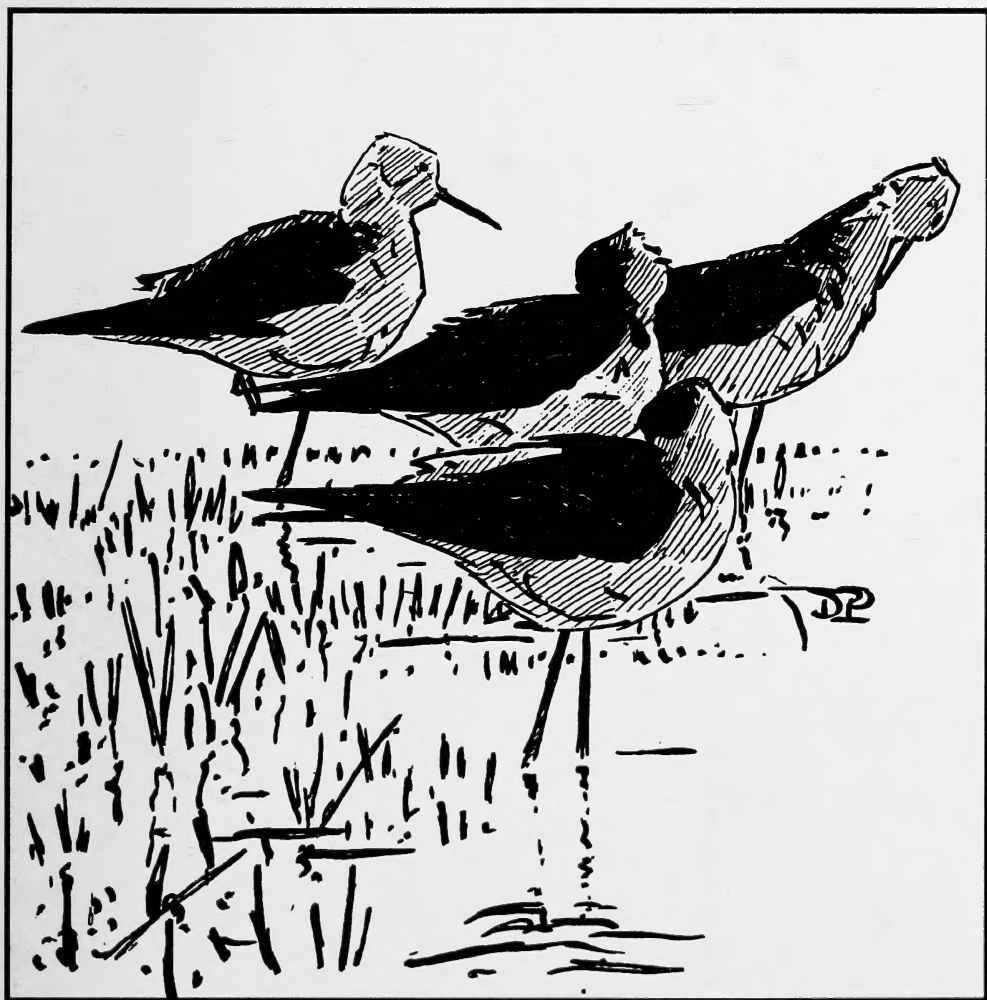


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**BULLETIN 33**  
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# OSME Bulletin 33

Autumn 1994

Editor: H.D.V. Prendergast

Designer: H.I. Scott

**All records in this *Bulletin* are subject to acceptance by the relevant records committees of the country concerned.**

*Any articles, announcements or requests to do with birds in the Middle East are welcome, and may be published free of charge, subject to the discretion of the Editor. Accompanying photographs and line-drawings are welcome. Bird names generally follow those of Birds of the Middle East and North Africa.*

**Contributions to the next *Bulletin* should be received by 15 January 1995.** They should preferably be double-spaced and typed. Articles on disk (3.5 or 5.25 inch only please) are welcome. Please include both formatted and ASCII files *and a paper copy as well.*

## **Illustrations**

We are grateful to the following artists for the illustrations used in this *Bulletin*:

*(Cover)* Black-winged Stilts by Dan Powell

**All illustrations by Dan Powell except those listed below.**

*per* R.S.P.B.

**J Busby:** Golden Plover 44; Corn Bunting 45.

# A note on heavy falls of Redstarts *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* on the Red Sea coast at Yanbu, Saudi Arabia during spring 1993

Brian S Meadows



The Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* is a regular double passage migrant at Yanbu al-Sinaiyah (23° 54-59' N, 38° 11-18' E) on the Red Sea coast. Spring passage occurs from March-May and autumn passage from August-October (Baldwin & Meadows 1988). Weekly counts in transects in mangrove stands of *Avicennia marina* along the shoreline never reached double figures in an intensive two year study (Meadows in press) and no unusually heavy falls have ever been observed in the landscaped areas of the city since regular observations commenced in 1979.

In spring 1993, however, during 13-22 April, exceptional falls of Redstarts were witnessed. Daily counts made two to three hours before sunset between 13-23 April along a one km length of sea-wall overlooking a dense stand of mangroves gave the following totals (rounded to nearest five individuals):

13 April - 5	16 April - <i>no count</i>	19 April - 80	22 April - 10
14 April - 10	17 April - 645	20 April - 40	23 April - 0
15 April - 120	18 April - 210	21 April - 30	

Weather at Yanbu was atypical at the time. Wind speeds were less than normal, and there were several overcast days between 12-18 April. Air temperature was relatively low.

Throughout the central Hijaz there was localized heavy rainfall during the last two weeks of April and first two weeks of May. Yanbu al-Sinaiyah had seven mm of rain on 11 May, the first recorded May rainfall in the city since local records began in 1981. There was rain again on 21 May.

Although such concentrated falls are apparently not uncommon during spring passage in North Africa (Cramp 1988), I am not aware of any comparable observations in Arabia. The maximum number observed at Azraq, Jordan, by Wallace (1982) on any one day was 80 birds.

The majority of nocturnal passage migrants that utilize the mangroves at Yanbu appear to use the stands primarily for roosting rather than feeding. During this event most of the Redstarts were actively feeding: flycatching, and taking insects from shallow pools following a high tide.

