



ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Bulletin 12

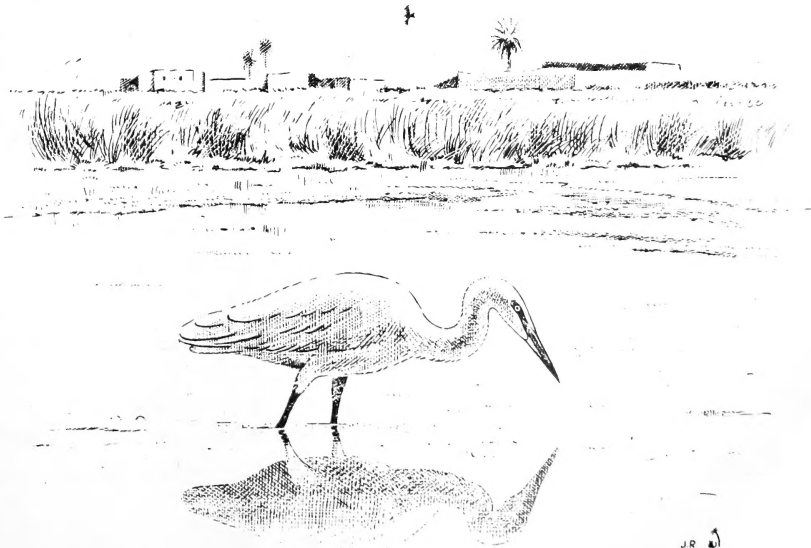
Spring 1984

EDITORS:

C A HARBARD AND D J FISHER

We hope to produce subsequent issues of the Bulletin in a new format and this will depend greatly on receiving sufficient material. With even more birders visiting the Middle East there has been no corresponding increase in articles submitted for publication. We are grateful to those people who regularly send contributions but we would urge our other members to help keep the Bulletin as full and interesting as possible.

All records in this and subsequent Bulletins are subject to acceptance by the relevant records committee of the country concerned.



JR 21

NOTES ON THE BREEDING OF THE SOOTY FALCON FALCO CONCOLOR ON ISLANDS IN THE RED SEA, AND THEIR PREY - Sherif Baha El Din

The sooty falcon Falco concolor has been reported to breed semi-colonially on some Red Sea islands (Clapham 1964). Seventy sooty falcons were found on the islands of Wadi Gimal (24°39'N 35°10'E) and Um El Shwra (24°21'N 35°24'E) during a visit on 12th and 13th November 1982.

Most of the falcons seen were recently fledged young (approximately 60% of the total number), some were still close to their nests in family groups, the latest fledging date in the Negev Desert (the northern breeding limit of the sooty falcon) is reported on 13th October (Frumkin & Pinshow 1983), nearly a month earlier than the birds I have observed.

No other sooty falcons were seen on the mainland or on the islands further north at Hurghada (27°N) and these must have migrated earlier.

Six family groups were seen, a maximum of four young were found in three families and the minimum were three young. Clapham (1964) and Frumkin & Pinshow (1983) report a maximum clutch of only three eggs.

Nests were found amongst rocks on the ground or on sea cliffs. An old nest of a reef heron Egretta gularis situated on a mangrove tree was apparently used by sooty falcons, although they rarely use other birds nests (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1952) and usually those of cliff nesting birds eg brown-necked raven Corvus ruficollis as reported at Ras Muhammad-Sinai (pers. observation).

Nest sites were always surrounded by masses of feathers and remains of the falcons' prey. The following bird species were identified amongst these remains:-

Green-backed heron Butorides striatus (1) juv. also an adult bird was unsuccessfully attacked by a sooty falcon; woodcock Scolopax rusticola (1); black-headed gull Larus ridibundus (1); white-eyed gull Larus leucophthalmus (15) mostly fledglings and young birds but four adults were also found; wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe and Oenanthe s.p. remains of several hundred were found; bluethroat Luscinia svecica several were found; redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus a large amount of remains were found, probably several thousand;

Sardinian warbler Sylvia melanocephala several were found; whitethroat Sylvia curruca only one was identified. Many feathers of other Sylvia and Phylloscopus warblers were found, and also feathers from a few wader species.

