whether to send in a form is whether or not there is a chance we do not know about a site or one or more of the birds you have recorded there. Please note that there is no need to insert a site name: some will inevitably be nameless.

Treatment of Material Received

At this stage we plan simply to file the forms we receive. The information they contain is not intended for immediate publication or dissemination but may be made available to national government agencies or relevant conservation bodies who request it. It is, however, our ultimate intention to process and make all information received available to the relevant conservation organisations. Non-confidential information would only be passed on with discretion, and forms marked 'confidential' will only be seen by the Chairman and Secretary of CRC; if they judge that the information should be made known to CRC or elsewhere, this can only be done with the observer's written permission. We hope, however, that observers will not mark records confidential unless there are very obvious reasons for doing so. Receipt of all forms will be acknowledged. The Middle East, for the purposes of this scheme, is defined as Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, North Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Yemen (including Socotra), Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and all the islands of the Red Sea. A blank site form is enclosed with these notes: photocopy it as you need or write for more to OSME Sites Register Scheme, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL.

PROJECT PROMOTION

OSME Council is committed to the promotion of conservation-orientated fieldwork in the Middle East, and proposes to initiate its own projects and to provide a measure of support for those of members and non-members.

OSME Expeditions

In cases where Council decides that a substantial investigation is needed, an Expedition will be mounted under the auspices of OSME and with the involvement of at least one member of Council. A proportion of the funding needed will come from within OSME; the rest will be sought by application to grant-making bodies. Members will be informed of such projects through the Bulletin.

OSME Grants

For 1984 and after, Council has established an indeterminate sum (subject to annual review) to be disbursed annually to a small number of suitably conservation-orientated projects in the Middle East. To qualify for consideration, proposals must be from members of OSME, show evidence of ability to complete the project, and indicate other sources of finance. Grantees shall be described as 'OSME supported': OSME will provide a letter of support on headed notepaper and generally expects that (a) Sandgrouse shall have first refusal of publishable results and (b) full acknowledgement be given to OSME in any publication. Proposals will be vetted by the Conservation Research Committee on the basis of established OSME priorities (see working list below).

The deadline for the submission of proposals seeking OSME support in 1984 is 15 November 1983. Proposals should be addressed to the Chairman, Conservation Research Committee, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL. A sum of £500 is set aside for OSME supported projects in 1984, though this may not all be allocated. Awards will be reported in the Bulletin.

OSME-endorsed Projects

Proposals from members which OSME would have wished to fund had funds been available, or proposals from non-members with strong conservation merits, may be endorsed by Council. Projects may thus be described as 'OSME-endorsed' in the hope that this will assist in the funding of the work or the implementation of its findings. Recipients of endorsements are encouraged to offer first refusal of publishable results to Sandgrouse.

SITES REGISTER SCHEME EXAMPLEPLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO: OSME (Sites Register),
c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, ENGLAND.PLEASE ANSWER AS SPECIFICALLY AS POSSIBLE, PREFERABLY TYPED OR CLEARLY
WRITTEN IN BLACK INK. ATTACH EXTRA SHEETS AS NECESSARY.

COUNTRY	TURKEY	NUMBER OF VISITS TO SITE AND DATES	2 visits: 23 May 1978 13 June 1978
NAME OF SITE Give alternative spellings.	NO NAME (NEAR DÜZCE)		
LOCATION Include geographical coordinates.	About 20-25 km SSE of DÜZCE (a small town on the main Istanbul-Ankara road. West of Bolu) 31°10'E 40°40'N		
SKETCH MAP Show: scale, north, site boundaries, main physical features, distance and direction of nearest towns.	<p><u>LOCATION OF SITE</u></p> <p>ca. 25 km</p> <p>— = roads</p>	<p><u>DETAILS OF SITE</u></p> <p>ca. 10 km</p> <p>roads streams</p>	
DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT Include: approximate area, altitude, type and extent of vegetation.	Stream valley in mountains south of Düzce ranging in altitude from about 1000-1500 metres over a distance of about 10 km. Mountain tops are at about 1700 m. Deciduous forest is dominant vegetation with scrub where forest has been cleared. There is some mountain pasture (farmland). Rocky streams are also important parts of habitat.		
CONSERVATION STATUS AND THREATS	Deciduous forest is relatively rare in Turkey and generally restricted to mountains. This vegetation type appears to be under threat through extensive felling at this and other sites with no signs of replanting.		
GENERAL COMMENTS Extra information eg. photographs, likely interest at other seasons.	Photographs are available of the area where the Green Warblers were found. This is an area of extensive felling at the top (southern) end of the valley.		
NAME AND ADDRESS OF OBSERVER(S)	SIMON ALBRECHT 9 Romsey Terrace, Cambridge CB1 3NH, England		