All the Redstarts appeared to be of the nominate race save two male *P. p. samanisticus* on the day of the maximum count. Accompanying the falls were up to nine Woodchat Shrikes *Lanius senator*, and several Red-tailed Shrikes *Lanius isabellinus* and Masked Shrikes *Lanius nubicus*. These are regular spring migrants at Yanbu. One Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochuros*, either *P. o. phoenicuroides* or *P. o. rufiventris*, was present on 15 April.

In addition to the fall of 13-22 April, there was a second wave of Redstarts between 14-16 May, inclusive, but with a maximum concentration of only four birds (otherwise 1-2).

Counts in the landscaped areas in the city of Yanbu al-Sinaiyah showed birds present during 13-22 April and 14-16 May but only in ones and twos.

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# The occurrence of Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* in Arabia

Peter Symens, Abdullah Suhaibani & Xavier Eichacker

The Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* is a scarce but widespread breeding bird in the central and southern parts of the former USSR from the north eastern Caspian Sea in the west to the Aral Sea in the north and Manchuria and Mongolia in the east. Its breeding range extends southwards to Pakistan, northern India and Burma. Little is known about its movements but at least part of the northern population migrates southwards in the winter to reach Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent (e.g. Dementiev & Gladkov 1951; Cramp & Simmons 1980; Ali & Ripley 1983). Habitat destruction, water pollution and persecution have caused a drastic decline in numbers during the last decades, especially in the northern and western part of its range and, at present, the species is considered to be globally endangered (Collar & Andrew 1988).

Hitherto the Pallas's Fish Eagle has been considered to be a vagrant in Arabia, restricted to the eastern edge of the peninsula and southern Oman (Jennings 1981a, 1981b; Hollom *et al.* 1988; Bundy *et al.* 1989; Oman Bird Records Committee 1989; Richardson 1990). Prior to 1987, there had been four records of eight birds:

## Saudi Arabia:

- two birds near Qatif, Eastern Province, on 2 November 1979 (Jennings 1981a; Bundy *et al.* 1989);
- three birds in Tarut Bay, Eastern Province, between 26 January and 6 February 1986 (IUCN 1987).

## United Arab Emirates:

- one at Ras al Khaimah, Dubai, on 29 October 1972 (Richardson 1990).

## Oman:

- an immature bird was present in southern Oman from 12 October 1984 to 8 March 1985, with a second bird present on 11 January 1985; presumably it was one of these two birds that was seen again on 22 March 1985 (Gallagher 1986).

Since 1986 no more Pallas's Fish Eagles have been observed in eastern Arabia or Oman, possibly due to the serious decline in numbers of the wintering population along the eastern Gulf coast of Iran and in Iraq, where the species used to occur as a rare but regular winter visitor (e.g. Allouse 1953; Cramp & Simmons 1980; Gallagher & Woodcock 1980).

Surprisingly, since 1987 there have been seven records in the southwestern part of Saudi Arabia and one in the northern region of the Kingdom:

- an adult bird at the reservoir of the Malaki Dam in Waki Jizan, Jizan Emirate, from 25 October to 6 November 1987 (P. Symens, A. Varelille, M. Shobrak and A. Rahmani);
- an adult at the same site from 20 November to 3 December 1988 (P. Symens);
- a juvenile bird, again at the Malaki Dam, on 18 January 1990 (P. Symens);
- remains of a shot adult were found at the Dawmat al-Jandl Reservoir, Al Jauf Emirate, in January 1990 (X. Eichacker and C. Wilmé);
- an adult bird overflying Wadi Jawwah, Jizan Emirate on 2 January 1991 (J. Hellmich);
- an adult bird near Al Fareiq village, Meccah Province, about five km from the coast, between Kiyad and Amq on 12 January 1992 (Rahmani, Shobrak & Newton 1994);
- an adult migrating southwards along the Al Hada Escarpment near Taif, Meccah Province in October 1992 (X. Eichacker);
- an immature bird at Malaki Dam on 1 February 1994 (P. Symens and M. Werner).

Considering the low density of birdwatchers in the Kingdom, these recent records suggest that a small number of Pallas's Fish Eagles might winter regularly in western Saudi Arabia, especially in the southern Tihamah. As such, this region would represent the most southwestern wintering range for this rare and vulnerable species, since no records are known from northern Yemen (Brooks *et al.* 1987) nor Africa (Brown *et al.* 1982).

In eastern Arabia Pallas's Fish Eagles were observed in marine habitats, including extensive intertidal flats and shallow lagoons. In contrast, the recent records in the western half of Saudi Arabia were further inland near freshwater habitats, except for the one bird migrating southwards along the northwestern tip of the Asir Escarpment. The reservoirs of the Malaki Dam and Dawmat al-Jandl contain large populations of introduced fish *Tilapia* sp., and attract large concentrations of wintering waterfowl, both being important food items for Pallas's Fish Eagle (e.g. Gallagher & Woodcock 1980). Until recently this type of habitat was virtually non-existent in Saudi Arabia, which might explain the lack of previous records in this region (e.g. Jennings 1981a; Stagg 1985).

Six of the eight birds recorded in western Saudi Arabia were adults, whilst details on age of the records prior to 1987 are generally lacking. The field identification of adult Pallas's Fish Eagles is straightforward, in contrast to that of juvenile and immature birds, which can be confused easily with young *Aquila* eagles, in particular Tawny Eagle *A. rapax* and Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca*. Therefore the presence of juvenile/immature Pallas's Fish Eagles might easily be overlooked, especially in southwestern Saudi Arabia where the two *Aquila* spp. are more common throughout the winter (pers. obs.).

All records of Pallas's Fish Eagles in Arabia are from mid-October to the end of March. Autumn dispersal in the northern breeding areas of the former U.S.S.R. (e.g. Kazakhstan) begins in October. Breeding in these areas starts from March onwards, but northward movements from presumed immature birds continue throughout April until May (Dementiev & Gladkov 1951; Cramp & Simmons 1980). In India breeding takes place from October to February after which many birds disappear from the lower breeding areas during the hotter months (June-July), possibly migrating northwards to reach the high plateaus of western Tibet (Ali & Ripley 1983). The records from Arabia fit very well into the migration pattern of the northern breeding populations, but not into the pattern of the breeding birds from India.