Unlike Eleonoras falcon Falco eleonorae the sooty falcon appears to take quite large prey, sometimes larger than the falcon itself. The previous largest known prey is a sandgrouse Pterocles s.p. (Tregenza 1951).

Sooty falcons breeding on the mainland hunt at great heights (500 - 1500 m) (pers. observation), and a great portion of their prey consists of more aerial species eg swifts, swallows and bee-eaters (Tregenza 1951, Frumkin & Pinshow 1983).

Falcons breeding on islands only hunt at very low heights as most of their prey consists of night migrants caught on the islands. Usually more than one pair takes part in the hunting.

It appears that the falcons breeding on islands are totally dependant on the prey available on the islands and no attempts to cross to the mainland were observed.

It seems probable that when smaller migrants are not available the falcons attempt to take larger prey found on the island such as the white-eyed gull.

On the island of Um El Shwra a long-legged buzzard Buteo rufinus was harassed and attacked for several minutes by a group of ten falcons until it was forced to leave the island, at the same time ospreys Pandion haliaetus present on the island were ignored.

LESSER CRESTED TERN IN BENGHAZI, LIBYA

Bundy (1976) summarized the status of lesser crested tern Sterna bengalensis for western Libya as common on coastal passage from west to east in June, less numerous but not scarce July - November. An old breeding record, (Moltoni 1937) in Bundy (1976) of 2000 birds on islets off Zuwatina (20°4'E 31°5'S) 135 km south of Benghazi is the only record for eastern Libya.

During 1978 regular counts were made of a roosting flock using a flooded Sebkhah within Benghazi city. Observations were made on 31 days between

26th May (a single bird off shore) and 5th November (three birds at the roost site). A summary of sightings follows.

27th May	12 - 14 birds moving east inshore at 18.00 hours.
11th June	75 birds at roost site.
14th June	24 birds at roost site during the morning with a few birds displaying. This pattern continued until the end of June.
23rd June	1 pair moving east inshore.
28th June	40 + in the morning, several displaying. 48 at lunchtime, 1 pair mating. 109 early evening with pairs (never singles) still arriving. 142 at dusk.
30th June	2 pairs moving east inshore indicating some movement continuing.
1st July	A maximum roost count of 328 birds.
7th July	c10 along city front. 101 at evening roost with several pairs still coming in.
29th Aug	1 pair and a flock of 18 all adults.
11th Sept	28 at roost site.
16th Sept	A flock of 230 large <i>Sterna s.p.</i> moving west along the coast at Tocra. Most probably this species.
21st Sept	Still about 30 at roost site.
13th Oct	5 at roost site.

In 1979, 96 plus were seen at the roost site, with several birds displaying and mating, on 20th June.

Despite continued display and mating during June breeding at the roost site was not suspected. During July and August the water level in the Sebkhah continued to fall enabling dogs and children to roam across the sand islands used by the terns. Breeding birds in the area included little tern *Sterna albifrons*, (eggs 11th June) Kentish plover *Charadrius alexandrius*, (chicks 1st May) and stone curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus* (chick 25th June). The little terns were well spread out and fiercely defended their nest sites often mobbing nearby lesser crested terns.

A visit to Zuwatina on 19th May 1978 to check on the islets mentioned by Moltoni was disappointing. Three hours of sea watching produced no terns, and only a few herring gulls *Larus argentatus*. A major oil terminal is on

the coast opposite the islets, local oil pollution is quite severe and disturbance from tankers anchored around the islets probably considerable. On 21st February 1979 a visit was made to the isle of Gez el-maracheb in the Gulf of Bomba (23°17'E 31°46'S). This low sandy isle approximately 1 km x 500 m held many shag Phalacrocorax aristotelis and herring gulls, and is perhaps a suitable nest site for lesser crested terns. The shallow water in the gulf being relatively pollution free and teeming with small fish.