LIST OF BIRD SPECIES (Scientific or English names)

Wherever possible supply extra information on important observations, in brackets after name of species (eg numbers, date, evidence of breeding)

CONFIDENTIALITY: Please indicate any information that you wish to be kept confidential.

- CUCKOO (calling 13.6)
CRAG MARTIN (nest found)
RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (nest found)
HOUSE MARTIN (nest found)
GREY WAGTAIL
WHITE WAGTAIL
JAY
DIPPER (2+ carrying food 23.5; 2 on 13.6)
WREN (Carrying food to fledged young 13.6)
DUNNOCK
BLACKCAP (song; carrying food 13.6)
CHIFFCHAFF (song)
GREEN WARBLER (4+ singing 23.5; 2+ singing 13.6.
Minimum nos. - full search not made
on either date)
ROBIN
BLACKBIRD (carrying food 13.6)
SONG THRUSH (1 13.6.)
MARSH TIT (1 23.5)
GREAT TIT (juveniles seen 13.6)
CHAFFINCH (carrying food 13.6)
SCARLET ROSEFINCH (singing - several heard - 23.5 & 13.6)
BULLFINCH (1 pair 23.5)
ROCK BUNTING (alarm calls from male 23.5)

22 species seen in 2 visits

WORKING LIST OF CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

In order to assess what conservation work and research is required in the Middle East and to assist in the selection of suitable projects the following list has been drawn up. The list is not exhaustive but aims to present guidelines to the more important issues. It is stressed that there is much valuable research (e.g. into populations and trends) which can usefully be carried out by amateurs.

It is of course impossible to draw up an absolute list and we would welcome comments and additions.

Habitat preservation and conservation: the following areas are identified as being of major significance to birds in the Middle East and require (further) study to establish level of ornithological importance and potential threats:

Wetlands, in particular:

marshes of southern Iraq
 Nile Valley and Delta
 wetlands of Sistan on the Iran/Afghanistan border
 major wetland sites in Turkey
 major wetland sites in Iran

Forests, in particular:

major tracts in Turkey

Montane habitat, in particular:

south-west Arabia
 northern Iran
 Turkey
 Sinai

Deserts and semi-deserts throughout the region

with particular reference to desert habitat erosion and alteration as a result of general land management practices (e.g. animal grazing and agricultural development)

Islands and coasts throughout the region

with particular reference to the extent and effect of pollution, exploitation, disturbance, introduced pests

Preservation of all species endemic to the region (many are not threatened at present)

Conservation of all species globally threatened or populations regionally threatened. The following are identified in particular (but a more extensive evaluation is in progress):

Dalmatian Pelican Pelecanus crispus
 Bald Ibis Geronticus eremita
 White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla
 Lappet-faced Vulture Torgos tracheliotus
 Caucasian Black Grouse Tetrao mlokosiewiczi
 Siberian White Crane Grus leucogeranus
 Demoiselle Crane Anthropoides virgo
 Houbara Bustard Chlamydotis undulata
 Arabian Bustard Ardeotis arabs
 Great Bustard Otis tarda
 Audouin's Gull Larus audouinii

Survey of seabird colonies throughout the region, in particular:

eastern Mediterranean
 Red Sea
 Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman

Monitoring of breeding raptor population with particular reference to persecution and pesticide deployment