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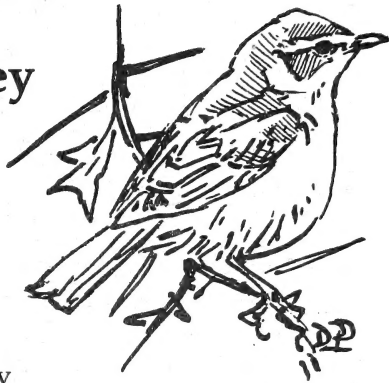
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# A record of Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* from Turkey

Guy Kirwan



On the morning of 20 May 1993, Mick Davies and I were birding along the southern shore of Ercek Gölü (Van Province). Passerine migration over the previous few days had been good, and we had already seen large numbers of Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* and Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* that day. Just after we had started to scrutinise a small patch of poplars *Populus* sp., MD drew my attention to what he confidently identified as a Booted Warbler, a species with which he was reasonably familiar, having seen five individuals in Britain. I was aware that there were very few records for Turkey. In addition, my own relative inexperience (based on just two individuals) with the species in the field led me to take a good full description over the course of the next hour. With good light conditions, and a co-operative bird feeding at 2-8 m distance in the trees, more occasionally in the canopy, the situation was virtually ideal.

## Field Description

**Size and structure:** Much more like Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* than e.g. Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* (both available for direct comparison). A relatively stubby, compact bird, with a proportionately long, broad tail, with only slightly rounded corners, but nevertheless retaining its square ended appearance. Both bill and tail distinctly shorter than in Olivaceous. Tail movements not as accentuated as in Olivaceous and thus noticeably different, the tail being occasionally flicked upwards, but not persistently dipped as is the case with the latter species. Movements generally lacked the rather lugubrious, quirky actions of a typical *Hippolais*, and were instead more reminiscent of a *Phylloscopus*, being darting and giving the impression of much greater mobility. It would also occasionally flycatch on the edge of the trees, behaviour I have never seen in a *Hippolais*.

**Bare parts:** Bill c.1/2 head length and distinctly shorter than in Olivaceous Warbler, largely pale flesh coloured lower mandible with darker tip, but greyer on upper mandible, especially on culmen and at base. Legs very pale flesh colour with greyer feet and dark claws.

**Plumage:** Head with short supercilium extending slightly beyond eye, with pale brown eyestripe and lores, eyestripe also extending only slightly to the rear of the eye (c.1/3 of the way along the ear coverts). Underparts entirely clean, almost silky white, with some traces of buff on the flanks. Upperparts, ground colour of crown, nape, mantle, back and rump (as well as wings) pale sandy-brown, warmest in the rump and lower back (both observers attempted to describe accurately the upperparts without using the new well known "milky-tea" colloquialism but agreed that this was a good description). Most wing feathers with pale fringes, broadest on greater coverts, and narrower on tertials, slight indication of a small pale panel formed by pale fringes to inner secondaries and third tertial, but not as pronounced as in other *Hippolais*. Approximately five primary tips projected beyond tertials. Tail very slightly darker than rest of upperparts, with whitish tips to all feathers, and with white fringes to outer pair. Pale greyish remiges to all feathers visible on the undertail.

**Call:** None heard.

### Discussion

The most critical points of identification have been much discussed since Wallace (1964), most recently and notably by Harrap (1988), Harris *et al.* (1989), Alstrom *et al.* (1991), and Parmenter & Byers (1991). Most authors note the species' similarity to a *Phylloscopus* (Bonelli's Warbler *P. bonelli* has proved to be a troublesome pitfall on a number of occasions), while the smaller, eastern race of Olivaceous Warbler *H. p. elaeica*, of which an example was present, was carefully eliminated during our identification (a recent bird on Shetland was also the subject of much debate in this respect; c.f. Osborn 1993). Most authors have also pointed to a possibility of confusion with Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, based on the similarities in facial pattern. However, some contradictions of the facial features of Booted Warbler became apparent through a perusal of the literature. Thus, while the shadow above the supercilium, emphasised by Bushell (1984) as an identification feature, is useful, it is not always present, as noted by Alstrom *et al.* (1991). Similarly, the relative darkness of the lores and eyestripe is somewhat variable (Cramp 1992). The propensity, of vagrants at least, to seek out low vegetation, or even feed on the ground, has been noted (MD and pers. obs.) and it therefore came as a surprise to find this bird flitting actively, even in the canopy of trees, occasionally making flycatching sallies on their edge. However, the catholicity of this species' habitat requirements and thus feeding behaviour has been thoroughly detailed by Cramp (1992). The timing of this record accords reasonably well with the known migration period of the nominate race *caligata* (Cramp 1992).

There are two previous records listed for Turkey: one at Ardesen on 9 September 1976 (Beaman 1986) and one at Rize on 20 August 1988 (Kasperek 1992; Kirwan & Martins in prep.). This latter record has been formally accepted by the German rarities committee. Three other

records have been published without description: two at Rize, in mid-August 1990 (Anon 1990) with another there on 8 August 1993 (Gantlett 1994) and one at Birecik on 24 May 1992 (Anon 1992). A further report on one at Mersin on 25-26 April 1993 is supported by a description (Paul Collin in litt.).

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Paul Collin for supplying his notes on the Mersin Booted Warbler.

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# Leg colour of Kentish Plovers

## *Charadrius alexandrinus* in Bahrain

*Erik Hirschfeld & Tadeusz Stawarczyk*

Cramp & Simmons (1983) state that leg colour of the Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* can be 'dull grey to almost black, rarely, pale yellowish-brown'. During August to October 1992, whilst we were ringing waders as part of the Bahrain Wader Study Project, we caught 267 Kentish Plovers. It became clear that very few of these had black or very dark legs so we recorded the colour of the tibia, tarsus and foot (i.e. upperside of foot) of 251 individuals.

The majority, 141 birds, showed dark-grey tibia, 82 had grey tibia, 21 had black tibia and five showed pale grey, while olive and olive-grey were rarest, with only one bird showing either. The most frequent tarsus



colour was grey (214), followed by pale grey and dark-grey (16), olive-grey (four) and black (one). Foot colouration was less variable with black (217 individuals) and dark-grey (34) being the only colours recorded.

We were somewhat surprised to find so few birds with black legs, especially since the literature and our own experience from Europe show that black legs are diagnostic for this species.

The strong sunlight and high water salinity in the Persian Gulf perhaps bleach the bare parts of these birds, making them look different from European populations. Hayman *et al.* (1986) mention that pale legs seem more prevalent in less migratory populations (presumably from southern, sunnier areas?). The Kentish Plover breeds commonly in Bahrain but there are some movements of (probably migrant) birds throughout the year (Hirschfeld in prep.) but we have no idea whether the birds we caught were local birds or migrants. We found neither any differences in leg colouration between adults and juveniles, nor any consistent tendencies in leg colour other than that most birds with dark tibia had darker tarsi as well.