On an identification note lesser crested terns were often seen alongside sandwich terns S. sandvicensis. Occasionally they appeared similar in size but more often S. bengalensis looked larger and always taller, being at least half a head above S. sandvicensis whenever they were seen together. In flight S. bengalensis often appeared longer winged. The only European field guide covering this species Heinzel, Fitter and Parslow (1972) states S. bengalensis is smaller at 36 cm against 41 cm. However other works give different measurements.

	<u>Length</u>		
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
Dillon & Ripley (1969)	44 cm	-	43 cm
Etchecopar & Hue (1964)	40 cm	36 cm	-
Harrison (1983)	40-45 cm	38-43 cm	38-43 cm
Tuck & Heinzel (1978)	41-46 cm	39-41 cm	39-41 cm
Mclachlan & Liversidge (1978)	40 cm	43 cm	-

A = S. sandvicensis; B = S. b. par; C = S. b. bengalensis

The variation is considerable, size (ie length on a museum slab) is perhaps not a reliable field character. The tallness of birds around Benghazi is perhaps a more reliable guide.

The other field guide feature also stressed in other works is the black not white forehead in breeding plumage. The majority of birds observed displaying and mating had a black forehead, some were flecked with white but none showed the large distinct white forehead depicted so often in various books. This feature may well be as variable as length.

References

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Pakistan Vol 3.
- Bundy, G. 1976 The Birds of Libya.
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- Harrison, P. 1983 Seabirds: an identification guide.
- Heinzel, H. Fitter, R.S.R. & The Birds of Britain and Europe with
Parslow, J.L.F. 1972 North Africa and the Middle East (a field
guide).
- McLachlan, G.R. & Liversidge, R.
1978 Roberts Birds of South Africa.
- Tuck, G.S. & Heinzel, H. 1978 Seabirds of Britain and the World (a field
guide).
- N.E. Baker

FEEDING TECHNIQUES OF SLENDER-BILLED GULL

During 1977 and 1979 slender-billed gulls Larus genei were observed around Benghazi, eastern Libya as quite common non-breeding visitors between October and May.

Two feeding techniques were observed that differed from those used by other gulls in the area.

On a flooded sebkha an adult with outstretched neck was observed laying flat on the water and swimming fast against the considerable wind blown current. It would "pounce" immersing head and neck whilst fishing and would then drift with the current to repeat the process. This continued for 20 minutes, no significant catch being seen during this period.

The other technique involved several birds (maximum 14 on one occasion) usually alone but often with little egrets Egretta garzetta. They would wade through shallow water with heads held high and neck outstretched. The flock would work together shepherding small fish into shallower water before plunging after them in the manner of egrets. This method was often used for identifying L. genei in company with other gulls. Black-headed L. ridibundus and Mediterranean L. melanocephala, being surface feeders, were only occasionally seen plunge diving and then from the air not the surface of the water.

Another useful aid for identification at great distance was the flight silhouette showing bill and head pointing slightly downwards in the manner of a tern rather than a typical gull. The impression gained was of a heavy bill and head slightly weighing down the rather long neck. This was typical of birds in level flight, not just when they were scanning for food.

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HOUSE SPARROWS ROBBING HOOPOES - On 21st April 1982

My wife and I spent an hour or more birding about the grounds of the sea-side Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv, Israel. After pursuing a diminutive warbler singing in the sandy scrub (we were later told that it was Prinia gracilis), we turned our attention to a large lawn. Here two hoopoes Upupa epops were foraging vigorously, though often disturbed by dogs and people, which obliged them to fly to a new location. Each hoopoe was followed by a group of three or four house sparrows Passer domesticus. Digging with vigorous blows of the long, curved beak, each hoopoe from time to time unearthed a morsel, probably a grub or worm. Whenever this occurred, several sparrows would rush up and attempt to steal the food. It was difficult to determine if they were successful, but they must be at times or they would not continue the practice. The hoopoes made no attempt to fend off the sparrows with their seemingly formidable beaks, but continued their methodical feeding.