Monitoring of breeding herons and allied species in Turkey (which probably contains some of the largest colonies in the Western Palearctic)

Monitoring of wintering waterfowl throughout the region (several areas are internationally important for them)

Monitoring of wintering Cranes Grus grus in the region

Campaign on behalf of migrant White Storks Ciconia ciconia in the region and census of migrating flocks

Campaign against bird-trapping (e.g. in Cyprus)

Monitoring the extent and effect of hunting and persecution in the region

RAPTOR MIGRATION OVER THE RED SEA MOUNTAINS
NEAR PORT SAFAGA, EGYPT

UFFE GJØL SØRENSEN

During March 1982, a trip was made by the Danish Ornithological Society to Egypt (Meilstrup, H. & Sørensen, U.G. (1982): DOF-stortur til ~~A~~Egypten. Marts 1982. Danish Ornithological Society (50 page report)). Four days were spent at Port Safaga at the coast of the Red Sea (460 km south of Suez), and this opened up the possibility of investigating the spring migration of raptors over the Red Sea Mountains in this still rarely visited part of Egypt.

At level with Port Safaga the mountain range is approximately 80 km broad and slanting, the highest peaks are found in the eastern part (nearest peak to Port Safaga is Gebel Nuqara (834 m), but other peaks in the range are 1000-2000 m).

Observations were carried out in two areas: 1) From the seashore at Port Safaga which is 1-2 km east of the foot of the mountains on 20 March (whole day), 21-22 March (early morning and late afternoon) and 23 March (early morning). 2) Along the westward road to Qena in the Nile Valley. This road is situated in the bottom of wadis between the mountains. Observations were made here on 21 March (0950-1400 hours, 4-9 km west of Port Safaga), 22 March (0925-1400 hours, 4-15 km west of Port Safaga) and 23 March (0855-1030 hours, 4-15 km west of Port Safaga, and further on but under unfavourable weather conditions (see below)).

Wind direction and force (Beaufort): 20 March NE 1-2, 21 March NE 1-2, 22 March N 2-3, 23 March SW 2-4.

Only very few raptors were seen migrating around Port Safaga. In all only five birds were seen (3 Black Kite and 2 Marsh Harriers). None were seen crossing the sea. However, during 30 minutes' observation in the middle of the morning on the 22nd, approximately 430 raptors were seen in the distance following the eastern ridge of the mountains towards the north.

The observations along the Qena road, on the other hand, showed an apparently endless stream of raptors heading north. Due to our low position in the valleys between the mountain peaks, it was impossible to cover more than a few kilometres at any time. Even if the observation post was moved gradually inland (maximum 15 km from Port Safaga) there did not seem to be any major decrease in the intensity of birds passing overhead. Thus the actual number of raptors passing over the Qena road during these days was evidently several times higher than the figures in Table 1.

The species composition seems to indicate a close relation to the migration pattern recorded at Eilat (Christensen et al 1981, Sandgrouse No 3) in the way that those species which cross the southern part of the Gulf of Suez (Steppe Buzzard, Black Kite, Steppe Eagle) are the most numerous. Those species (e.g. Lesser Spotted Eagle and Short-toed Eagle) which Christensen et al suggested chose another route over the Suez are correspondingly scarce. Only further investigations in the Red Sea Mountains can prove if the two supposed main migration paths are already separated at level with Port Safaga.

When we left the Port Safaga area on the 23rd towards Qena, we were looking forward to seeing how the intensity of birds would develop after the first 15 km and we had hoped to find more 'Suez' birds. Unfortunately a sandstorm rose during the morning and consequently the visibility was very low on the major part of this stretch.

Undoubtedly, in the future, the Qena road may be an important study area for the elucidation of migration patterns through the Middle East of raptors.

Uffe Gjørl Sørensen, Møllegaede 21. 1 tv., DK-2200 København N, Denmark.