The Bahrain Wader Study Project 1992 was sponsored by Lufthansa German Airlines, DHL Worldwide Express, Bahrain Petroleum Company Bsc., Caltex, Standard Chartered Bank, Budget Rent-a-car, The British Bank of the Middle East and Bahrain Center for Studies and Research.

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# First record of Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis* in Arabia

Peter Symens & Matthias Werner

The shallow lake of Ain Wakhra is located in Wadi Mishrif near the Malaki Dam (17° 03'N, 42° 58'E), some 20km east of Abu Arish, Jizan Emirate, Saudi Arabia, at the base of the foothills of the Asir mountains. It is isolated from the main reservoir of the dam by siltation. To the north and the east the lake is surrounded by *Sorghum* fields. To the south and west it is fringed by stands of *Tamarix* trees and here the hinterland consists of basalt hills and undulating basalt plains scattered with *Acacia* trees, interspersed by narrow sandy wadis with often dense *Acacia* scrub. At dusk on 1 February 1994 we were on top of one of these basalt hills overlooking the lake, when we briefly heard a thick-knee *Burhinus* sp. calling from a stand of *Acacia* scrub less than 100m from the water's edge. The calls resembled those of a Stone Curlew *B. oedicnemus* but were less rasping and less harsh. On leaving our observation point when it was completely dark, we noticed a thick-knee in the beams of the car's headlights on a track between the lake and the basalt slopes. As we slowly approached, the bird kept on running in front of the car and allowed us to observe it with 10 x 42 binoculars for about two minutes at distances down to five m. Eventually it flew away some 50 m and landed out of sight behind a dense stand of *Tamarix* trees.

## Field description

**Size and structure:** Very similar to Stone Curlew but appeared slightly smaller, slimmer built and longer legged.

**Head:** Crown and forehead pale brown-grey interspersed with numerous fine blackish streaks. Distinctive white eye-ring and supercilium, as well as broad whitish line from gape to ear, bordered above and below by a narrow line of the same colour as the crown. Chin and throat whitish.

**Upperparts:** Pale sandy grey-brown with thin brown-blackish shaft streaks. The closed wing showed a large whitish-grey panel on the coverts, bordered above by a narrow black line on the lesser wing coverts and below by a black sub-terminal band on the greater coverts. This panel was only sparsely interspersed with some dark fringes on the median and greater coverts. The rufous brown upper tail contrasted with the greyer back and mantle, and showed no distinct black or white markings except for some black on the outermost tail feathers. In flight the large whitish panel on the innerwing contrasted strongly with the black secondaries and black primaries. Two small, separated, well-defined, pure white spots were visible on the outer and inner primaries.

**Underparts:** Under tail coverts buffish and contrasting with the pure white vent and belly. Throughout the observation period the bird kept walking away from us and no views of the breast were obtained.

**Bare parts:** Large eye with bright yellow iris. Bill mostly black, though some yellow on the proximal third. Legs pale yellow. As the bird was running away from the car, no complete lateral view was obtained and no precise judgement of the size of the bill could be made.

## Discussion

Both Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* and Stone Curlew *B. oedicnemus* are known to occur in similar habitats in southwest Arabia (e.g. Jennings 1981; Stagg 1985; Hollom *et al.* 1988; pers. obs.). The former could easily be ruled out by the absence of black spots on the overall pale upperparts and by the presence of a large light wing panel. The complete absence of the distinctive white bar along the blackish band on the lesser coverts, the slimmer appearance with longer legs, the abundance of broad, whitish lines in the head pattern without dark spots around the eyes, and the plain tail excluded Stone Curlew and justified the identification as Senegal Thick-knee (e.g. Cramp & Simmons 1983; Hayman *et al.* 1986; Hollom *et al.* 1988). It should be noted that Stone Curlews of the north-eastern race *B. o. harterti* which winter in Arabia are paler, greyer, less heavily streaked, and more diffusely patterned on the wing coverts than birds of the nominate race and might therefore resemble the Senegal Thick-knee superficially (Cramp & Simmons 1983; Hayman *et al.* 1986). However, birds of this subspecies show at least to some extent the typical Stone Curlew wing pattern which was completely lacking in the bird near Ain Wakhra.

The Senegal Thick-knee occurs from Egypt south and east to Sudan, Somalia and Kenya, and west through Chad and Zaire to Senegal. It occupies a wide range of habitats from sea level to uplands at about 1,600m, including savannas, thorn-scrub, cultivated areas, rivers and lakes (e.g. Cramp & Simmons 1983). In Egypt it is generally regarded as a resident bird which rarely wanders far from water. However, due to this preference for moist places, the populations of the Afrotropical Region are known to undertake some dispersal in response to flood and drought conditions. This record is the first ever outside Africa.

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## OSME News

### Sixteenth OSME AGM - changes of Council members

The following changes took place on Council as the result of elections of officers at this year's AGM. Two members, both of whom have played major roles in the running of the Society over the years, retired after completing their terms of office.

**Duncan Brooks** - Editor of *Sandgrouse*. Duncan joined Council in 1986 having been a member of the 1985 OSME Expedition to North Yemen. Initially a member of the Editorial Committee working closely alongside Don Parr, Duncan took on the role of Editor following Don's untimely death in late 1988. As a result of Duncan's outstanding editorial skill and attention to detail, *Sandgrouse* continued to develop and now stands as one of the most respected ornithological journals. Duncan's dry wit frequently added a touch of humour to sometimes heated Council discussions regarding the Society's publications and, though there was not always agreement and deadlines were not always met, the finished product was always worth waiting for. *Sandgrouse* will stand as a tribute to Duncan's abilities, though it pales somewhat compared with his 'real job' as principal editor of *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. With the completion of *BWP*, Duncan moved to BirdLife International to assist with editing *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East* and now remains at BirdLife editing the new Conservation Series of which the IBA forms a part.