D Amadon

EARLY RAPTOR MIGRATION AT SUEZ

On 24th January 1984 a considerable movement of raptors was noted over Suez. The wind was NW and birds were migrating over the town of Suez at a height of 500 m.

Over 300 lesser spotted eagles, Aquila pomarina, one spotted eagle A. clanga, one griffon vulture Gyps fulvus and several kestrels Falco tinnunculus were counted between 11.00 and 15.00 hours.

The movement is a month earlier than the count made in 1982 (Whimpfheimer et al 1983) at Suez and may indicate a very early migration of adult A. pomarina that was missed in 1982.

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BIRDWATCHING IN TURKEY

In the last Bulletin we informed members of the law which requires anyone carrying out scientific study (including nature study) in Turkey to obtain prior permission from the Turkish authorities. In February Richard Porter had a meeting with a Counsellor at the Turkish Embassy in London to try to ascertain the full implications of this law. It was clear at this meeting that grey areas over the interpretation of the law exist and that these can only be determined by the Turkish authorities and not by OSME. We can only therefore repeat the instruction that anyone wishing to carry out scientific birdwatching in Turkey should consult with the Turkish Embassy in their country beforehand.

We cannot anticipate the response but it is worrying to note that one proposed expedition has been refused permission. This was the Aberdeen University Ornithological Expedition to Nemrut Dag in Eastern Turkey which had been endorsed by OSME because of the useful contribution it would have made to ornithology of this little known region. The expedition went through the correct channels but sadly were recently informed by the Turkish Embassy in London that permission had been refused, the decision having been made in Ankara.

Finally we must also repeat the general comment made in the last Bulletin that birdwatchers visiting any country in the Middle East should take care to avoid any sensitive areas such as frontiers and military zones.

APPEAL FOR FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CENSUS OF THE WHITE STORK 1984

The following extract is from an ICBP document recently received. Members visiting Middle East countries where white storks breed may be able to assist with this census.

The White Stork population is declining drastically across much of its territory. In these circumstances it is imperative that the international censuses of 1934, 1958 and 1974 be followed by a fourth one. 1984 has been chosen for the next census. The extent of the census would (wherever possible) cover the entire breeding territory of the species. Researchers should make note of the following points:

- a Observations should preferably cover a whole national territory. Where this is not feasible, sample figures may be obtained by observing important representative areas which should each measure 100 km² or, in special cases, smaller areas containing a certain population of breeding storks (such as in Oriental towns).
- b The best time for starting a census is when the young are half grown (usually around the second half of June).
- c It is essential that the results of censuses from different places and different years should be able to be compared. This necessitates a precise agreement on the information required. It is not sufficient merely to count the number of nests, or nests occupied, but - to obtain definite information on the population dynamics - the number of pairs of storks, or nests occupied by pairs. The most important points are therefore:
 - 1 Number of pairs occupying a nest, to be further classified by the following 2 or 3 points:
 - 2 Number of nesting pairs with young about to fledge

- 3 Number of nesting pairs without young leaving the nest
- 4 Number of nesting pairs of whose young nothing is known
In points 1, 3 and 4 <<stork pairs>> refers to those which were on the nest for at least 4 weeks between 14.4/15.6. Those present for shorter periods, or single storks, can be recorded as
- 5 Visitors (optional category)
- 6 Total number of fledglings, from nests listed in point 2.

Points 1 to 4 and 6 are essential. For the study of population dynamics, point 3 should be further examined as follows:

- 7 Number of unsuccessful pairs whose young did not fledge
- 8 Number of unsuccessful pairs with eggs but which did not raise young
- 9 Number of unsuccessful pairs without eggs

For further information and advise contact ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, England.