TABLE 1

	<u>21/3</u>	<u>22/3</u>	<u>23/3</u>
Black Kite <u>M. migrans</u>	169	684	72
Egyptian Vulture <u>N. percnopterus</u>	43	13	13
Short-toed Eagle <u>C. gallicus</u>	5	5	
Marsh Harrier <u>C. aeruginosus</u>			1
Steppe Buzzard <u>B. buteo vulpinus</u>	368	2201	801
Buzzard/Kite <u>Buteo/Milvus</u>		362	
Eagle sp. <u>Aquila sp.</u>	180	48	1
Steppe Eagle <u>A. nipalensis</u>	155	406	49
Lesser Spotted Eagle <u>A. pomarina</u>	16	1	3
Imperial Eagle <u>A. heliaca</u>		1	
Booted Eagle <u>H. pennatus</u>		1	
Osprey <u>P. haliaetus</u>		1	
Lesser Kestrel <u>F. naumanni</u>		2	
Kestrel <u>F. tinnunculus</u>	1		1
Kestrel sp. <u>F. naumanni/tinn.</u>			2
Falconiformes sp.	188	230	
TOTAL	1125	3955	943

ATLAS OF BREEDING BIRDS IN EGYPT

We have received a preliminary report of this project, which due to space limitations will have to be held over until the next Bulletin.

The Atlas will be published as a part of a book on the birds of the country.

The organisers would appreciate receiving any unpublished records or other suitable material (both on breeding and non-breeding birds) for inclusion in the book. Ornithologists visiting Egypt are requested to contact them, so that they can be sent standard forms for the "Atlas of Breeding Birds" Survey and additional information. All contributions will be fully acknowledged.

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AN INLAND RECORD OF RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus*) IN ISRAELG.W. MURPHY AND N.J. REDMAN

On 2nd April 1981 the authors, in the company of S. Ball, G. Bond and R. Filby, identified an adult Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* flying south along the western shore of the Dead Sea in Israel, at a point just south of Ras Fashka ($31^{\circ} 45'N$, $35^{\circ} 30'E$).

Our initial impressions were of a predominantly white bird with long and narrow, pointed, black-tipped wings and a red bill. In size it appeared roughly equivalent to a largish duck and its flight was rapid and direct with deep, angled wing beats. The bird was watched for nearly 2 minutes, at ranges down to approximately 300 metres, as it continued purposefully southwards maintaining a constant height of about 10 metres above the water. Viewing conditions were excellent with bright sunshine and no wind. With the aid of telescopes the following plumage characters were noted:

Head white with a black smudge through the eye. Bill long and red appearing slightly decurved. Narrow blackish barring on upperparts appeared uniform greyish at a distance. Upperwing white with black outer primaries, also showing black at the bases of the wings, on the inner secondaries and inner median coverts. Underwing and entire underparts white. Tail white, long and wedge-shaped.

The characteristic elongated tail streamers were not seen and it was assumed that they had either been broken off or moulted. Although a complete moult is undertaken annually immediately after breeding, the moult of the tail streamers is apparently irregular.

Two races of Red-billed Tropicbird occur marginally in the Western Palearctic. *P.a. mesonauta* breeds on islands in tropical North Atlantic, in particular the Cape Verde Islands. *P.a. indicus* breeds on islands in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. It formerly bred in the Gulf of Suez and is apparently declining throughout its Western Palearctic range.

Red-billed Tropicbirds are essentially pelagic and usually solitary except in the breeding season. Although there is no evidence of regular seasonal movements, many birds disperse widely from the breeding colonies. In the North Atlantic, vagrants have reached Madeira and Long Island, New York, the latter record representing quite a considerable northerly displacement from its nearest breeding colonies on the Lesser Antilles. P.a. indicus ranges widely over the Indian Ocean, occasionally reaching the coasts of western India and Sri Lanka, as well as dispersing throughout the waters surrounding Arabia. Individuals occasionally reach the Gulf of Aqaba although the only records of which we are aware are single birds off Ras Mohammed, Sinai on 27.3.76 (R.F. Porter pers comm) and 2 km southwest of Tiran Island on 22.4.77 (Y. Leshem in litt). It has been recorded twice at Eilat, 2 birds on 14.5.67 (P. Schlutter in litt) and 1 on 14.5.78 (N. Krabbe in litt).