**Richard Porter** - Chairman Conservation & Research Committee. It is difficult to find something new to say about Richard as he was instrumental in the founding of the Ornithological Society of Turkey from which OSME later grew. As Chairman of Council from 1982-87, Richard played



a key role in developing the Society and his ornithological knowledge enabled him to oversee the Conservation & Research Committee very effectively. In 1993, he led the highly successful OSME Expedition to southern Yemen and Socotra. Richard's experience eventually worked to OSME's disadvantage in that, following a secondment to BirdLife from the RSPB to oversee the development of their Middle East Programme, he resigned prematurely last autumn feeling he could not really wear three 'hats' at once - OSME, RSPB and BirdLife. This was a great loss to OSME but Richard and I maintain regular contact and, long term, there may be even more opportunities for OSME to play a more active role in the conservation of the region's birds.

Since the AGM, Council has also received the resignation of Richard Webb who feels he is unable to devote as much time to the Society as he would wish as he is so closely involved with the newly formed African Bird Club. Richard joined Council in 1990, initially as a co-opted member, acting as Turkey Officer for two years. He brought to the Society a broad knowledge of the region, especially Turkey, and a close link with the more active birding community. Council very much regrets losing Richard but can appreciate his reasons and wishes him, and the ABC, every success for the future.

To all of the above, I express my sincere thanks for the time and effort they have given on behalf of the Society.

On the plus side OSME's 'publications team' was joined by Hew Prendergast and Harry Scott. Hew joins Council temporarily as *Bulletin* Editor and, whilst a botanist by profession, he is also an active birdwatcher and is widely travelled. Hew is no stranger to OSME having submitted several papers and been editor of *OSME Bull.* 32. Harry, too, has already been active on OSME's behalf, overseeing the desktop publishing and printing of recent issues of the *Bulletin*. Harry is a co-opted member and will become increasingly involved with the production and design of the Society's publications. A warm welcome to both of them.

*Geoff Welch, Chairman of Council*

## **OSME Members' Survey - preliminary results**

The response to the survey was extremely encouraging with 317 questionnaires returned, 37% of members. To date, analysis has been restricted to calculating percentage responses to each of the main questions. The more detailed and time-consuming appraisal of the anecdotal information is still underway. Below is a summary of the more interesting results.

### **1. Geographical spread of responses:**

Of the questionnaires completed, 58.0% are from Britain, 24.9% from Europe, 2.6% from Middle East nationals, 6.4% from expatriates resident in the region and 8.1% from elsewhere.

### **2. Membership items most valued or enjoyed:**

For virtually all members, receiving *Sandgrouse* and the *Bulletin* is the greatest asset of membership, followed by the knowledge that they are supporting bird conservation in the region.

### **3. Availability of the membership list:**

Ninety percent of the members are in favour of this being made available to other members to improve communication. The task of amending our records to exclude those members who expressly wish not to have their names and addresses circulated is currently underway.

### **4. Quality of OSME publications:**

Ninety-seven percent of members are more than satisfied by our publications. This is a credit to the editors and production team of the two publications. However, the Society is not complacent and suggestions made for improving the *Bulletin* and *Sandgrouse* are also being considered.

### **5. Merging of *Sandgrouse* and the *Bulletin*:**

Here members are almost equally divided, though the majority (56%) are against a merger. A variety of factors, especially printing and distribution costs, need to be taken into account before any changes in OSME's publications can be made. Council will bear members' views in mind when it comes to making a decision.

### **6. OSME's activities:**

Members clearly feel that, of the activities listed, OSME's strengths are in disseminating information, carrying out ornithological studies and promoting conservation. When it comes to greater involvement, the view appears to be that the Society should focus on educating people in the region about conservation, birds and habitats, and increasing lobbying activities. These views will all be considered when Council meets to discuss the future plans for OSME in October.

## **7. Expanding the region:**

This elicited the greatest variety of response, though everyone was of the opinion that OSME should include the Arabian peninsula and Turkey! Approximately 50% of members are in favour of including North Africa and those countries bordering the Red Sea, with a slightly smaller percentage in favour of including the area surrounding the Caspian. One point which comes across very strongly is that OSME should initially consolidate its position within the Middle East itself before considering taking in extra countries. This is a view generally shared by Council and members can be assured that no changes to the region will take place at the expense of our existing membership.

### **What next?**

Over the last 12-18 months, apart from the Members' Survey, OSME Council has been drawing up outline strategies for the Society's future conservation, ornithological and promotional activities. These, together with the survey results, will form the basis of a Development Workshop to be held on 15 October. From this it is hoped that an overall development plan for the Society will be produced to guide OSME through the next five to ten years. Your continued support will be a major factor in helping OSME become more effective in the Middle East.

## **Report of the first meeting of executive officers of ABC, NBC, OBC and OSME held at White Cottage, Cley, Norfolk, UK on 3 July 1994**

### **Present:**

Chris Balchin (NBC), Martin Kelsey (NBC), Nigel Redman (OBC), Graeme Spinks (OBC), Richard Webb (ABC), Geoff Welch (OSME), Hilary Welch (OSME), Martin Woodcock (ABC).

*The meeting was chaired by MK and the minutes were taken by NR.*

After a general introduction by MK, it was agreed that a degree of collaboration between the four clubs was beneficial to each club. A series of objectives was drawn up which included increasing cooperation between the clubs, increasing the effectiveness of each club, reducing competition, and reducing costs. It was agreed that the meeting should produce a series of recommendations for consideration by the full councils of the four clubs.

### **1. Meeting dates:**

It was noted that all four clubs have set a 'fixed' month for their AGMs: ABC (March), OSME (July), NBC (November) and OBC (December). In addition, NBC intends to have a regular May Bank Holiday meeting and OBC has a well established August Bank Holiday meeting.

*Recommendation:* That each club, when planning non-fixed meetings, attempts to pick a date not closer than one month to the date of an existing meeting of any of the other clubs.

### **2. Conferences:**

It was agreed that we should explore the possibility of a joint 'World Birding Weekend' meeting of all four clubs, ideally along the lines of a Swanwick conference. February 1996 was considered to be a suitable date. Each club is to appoint a person to form a steering committee, under the leadership of RW. This committee will explore the various options, assess the likely start-up costs, determine the feasibility of February 1996 and report back to this committee with clear recommendations on how to proceed.

*Recommendation:* That the four clubs should hold a joint weekend conference subject to the recommendations of the steering committee.

### **3. Advertising:**

It was agreed that valuable additional publicity for all the clubs could be achieved by advertising each other's meetings. However, if a club wished to advertise its meeting in 'Diary Dates' or as an announcement in another club's bulletin, it was the responsibility of the meetings organiser to inform the appropriate bulletin editor.

*Recommendation:* That each club should be able to advertise its meetings in the bulletins of the other clubs when requested to do so.