NEWS

Akrotiri Saved

Cyprus has just provided an encouraging example of the application of European standards in the field of wildlife protection with a decision to change the location of a planned sewage treatment plant for Limassol because of the negative consequences the project would have had on wild life in the Akrotiri Salt Lake region. The plant will now be sited in another location which French experts say will no longer threaten the environment.

The Salt Lake of Akrotiri and the surrounding marshes are of considerable international importance as staging points for large numbers of birds

migrating between Europe and Africa, as well as a wintering ground for tens of thousands of water birds, including ten thousand flamingoes, Demoiselle cranes and white pelicans.

Turkey - National Parks Law

Act N° 2873 on national parks entered into force last August. Its purpose is to conserve the natural features and ecological balance of sites and ensure their survival. It defines the different types of natural sites to be protected and lays down regulations on the planning of them. It prohibits any human intervention that might alter such sites' natural features or cause any form of air, water or land pollution. No new buildings may be erected on a site unless provided for in the relevant site development plan. The Act further establishes a national parks fund, under Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry control, to meet the cost of protecting, maintaining and promoting the sites.

(Resmigazete, 11.8.83)

REVIEWS

Report on the Ornithological Results of the Egyptian Red Sea Pollution Expedition: October - December 1982 - S M Baha el Din and M A Saleh (1983)

This 20 page report is the first publication of any kind by the newly formed Ornithological Society of Egypt (OSE). Although the Society intends to publish a regular journal in due course this present report appears to be a 'one off' occasional paper.

During the period 31st October to 4th December 1982 a team of Egyptian ornithologists and biologists mounted an expedition by boat down the Red Sea coast of Egypt, from Suez to Ras Banas near the Sudan border. Their aim was to study the impact of oil pollution in the area on seabirds and other species. This report of their expedition consists largely of a systematic list of the birds seen (133 species) with notes against each species of the quantities observed at each location. Particular attention is paid to the number of oiled birds seen or found dead. The report suffers from not having a native English speaker reading the final text and there are some unfortunate discrepancies between the text and the names of places

on the two maps. However this does not diminish the value of the report as the first full account of the birds of the Egyptian Red Sea coast in winter, including some notes from islands not previously visited by ornithologists. The text is embellished by six line drawings by the first author.

Available from, S M Baha el Din (OSE), 4 Ismail el Mazni, Flat N° 8, Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt. Price £2.00 or £3.00 airmail (Bank notes only).

Michael C Jennings

The Birds of Cyprus - An annotated Check-list. P R Flint & P F Stewart. 174 pages. BOU Check-list N° 6, 1983. £12.00.

If you visit Cyprus, you should bring along this new check-list. It is more than a check-list to the birds of Cyprus; it is an introduction to the ornithological history of Cyprus, its geography, geology, climate, vegetation, migration, breeding and much else.

The section on migration and movements of birds through the island is interesting and well described. The systematic list itself contains some 340 accepted species and 40 which have been rejected (Appendix 1). Clearly, the authors have carried out much research; to me, it appears that they have had a sound and critical judgement in putting the various old and new information together. The occurrence of migrants and winter visitors is well known. Personally, I like the co-ordination between the occurrence of birds in Cyprus with that in the surrounding countries. The information on breeding birds is more scanty but this cannot be credited to the authors; they have included all known and relevant published information on the breeding birds in Cyprus.

The ringing activity in Cyprus has clarified the status of several species and/or races occurring in the island. All ringing recoveries are listed in Appendix 2 and contains much valuable information. Appendix 3 lists some biometric data on selected species, also a result of the ringing activity. For the new-comer to Cyprus there is much useful information to find in Appendix 4, "Sites of Ornithological Interest in Cyprus". Finally, there is an extensive and useful list of references.

The section "Bird Killing and Conservation" miss a list of protected species but one could ask what good such a list would do. It is frustrating that so many birds are killed each year in Cyprus by shooting, liming and (!) netting and it is no less frustrating that the protected species are shot freely!