An inland record of Red-billed Tropicbird is undoubtedly unusual. We are not aware of any particularly irregular weather conditions during the days preceding our sighting and can only speculate as to the origin of this bird. The two Western Palearctic races are distinct in the field, P.a. indicus having a more orange-coloured bill and a less well-defined black eye stripe. Unfortunately, these features were not apparent to us. Geographically this bird was most likely to have been of the P.a. indicus population, having wandered too far north. Indeed it seemed to have corrected its error and was heading in the direction of its nearest breeding grounds.

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C.W. Murphy, 3 Sinclair Drive, Liverpool 18.

N.J. Redman, 1 Westfields, Saffron Walden, Essex.

BALD IBIS (Geronticus eremita) IN ISRAELF.R. LAMBERT & R.F. GRIMMETT

A Bald Ibis was seen on 7th April 1980, south of Jerico, close to the northern shores of the Dead Sea. The bird was watched feeding in an area of bare stoney ground for approximately 20 minutes before taking flight. Rising on thermal currents, it circled to a great height before departing in a northerly direction.

The bird was in full adult plumage, with prominent neck crests, metallic purple and green sheens to plumage and brilliant red iris.

The only known remaining Bald Ibis colony in the Middle East is at Birecik, Turkey, some 600 km north-east of Jerico. It was felt at the time that this individual was on return migration northwards. However Hirsch (1979), discussing the Birecik colony, states that birds begin to arrive by mid-February and have usually all returned by mid-March when breeding commences. The date of our record therefore suggests that the bird was a non-breeding adult, presumably from the Turkish colony.

There are two other post-1935 records of Bald Ibis from this region. Both of these records were in April 1970, and both were of birds sighted near Elat. A total of as many as 19-20 individuals was involved (Hirsch 1980).

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BALD IBIS (Geronticus eremita) SEEN ON MIGRATION IN ISRAELNIELS KRABBE

On April 4, 1970, 4 Bald Ibises were observed in the area around and in the fields of Kibbutz Elot. The birds were first seen flying over the fields before resting in a field for half-an-hour, then flying north, following the Arava. The birds did not seem shy at all. They were watched by 4 observers through 2 Kowa 10:50, 1 Asahi pentax 7:50 and 1 Holbeck 8:30 binoculars. Observers: Gerda Perelson, Ebbe Hansen, Bruria Globinsky and Niels Krabbe.

Description: The birds were about the size of a Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus, glossy black on body and wings, shining purple on shoulders and wing coverts. The deeply curved bill was bright red as was the eye and bare head. The feathering on the head started a few centimetres behind the eye. All the feathers on the hind-crown and nape were very elongated and raised, each feather with a different length, giving the appearance of a shaggy crest. In one of the birds there was a little pinkish to be seen in the legs, while they were dirty grey in the rest.

Niels Krabbe, Møllegade 21, 2200 Copenhagen, Denmark.

A PUZZLING SYLVIA FROM EILAT, ISRAELNIELS KRABBE

During the time I was ringing birds in Eilat, the most interesting bird was a Sylvia caught on April 12, 1970. With the kind help of Walter Ferguson we finally succeeded in finding a description which matched the bird perfectly. This was the female Sylvia melanocephala norissae, described by Kenneth Williamson in "Identification for Ringers". His description goes: "Bright sandy-brown above; a heavy wash of sandy-buff on breast, sides and flanks". The eye-ring was not as red as in S.m. momus, more yellowish.

Ferguson did a very accurate, full-size, watercolour painting of the bird while it was completely fresh. The bird was collected, and the specimen is now preserved in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. To the best of my knowledge, no effort has so far been made to compare it with

a specimen from the oasis El Fayum in Egypt. The subspecies is previously known from this oasis only, and was thought to be strictly resident.

Niels Krabbe, Møllegaade 21, 2200 Copenhagen, Denmark.