### **4. Stalls at meetings:**

As it is becoming commonplace for each club to have a stall at the meetings of other clubs, it was agreed that it would be simpler not to charge each other commission. However, it was felt by some that clubs should not have the automatic right to have a stall at another's meeting, and should make a request in advance.

*Recommendation:* That each club should determine its own policy with regard to having other clubs' stalls at meetings, but when stalls are allowed that commissions should be waived.

### **5. Suppliers and sponsors:**

A suggestion that better deals with suppliers and sponsors might be achieved if approached jointly was rejected.

*Recommendation:* That each club continues to negotiate its own deals with suppliers and sponsors.

**6. Joint projection equipment:**

Although there are some advantages in the clubs buying joint projection equipment for use at meetings, some disadvantages were noted (in particular, responsibility for maintenance and ensuring that all equipment remains in good working order after use). In any case, OSME has ready access to good equipment and would not need to be involved.

*Recommendation:* That ABC, NBC and OBC pursue this matter themselves if they wish.

**7. Separate identity of the clubs:**

Whilst accepting that there are a number of advantages in forging closer ties, GS pointed out the importance of the conditions of operating under charity law and the need to maintain separate identity. The forming of a parent club to oversee general administration of the four clubs is therefore inappropriate.

*Recommendation:* That each club maintains its separate identity in order to fulfil the provisions of charity law.

**8. Subscription levels:**

The timing of subscription increases was discussed and it was agreed that it would be impractical for the four clubs to increase subscriptions at the same time.

*Recommendation:* That each club avoids situations where it may seek advantage by the timing of subscription increases.

**9. Communication between the clubs:**

It was agreed that we should encourage communication between the officers of each club at different levels as appropriate (e.g. between bulletin editors), and that we should share information which may be of mutual benefit.

*Recommendation:* That each club exchanges its publications, and circulates a current list of council members to the secretaries of the other clubs annually.

**10. Dual roles of club officers:**

The various merits and disadvantages of a person serving on the councils of two (or more) clubs were discussed. There was a general consensus that persons serving on two councils were in danger of spreading themselves too thinly and not having enough time to fulfil one or both roles properly. It was agreed that the matter should be left to the discretion of the persons concerned and that individual councils should decide their own policy on this matter.

*Recommendation:* That each club should discourage executive officers from holding office in other clubs and that each club, when appointing new council members, should be aware of their proposed appointees' other responsibilities or roles.

It was generally agreed that each council should explore ways in which collaboration can be fostered, and that a meeting of executive officers of the four clubs should be held at least annually. The next such meeting is scheduled for 2 July 1995 and will be hosted by GW and HW at Minsmere, Suffolk, UK.

### Supporting OSME

Council is pleased to announce that Subbuteo Natural History Books Limited has resumed its sponsorship of the inclusion of colour plates in *Sandgrouse*. This support is greatly appreciated as it allows OSME both to enhance the appearance of *Sandgrouse* and to release additional funds for other aspects of the Society's work.

OSME would also like to express its gratitude to Dominic Mitchell, editor of *Birdwatch*, for the regular promotion OSME receives and especially for the Middle East article in the February issue. *Birdwatch*, published monthly, is available in the UK from all good newsagents or by subscription from 1 Northumberland Park I.E., 76-78 Willoughby Lane, London N17 0SN.

If you would like to support OSME by sponsorship, advertising in the *Bulletin* or promoting the Society in some way, please contact the Publicity Officer.



# Sunbird

The best of birdwatching tours

## Special Offer for OSME members - OSME/Sunbird trip to the United Arab Emirates, autumn 1995

OSME members will be eligible for a 10% discount on the cost of the above birdwatching trip scheduled for 26 October to 6 November 1995. Led by OSME member Colin Richardson, one of the UAE's top birdwatchers, and Paul Holt, the trip will take in over 20 of the country's major birding sites. The UAE boasts a bird list of over 370 species, including many migrants from Central Asia and Siberia, and with this trip timed to coincide with the peak migration period an excellent selection of species can be expected. As Sunbird has generously agreed to donate 20% of the trip's profits to OSME, this is your opportunity to discover the birdlife of the UAE, save money and help OSME all at the same time! For further details, contact Jennifer Thomas, Sunbird, PO Box 76, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 1DF, U.K. (Tel. 0767 682969.)

# *Requests for Information*

## **Black Storks**

Following the First International Black Stork Conservation and Ecology Symposium held in Latvia in April 1994, information is being sought on the status of Black Storks *Ciconia nigra* in all countries in its range. Information is required under the following headings:

1. Country.
2. Occurrence of the Black Stork;
  - 2.1 Breeding (numbers and trends),
  - 2.2 Migration (numbers and trends),
  - 2.3 Wintering (numbers and trends),
  - 2.4 Accidental summer visitor/vagrant (frequency).
3. Legal status of the species in the country.
4. Practical conservation measures taken for the species in the country.
5. Source of information (name or source of literature).
6. Contact organisation/person concerning the species in the country.
7. Address of the above organisation/person.

All information to be sent to: *M. Strazds, Project 'Black Stork', PO Box 677, LV-1047, Riga, Latvia. (Fax +371 8-820113.)*

## **Lesser White-fronted Geese marked with blue neck bands in Finland**

During 1989-1993, 103 Lesser White-fronted Geese *Anser erythropus* were reintroduced into Finnish Lapland by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Finland as part of its conservation project for the species. Reintroductions will be continued in coming years. In addition to aluminium leg bands, the birds are wearing blue neck bands with figures (00-94) or characters. The figures and characters are so large that they can be read with a telescope from up to 500 m. We hope that the neck bands will help us find out e.g. the migration routes and resting and wintering areas of Fennoscandian Lesser White-fronted Geese and also how they survive. So far birds wearing blue neck bands have been seen in the

Netherlands, Denmark, England, Sweden and Russia and, after the winter, in northern Norway. Please send us details of all observations of banded Lesser White-fronted Geese such as the date, time and place of observations.