This new check-list is a must for people interested in the birds of Cyprus and the Near East. I congratulate the authors with their excellent work.

Steen Christensen

The Birds of Turkey: 1 - Ercek Golu; 2 - Seyfe Golu

Price £1.00 (each) including postage and packing.

These two booklets - the first in a series which could eventually cover most of the interesting bird sites in Turkey - are an enterprising departure from the usual form of ornithological publication.

Ercek Golu (lake) which lies in Eastern Turkey close to Van Golu has been visited by a number of observers over the last 15 or 20 years and this 24 page book covering the locality summarizes, under species all the information they have supplied. Thus in essence the publication - which is in type form not printed - is a glorified check-list of the 177 species recorded there. In addition the area is described and its ornithological importance detailed. Some of the more interesting observations are up to 2,000 avocets in August/September and 900 red-necked phalaropes on passage (in May), autumn movements of little grebes (up to 1,000) and black-necked grebes (up to 3,000). Breeding birds are well documented and to a Western European birder some of the specialities would be long-legged buzzard, black-bellied sand grouse, bimaculated lark, Finsch's wheatear, crimson-winged finch, and grey-necked and cinereous bunting. The most amazing record however is of 14 adult and 8 pulli red-breasted geese in August 1982 for which the editors state "there is no reasonable explanation". No description is given, but by publishing the record the editors must be satisfied that

the birds had been correctly identified. Nevertheless, I was left wondering "could they have been ruddy shelduck seen by an observer with little knowledge of birds". It is such an amazing record that most readers will I am sure have similar thoughts to my own but whether we are right or not is of course another matter.

The Seyfe Golu publication is longer, slightly better produced (as one would expect for the second in the series) with an expanded introduction covering description of the area, water quality, climate, ornithological importance and nature conservation issues such as drainage. No special study has been made of this slightly saline lake yet 167 species have been recorded. It is a very important area for breeding and summering birds: up to 30,000 flamingoes in May for example. Also 2,100 pairs of breeding slender-billed gulls and 1,000 pairs of gull-billed terns. It is good to see such concise documentation for an area which is now regarded as being of international importance.

The multi-national team (including three Turks) producing this series are to be warmly congratulated. I hope it will encourage observers to send records to them for future publications. The next will cover Kizilcahaman, a woodland National Park north of Ankara and anyone with records for this area (or ideas for future coverage) should write to the co-ordinator of the series - Max Kasperek, Bettinaweg 7, D-8300 Landshut, West Germany.

Richard Porter

LETTERS

In their Egyptian Atlas progress report, Meininger, Mullie and Goodman (1983, OSME Bulletin 11: 1-3) state that HASA is using a grid system for mapping, citing Lees-Smith (1980, OSME Bulletin 4: 9-10) as authority. I have to point out that this is not so and that the two-volumed African atlas by Hall, Moreau, Snow et al, upon which HASA is modelled, did not utilize any form of grid system for mapping.

D T Lees-Smith
Organizer/Editor, HASA

Re: HARRISON, C (1982) An Atlas of the Birds of the Western Palearctic.

HARRISON'S Atlas (1982) which is very useful - but which leaves room for improvement in one or two places - has already found a critic in A M MACFARLANE in Bulletin 11 (1983). Below are a few additional comments.

Scops owl: possibly is a breeding bird in Syria; near Damascus birds calling on 13.4, 14.4, 30.4 and 1.5.1978 (WITTENBERG 1979).

Penduline tit: breeding time observations from Central Syria, Jordan (Azraq) and Israel are discussed in WITTENBERG (1979, 1983).

Great tit: breeding evidence from Petra/South Jordan (WITTENBERG 1983).

Goldfinch: breeding strongly suspected for several pairs in Petra/South Jordan (WITTENBERG 1983).