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RECENT REPORTS

From time to time we receive records from members of birds which they have seen in the OSME area. Whilst we do not collect such records for publication in any formal way we will occasionally mention the rarer or more unusual sightings in the Bulletin. Please bear in mind that these are not authenticated records which have been in any way 'accepted' by any relevant recorders or records committees - they are just sightings as reported to us.

NORTH YEMEN

In early summer 1982 A Helbig visited North Yemen from 28 May to 10 June. Most of the time was spent birding the highlands, especially around Sana'a, Al Mahwit and Ibb with only a one-day visit to the Red Sea coast at Al Mukha.

Among the 95 species seen, three appear to be new for the country, if the records are acceptable.

A probable Senegal Scops Owl Otus (senegalensis) pamelae, two Didric Cuckoos Chrysococcyx caprius photographed west of Al Mahwit and another near Kuhlän. A pair and three calling male Klass' Cuckoos Chrysococcyx klass north of Ibb.

Other species of interest include Rüppell's Vulture Gyps rueppellii, Shikra Accipiter badius, Sooty Falcon Falco concolor and Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus, the latter two being at Al Mukha. Two Spotted Eagle Owls Bubo africanus west of Al Mahwit and another north of Ibb were seen in full daylight. Nesting of African Paradise Flycatcher Terpsiphone viridis was confirmed near Al Mahwit.

Among the south western Arabian endemics Arabian Accentor Prunella fagani at two localities, Golden-winged Grosbeak Rhynchostruthus socotranus and Yemen Warbler Parisoma buryi feeding a recently fledged young at Ibb were especially noteworthy.

In October/November 1982 Richard Porter and Nigel Redman spent three weeks in North Yemen and recorded a total of 202 species. They were joined by three resident ex patriot birders: John Hickerton, John Finch and Jan Karpowicz, and areas visited included Sana'a, Bajil, Hodeida, Taizz and Kawkaban.

A small but significant raptor passage was observed high over the edge of the foothills near Bajil comprising several hundred birds the majority of which were Buzzards Buteo buteo and Steppe Eagles Aquila nipalensis. Up to 60 Steppe Eagles and small numbers of Spotted A. clanga, Tawny A. rapax and Imperial Eagles A. heliaca were present for several days at a rubbish dump near Taizz. This is apparently a regular resting place and possibly a wintering site for migrant eagles.

Following Cornwallis and Porter 1982 (Sandgrove 4: 1-36), 8 species were apparently recorded for the first time in North Yemen: Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis, Black Stork Ciconia nigra, Honey Buzzard Parus arvensis, Little Crane Porzana parva, Baillon's Crane P. pusilla, Ring-necked Puffin Psittacula krameri, Barn Owl Tyto alba and Reed Warbler Acrocephalus scirpaceus.

All the South west Arabian endemic species were seen including two Arabian woodpeckers Dendrocopos dora, two Arabian Accentors Prunella fagani, and two pairs of Yemen Warblers Parisoma buryi. A party of five babblers of the 'white-faced' variety, (described in OSME Bulletin No 8), were found in the same area as before.

A number of rarely recorded species included Sacred Ibis Threskiornis aethiopicus, Verreaux's Eagle Aquila verreauxii, Water Rail Rallus aquariorum, Moorhen Gallinula chloropus, Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa, Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatalis, White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucopterus, Sedge Warbler Acrocephalus schoenobaenus, Whinchat Saxicola rubetra and Golden-winged Grosbeak Rhynchostruthus socotranus.

TURKEY

In June 1982, Ben King found a male Caucasian Blackcock Lyrurus pikosiewiczii in rhododendron scrub east of the Erzwrum-Rize road on the 24th, and a Citrine Wagtail Motacilla citreola north west of Erzwum on the 25th.

A Swiss expedition visited the Southern Coastlands from the Goksu-Delta eastward to Birecik and Urfa in April 1982. Unusual species seen included Purple Gallinule Porphyrio porphyrio, White-tailed Plover Chettusia leucura, Great Black-headed Gull Larus ichthyaetus, Striated Scops Owl Otus brucei, Citrine Wagtail Motacilla citreola and Red-tailed Wheatear Oenanthe xanthopygma.