On receipt of your observations we will send you information about the history of the bird(s) in question. Please send your report to: *World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF Finland, Uudenmaankatu 40, 00120 Helsinki, Finland (tel. +358 0 644 511; fax +358 0 602 239)*, or to: *Juha Markkola, WWF Lesser White-fronted Goose Project, Märssytie 1 F 6, 90560 Oulu, Finland. (Tel. +358 81 341 363; fax +358 81 556 1258.)*

### **Birds of Armenia Project**

We are seeking all sources of data on the birds of Armenia. We are most interested in personal field notes taken while in the country since 1960, and especially field notes from 1970-1994. We are also interested in data collected in the bordering areas of Turkey and Iran. Information on rare, endangered, or uncommon species is of greatest value. If you have any interest in contributing to our efforts, please contact: *Dr. Daniel Klem Jr, Department of Biology, Muhlenberg College, 2400 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104 U.S.A.*

## *News and Information*

**August 1994**

**Compiled by Simon Albrecht**

The aim of this section is to inform readers about events in the OSME region. It relies on members and others supplying relevant news and information. If you have anything concerning birds, conservation or development issues in the OSME area, please send it to: **News and Information, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, U.K.**

This section is not intended as a definitive report or write up of the projects concerned. Many of the projects are sponsored; such support is appreciated but is not generally given acknowledgement here.

### **BAHRAIN**

*National Body to Protect Wildlife* - A National Committee for the Protection of Wildlife has been formed through the Crown Prince's Court in



Bahrain. A national body to protect wildlife in the country was deemed essential because of the rapid development and continuous shrinking of coastal areas and natural habitats. The Committee has already approved plans for the protection of critical habitats and rare and endangered species, and is organising a symposium on wildlife next year. The Committee comprises a number of government bodies and its Secretary is Dr Saeed A. Mohammed, who prepared the Bahrain chapter for the *IBAs in the Middle East*.

## CYPRUS

*Ban on spring shooting re-instated* - We are pleased to report that the President of Cyprus has re-instated the spring ban on shooting. The ban was originally imposed in 1990 but was lifted in 1993 by the newly elected

President Glafkos Clerides. (Source: *Network News* 2 (2).)

## JORDAN

*Birdlife Committee formed* - The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature has recently established the Jordan Birdlife Committee whose main objective is bird conservation and the promotion of birdwatching in Jordan. Ms Fadia Hussein has been appointed as coordinator for the Committee. A bird survey of the Kingdom has been started to update information on birds and their habitats and to produce a revised checklist and bird book for the country.

## KUWAIT

*Threat to Jahra Pool Reserve* - The Jahra Pool Reserve, a listed Important Bird Area, is Kuwait's only freshwater wetland, and owes its existence to waste-water outflow from the nearby town. In a country entirely lacking in rivers and natural standing fresh water, it is not surprising that the site is ornithologically important, a claim supported by the fact that over 70% of the 300+ species on the Kuwait List have been recorded there. The reserve comprises 250 ha of coastal *subkha* lying between the town of Jahra and the sea. About 70 ha are fenced in to offer protection to the main pool (some four or five ha of open, shallow water) and dense reed beds, which extend out across a small delta to the sea.

In 1992 the Kuwait Oil Company inflicted serious and persisting damage on the Reserve, when it bulldozed away the east gate to widen and consolidate a road across the site. Since then hunters and others have had a route across the marshes, which is both sound and free from the hazards of unexploded ordnance, into the heart of the Reserve. Apparently the Oil Company ignored the protected status of the site and made no attempt to consult with the Environment Protection Council (EPC) at any time.

Since the winter of 1991-92 a more serious and potentially fatal threat to the existence of the Jahra Pool Reserve has arisen. During that winter and the one following, unusually heavy rains caused flooding of the *subkha* and adjacent parts of Jahra, which resulted in subsidence damage to buildings and roads. Understandably, this prompted the decision by engineers of the relevant ministries to construct an extensive system of massive drains to take storm-water away directly into the sea. The new drains cross the Reserve and have been under construction since the early part of this year. However, most damaging of all has been the decision to divert into one of the main drains the very outflow that gives rise to the pool itself. An alarming and depressing aspect of the scheme was that once again the protected status of the Reserve was ignored, with the EPC learning of the threat only after the drainage project had been approved.

To ensure the continued existence of the Jahra Pool, the EPC has therefore been forced to seek an undertaking from the ministry to provide an alternative supply of fresh water. It is understood that such an undertaking has been provisionally agreed and water could be piped from a preliminary treatment plant more than a kilometre away. How readily financial approval will be forthcoming for this rather costly solution is questionable and a cause for serious concern, given the Government's current need to restrict public spending severely. Newspapers regularly report on the gloom in Kuwait's civil engineering industry resulting from Government cut-backs, so it is difficult to envisage any priority being given to the Reserve issue. That the problem need never have arisen if the EPC had been consulted at the outset is now beside the point: the Council will need all the encouragement and support that it can muster to preserve this listed Important Bird Area. (*Contributed by C.W.T. Pilcher.*)

## OMAN

*Conservation of IBAs* - Discussions between the Oman Minister of Regional Municipalities and Environment, Shaikh Al-Hosni, and the BirdLife International Secretariat in March centred on the conservation of Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The Minister expressed interest in producing an IBA publication for the sites in Oman. (Source: *Network News* 2 (2).)

*IUCN publication on the marine fauna of Oman* - Salm, R.V., Jensen, R.A.C. & Papastravou, V.A. 1993. *Marine Fauna of Oman: Cetaceans, Turtles, Seabirds, and Shallow Water Corals. A Marine and Development Report.* IUCN. It contains a chapter (pp. 31-41) on birds and is available from IUCN Marine and Coastal Areas Programme, Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland.

## SHARJAH, U.A.E.

The municipality of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates has lifted a ban

it imposed in 1993 on trade in Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*, Hoopoe *Upupa epops*, Ostrich *Struthio camelus* and species of pelican, crane, flamingo, stork, owl and some other birds of prey. Trade in other animals covered by the ban remains prohibited (Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 14(1): 11.)

## YEMEN

*New conservation group* - A conservation group to promote awareness of the issues and to sponsor a major project each year for the benefit of wildlife has been initiated by the *Yemen Times* following public interest in a series of articles on conservation and the environment run by the newspaper. (Source: *Network News* 2 (2).)

*Socotra proposed as Biosphere Reserve* - A proposal to designate Socotra as a Biosphere Reserve is being prepared by UNESCO and Yemen's Environmental Protection Council. The results of the OSME 1993 Expedition are being used in the preparation.

*Outbreak of war* - The outbreak of war has halted the formation of a non-governmental wildlife conservation organisation. We hope that conservation activities will resume with the end of the war.