Serin: one unexpected observation of adult birds with young from Petra/South Jordan of the species Serinus serinus (!) is discussed in WITTENBERG (1983); the same publication also includes a list of further data on breeding from literature (Israel/Syria).

WITTENBERG, J 1979. Ornithological Observations on a Cultural Bus Trip through the Orient: Syria, Iraq, Jordan. Sonderheft 7 (Mitteilungsblatt Deutscher Bund für Vogelschutz, Landesverband Hamburg): 85 - 102 (in German).

WITTENBERG, J 1983. Ornithological Results of a Nature Research Trip to Jordan. Sonderheft 11 (Mitteilungsblatt Deutscher Bund für Vogelschutz, Landesverband Hamburg): 127 - 153 (in German).

A 30 page English translation of the latter article is obtainable for £1.00.

Jörg Wittenberg, Dehnhaide 31,
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OSME GRANTS

The Conservation Research Fund, set up to promote and assist suitable conservation-orientated projects in the Middle East, has awarded the following grants for 1984.

- 1 Max Kasparek (West Germany): for assistance with publication costs of a series of booklets titled "Birds of Turkey", each issue being devoted to a single area: £150. The first two issues are now available from the Sales Officer (see Sales List).
- 2 Peter Meininger, Wim Mullie (Holland), Steven Goodman (USA) and Sherif Baha El Din (Egypt): for field work in Egypt in Spring 1984 in connection with the forthcoming book "Birds of Egypt": £125.
- 3 Jane Fenton (ICBF, UK): for assistance with shipping costs and distribution in the Middle East of 3000 copies of the forthcoming Arabic translation of "Birds of Lebanon" by S Vere Benson: £125.
- 4 Hadoram Shirihai (Israel): for assistance with the costs of volunteer observers partaking in migration surveys at Eilat, Israel: £50.
- 5 Dr Uzi Paz (Israel): for assistance with a white stork Ciconia ciconia census in Israel in Spring 1984: £50.

In addition, Council has endorsed (without financial support) an Aberdeen University expedition to Nemrut Dag in Eastern Turkey.

A further £500 has been set aside for grants in 1985. Applications which must be from fully paid up OSME members, should reach the Conservation Research Committee, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, by 15th November 1984. Guidelines and conditions concerning these awards were set out in Bulletin 10. New members should contact Nigel Redman for further information.

Donations to the Conservation Research Fund will be very welcome and will enable the Society to increase its support of worthy projects.

REQUESTSJordan

Jorg Wittenberg (Germany) still seeks unpublished reports of ornithological observations from "Petra"/South Jordan, also short stays. After the appeal in Bulletin 8 (1982) he gratefully received reports from LARS NORGAARD ANDERSEN, PETER CONDER, P A D HOLLOW and Prof RAGNAR KINZELBACH. An evaluation of all available ornithological observations (and literature) is in progress, if possible for "Sandgrouse".

Jorg Wittenberg was in Jordan for five weeks in spring 1983 with several biology students and reported on the ornithological results from Petra, Wadi Rum, Azraq ... in "Sonderheft 11/1983" (Deutscher Bund für Vogelschutz, LV Hamburg). An approximate 30 page English translation of the German article is obtainable for £1.00 from the writer (Jorg Wittenberg, Dehnhaide 31, D-2 Hamburg 76, West Germany).

Roof Top Nesting in Gulls

Roof top nesting by herring gulls has been known for many years from Bulgaria but there is little or no information concerning Turkey or the Middle East.

I should be grateful to receive any records of roof top nesting by gulls from Turkey, the Mediterranean or elsewhere within the Middle East. Please give the species involved, the location, the date and the numbers involved (if known).

Simon Albrecht, 9 Romsey Terrace, Cambridge CB1 3NH, England.

ANNOUNCEMENTSSandgrouse 5

Regrettably there was an error in the Corrigenda (inside back cover) to Sandgrouse 4 (1982) - "p 94 line 29" should read "p 94 line 30". My apologies to all.