OBITUARY

YOEL PARAN 1919-1982

The sudden death of Yoel Paran in June 1982 was a great loss to ornithology in Israel. Born in Hungary in 1919, he emigrated to Palestine in 1938, where he studied chemistry in Jerusalem. He spent 5 years in the British Army from 1941-6, serving during the war in the artillery in Palestine, Cyprus and Italy. He joined the Israeli Army on its formation in 1948, and on his retirement in 1961 was the Deputy Director of the Artillery. From 1962 until his death, he worked at the American Israeli Paper Mills in Hadera, finally as their Deputy General Manager.

Yoel, despite his heavy business commitments, became a dedicated field ornithologist, with an excellent knowledge of the birds of all parts of Israel. His particular interest was the study of migration at Bardawil in Sinai; this he featured in a poster display at the International Congress in Berlin in 1978 and also as a paper in Sandgrouse (2: 108-9). He was an early and enthusiastic supporter of OSME. In Israel he had many friends among both amateur and professional ornithologists and conservationists. He was one of the correspondents for Israel for the Birds of the Western Palearctic. He arranged two successful trips to Israel for Phil Hollom and myself, enabling us to meet many of his friends and to visit some out-of-the-way spots, including Tiran in the Gulf of Aqaba. He was a delightful companion, a superb organiser, and hospitable, with an infectious zest for birdwatching. He leaves a widow and two children, to whom we extend our sincere condolences.

Stanley Cramp

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OSME AGM

The OSME AGM has been extended into an afternoon event with four speakers. It will be held at the Nature Conservancy Council offices, 19/20 Belgrave Square, London SW1, from 1400 hours to 1830 hours on Saturday 25 June 1983. Further details are contained on a separate sheet with the Bulletin.

WILLIAM WILKINSON

We would like to offer our congratulations to William Wilkinson, the previous Chairman of OSME, who has just been appointed Chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council in Britain. We wish him every success in this challenging role.

XIX CONGRESSUS INTERNATIONALIS ORNITHOLOGICUS - FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

At the XVIII International Ornithological Congress in Moscow the International Ornithological Committee accepted the invitation of the National Museum of Natural Sciences of Canada and of the Canadian ornithological community to hold the XIX Congress in Canada. The Congress will be held in Ottawa, Canada from 22-29 June 1986. It elected Dr Prof Klaus Immelmann (West Germany) as President of the Congress. Dr Henri Ouellet (Canada) was designated as Secretary-General.

Details about the general and scientific programmes, field excursions, and other activities during the Congress will be available later.

Those interested in participating in the Congress are urged to inform the Secretariat in order to obtain announcements and application forms. Correspondence should be addressed to The Secretary-General, Dr Henri Ouellet, XIX Congressus Internationalis Ornithologicus, National Museum of Natural Sciences, National Museums of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0M8.

CONSERVATION IN THE SINAI

The March 1983 Sinai Newsletter (Vol 1: 2) requested that the Ornithological Society of Egypt, in cooperation with the Office of Conservation, the Governorate of Northern Sinai and the Egyptian Wildlife Service, have been conducting migration studies at Lake Bardawil.

OSE members also took part in an investigation into the effects of oil pollution on the birds of the Red Sea.

The Sinai Conservation Group, UK, supported by the RSPB and the WWF/UK, have found evidence of excessive fishing, spear fishing, coral collecting and oil pollution at Ras Muhammed as well as the use of mist nets in an area from El Arish to Zaranik. A report by Cr P J Matthews also cites the number of conservation personnel and Town and Marine Police as insufficient to monitor the peninsula with any success.

HUNTING IN THE SULTANMARSHES: A new order gives better protection

Up to 1982 a special order gave the Sultanmarshes some protection against hunting, but as the area where hunting should be forbidden was not specified, it was meaningless in this respect. Now hunting is forbidden throughout the year by a decision of the Central Hunting Commission at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (1982-1983 Av Mevsimi, Merkez Av Komisyonu Karari 46, 4.6.82). A very large area was protected including not only the marshes and lake Yay, but also the surrounding steppe areas and the agricultural fields. Some wardens are guarding the area.

CREDIT NOTES FOR SALES

From time to time we receive payment for goods in excess of the amount owed. Small cash refunds are difficult to administer and usually expensive for the Society. Council has therefore authorised that credit notes be issued where appropriate and that these may be used for the purchase of further sales items or OSME subscriptions. Alternatively, they can be sent to the Treasurer who will refund them in sterling. Normally credit notes will be for at least 0.50p, smaller amounts will be put into OSME funds. So as to avoid an unending build up of liabilities due to uncashed credit notes, each credit note will be valid for two years from the date of issue.

URGENT

Would you be willing to help OSME? Due to forthcoming changes in Council we are left without a membership secretary and we are urgently looking for a volunteer to take on this role. The job is not an arduous or difficult one and is essentially to maintain up to date records on index cards of members and subscriptions and to periodically provide the information for the purpose of mailings to members. The person would liaise closely with the Treasurer and Sales Officer and the work is unlikely to exceed (on average) two hours a week.

Anyone interested in helping should contact the Chairman, OSME, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire (Sandy 80551).

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER1982 Accounts

Enclosed with this Bulletin is a copy of the audited 1982 Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet as at 31 December 1982. You will see that at the end of the year the Society was in a healthy financial state and this will enable us to achieve our objectives in 1983. There will be an opportunity to discuss any aspect of the accounts at the Annual General Meeting on 25 June.

Bequests

Members subject to UK tax may wish to note that the British Government Budget of March 1983 permitted all bequests to registered charities, such as OSME, to be free of Capital Transfer Tax. (Previously there was an upper limit, beyond which CTT had to be paid).

Deeds of Covenant

Many UK taxpayers have asked whether the Society has a scheme for paying subscriptions by deed of covenant, whereby the Society can increase subscriptions income by reclaiming tax at no extra cost to the member. It was not possible to introduce a deed of covenant scheme until the Society became a registered charity in 1981. It is now planned to introduce a deed of covenant subscription scheme starting in 1984 and an appropriate announcement will be made in the autumn Bulletin.

REQUESTSTHE BIRDS OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Since the seizure by the Israelis in June 1967 of that part of Syria known as the Golan Heights, it has been virtually inaccessible from the north-east except to UN observers. During the winter 1976-77, I explored down the Yarmuk valley from Syria to a point just below sea level but could go no further. I found several species unknown elsewhere in Syria, eg Apus affinis, Halcyon smyrnensis, Anthus similis, Cercomela melanura, Acrocephalus stentoreus and Nectarinia osea, and these and perhaps other species found in Israel could be well-established on the Golan Heights where military control may have provided unintentionally, as it sometimes does, a measure of protection for the local wildlife.

There have probably been a number of visits to the Golan Heights since 1967 by ornithologists approaching from the Israeli side. Disregarding the politics as to who now owns the Heights, it would be much appreciated if any member who has made observations in the area could either kindly let me have a copy of any notes he has made, or perhaps better still, submit them for publication in the Bulletin.

Lt Col A M Macfarlane
60 Holden Park Road
Southborough
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN11 0EP

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURE IN ISRAEL,
ISRAEL RAPTOR INFORMATION CENTRE

BIRDS IN ISRAEL

We are interested in receiving reports of observations and articles written about Birds in Israel at any time, past or present.

We are particularly interested in information about birds observed at Maagan Michael and Eilat.

This information is required for writing a book on the subject.

Any ornithologist whose observations are used in this work will be mentioned in the book.

When writing please

1. State species, numbers, date, time and location of observation
2. Write your full name and address
3. Send information to: Hadoram Shirihai
PO Box 22
Hertzelia 46 100
Israel

RARE BIRD BOOKS AND PERIODICALS (fat) Please ask for free catalogues on Ornithology and send your wantlists: ELSEVIER ANTIQUARIAN DEPARTMENT, Lippijnstraat 4, 1055 KJ AMSTERDAM, Netherlands.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mike Hodgson for his cover illustration of a Desert Wheatear Oenanthe deserti.