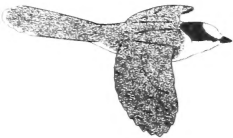
D Parr
Editor, Sandgrouse

● OSME AGM

Please note a correction to the enclosed notice of the sixth OSME AGM. We have now heard that Max Kasperek will be able to attend, and will be talking about "Birds of Turkey".

● If you pay UK Income Tax, please read on

If you have already completed a Deed of Covenant form (sent out with Bulletin 11) you need read no further. If not, please, please do so immediately. For every £5.00 subscription covenanted, the Society is able to recover £2.14 tax from the Inland Revenue at no extra cost or inconvenience to the member. If every member who pays UK Income Tax completes a Deed of Covenant, the Society will be able to reclaim about £650.00 each year - a sizeable sum which could genuinely help to keep subscriptions down. It's so simple and so beneficial to the Society's finances. Please act now!

The XIX International Ornithological Congress

The XIX International Ornithological Congress will take place in Ottawa, Canada, from 22nd to 29th June 1986.

Prof Dr Klaus Immelmann (West Germany) is President and Dr Henri Ouellet (Canada) is Secretary General. The programme is being planned by an international Scientific Programme Committee chaired by Professor J Bruce Falls (Canada). The programme will include plenary lectures, symposia, contributed papers (spoken and posters), and films. There will be a mid-congress free day. Pre and post-congress excursions and workshops are planned in various interesting ornithological regions of Canada:

Information and requests for application forms should be addressed to:

Dr Henri Ouellet

Secretary General

XIX Congressus Internationalis Ornithologicus

National Museum of Natural Sciences

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0M8.

Bustard Survey of Turkey

A report on the status of bustards in Turkey has recently been published by ICBP. Written by Paul Goriup and Don Parr, the report examines the former status of great, little and houbara bustards in Turkey, and presents the results of an extensive survey covering most of the country, undertaken between March and May 1981. Also included is an annotated systematic list of the 261 species of birds seen during the 12,000 kilometre tour. Other titles in this series of publications (ICBP Study Reports) cover the status of the Bengal Florican Houbaropsis bengalensis in Nepal and the St Vincent parrot Amazona guildingii. All are available from ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, England, price £3.00 each (inc p + p).

SALES NEWSOSME Tie

The Society has sold out of olive ties but there are adequate stocks of the other colours (light beige, cardinal red and royal blue) at present. It would be helpful if a first and second colour choice were given when ordering ties in future. The cost is £5.50 each inclusive of postage and packing (£6.00 if sent airmail).

● Sandgrouse Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4

We are offering these four volumes to members at the special offer price of £3.50 each for surface postage or £5.00 airmail postage. The normal price is £5.00 each plus postage. See enclosed sales list for details.

"Birds of Turkey" - Numbers 1 and 2

OSME is acting as the British outlet for this important series on the birds of Turkey which are published in Germany (see reviews elsewhere in this Bulletin). We are happy to supply people outside the British Isles at £1.00 surface postage but would appreciate a contribution to postage costs if airmail is required. "Birds of Turkey" is self financing and independent of OSME. Money from "Birds of Turkey" sales plus any donations will be forwarded direct.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Birds of Iran" by P. A. Scott and H. M. Hamadani (1975: 1983 reprint) text in Persian, with 343 distribution maps. Several copies available £17.00 including postage in UK, £19.00 overseas (surface). Available from A. Knox, The Bathy, Mentmore, Bucks LU7 0QG.

"Wildlife in Bahrain" - Third Biennial Report

This hardback publication contains the 1980/1981 Bahrain Bird Report and a new Check-list to the Birds of Bahrain. Additional articles are about flowering plants, gazelles, reptiles and amphibians. Illustrated with colour photographs, it is available from OSME Sales, price £7.00 plus 80p postage (surface).

Change of Address

Michael Jennings has moved out of London. New address - Moonraker Cottage, 1 Eastcourt, Burbage, Nr Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 3AG, England.

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