## WORLD BIRDWATCH 1993

BirdLife International organised a world birdwatching event on 9-10 October 1993. The aim was to get as many people out birdwatching as possible over one weekend and to record as many of the world's 9,000 species as possible. The magnitude of the response was enormous and staggered all involved. 256 organisations from 99 countries participated including nine countries in the OSME area: Bahrain, Cyprus, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. A total of 2,732 species was seen worldwide. The next World Birdwatch will be on 7-8 October 1995.

## RED SEA AND GULF OF ADEN ACTION PLAN

In January experts from the member states of the PERSGA (Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden) Convention met at the Arab League Headquarters in Cairo to draw up a new Action Plan. This is necessary because of increased coastal developments, the growth of tourism and the spread of industry. It is essential that developments in these important marine areas are environmentally sound and sustainable. (Source: *Network News* 2 (2).)

## WETLAND INVENTORY

An inventory of Middle East wetlands is currently being prepared in a joint venture between IUCN, WWF, the Ramsar Bureau, the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) and Birdlife

International. It will culminate in a *Directory of Wetlands in the Middle East*, which will probably be published in 1995. A further aim of the project is to encourage Middle Eastern countries to compile their own detailed national wetland inventories to form a basis for developing wetland policies, and to identify priorities for future conservation and research.

### **PUTTING BIODIVERSITY ON THE MAP**

We congratulate BirdLife International for winning the Amsterdam Prize for the Environment 1994 awarded by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. BirdLife has won the prize particularly for its publication *Putting Biodiversity on the Map* which is the result of a three year project using birds as indicators to identify key areas for global biodiversity conservation. The book is available from BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, U.K. Price £12.50.

### **THE BP BIRDLIFE/FFPS CONSERVATION EXPEDITION AWARDS**

Since 1990 British Petroleum has supported the Birdlife and Fauna & Flora Preservation Society Conservation Expedition Competition. The Competition is designed to stimulate teams of young people to run a well-defined conservation expedition working closely with host country counterparts. Prizes have so far been awarded to 48 expeditions, three of which have been to Turkey and one to Libya. For further information write to: Expeditions Officer, BirdLife International (see address above). (Tel. +44 (0) 223 277318; fax +44 (0) 223 277200.)

### **BUSTARD GROUP**

An international symposium on current research and conservation efforts on Bustards and Steppe Habitats will be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab

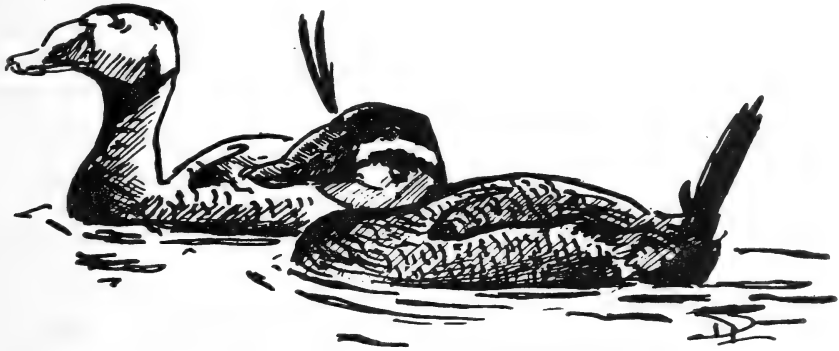
Emirates from 29 September - 5 October 1995. The symposium is being

organised by the National Avian Research Centre, Abu Dhabi in association with Birdlife's Steppe and Grassland Bird Group. Submissions for papers and posters and requests for information should be sent to NARC, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. (Fax +971 234 9154.)



## **SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW**

There is a real possibility that this species will become extinct in the next 15-20 years according to a workshop meeting held in Morocco in January 1994. It is estimated that there are between 50 and 200 individuals left. The workshop drew up or revised action plans for the species in western Mediterranean countries.



## **WHITE-HEADED DUCK/RUDDY DUCK HYBRIDS - IDENTIFICATION KEY**

In *OSME Bull.* 31 we reported the threat that the naturalised North American Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* poses to the native White-headed Duck *O. leucocephala*. Field identification, particularly of juveniles and winter plumage birds, can be difficult and this is further complicated by hybrids. Hybridization has occurred in Spain. Following the international workshop in 1993, the Spanish have produced a key to help with the identification of hybrids. *Identification of O. jamaicensis, O. leucocephala and their Hybrids* by Carlos Urdiales and Pablo Pereira (1993) includes coloured photographs of museum specimens of both species and their hybrids as well as tables giving the identification features. There is a copy in the OSME library but those wanting their own copy should contact ICONA, Gran Via de San Francisco 4, 28005 Madrid, Spain.

## **WORLD BIRDWATCH MAGAZINE**

BirdLife International publishes *World Birdwatch* four times a year. It contains news and articles on BirdLife International's work worldwide including the Middle East. It is available to members of World Bird Club whose subscription is £25 per year. Details from BirdLife International (see address above).

## ARABIAN WILDLIFE MAGAZINE

*Arabian Wildlife* is an attractive new periodical which is published three to four times a year. It deals with wildlife and its conservation in the Arabian Peninsula. So far two issues have appeared, covering a wide range of wildlife and habitats from mountain flowers in the UAE to the coral reefs of the Farasan Bank. Bird articles include Arabia's breeding birds, birds of the Al-Ansab Lagoons, Oman, and the Saudi Arabian Houbara Project. The next issue is due for publication at the end of October. Subscriptions (£16 for the next four issues) are available from *Arabian Wildlife*, Dept. S., Planet Publishing Ltd., 20 Berkeley Street, London W1X 5AE, England. There is a discount if more than one of each issue is bought.

## DIARY DATES

### 19-22 January 1995.

Alghero Convention on Coastal and Marine Biodiversity in the Mediterranean. Alghero, Sardinia. Details from MEDMARAVIS, B.P. 2, 83470 Saint Maximin, France.

### 11-16 April 1995.

Fourth MEDMARAVIS Symposium. Tunis, Tunisia. Details from MEDMARAVIS, B.P. 2, 83470 Saint Maximin, France.

*The following items have been received for the OSME library and will be of interest to members:*

**Forsten, A. (1994).** *Sites for Raptor Watching in the Belen Area, Turkey.* Letter.

**Hustings, F. & van Dijk, K. (eds) (1993).** *Bird Census in the Kizilirmak Delta, Turkey, in spring 1992*. WIWO - report 45, Zeist. This report summarises data from a three month survey jointly organised by WIWO and DHKD and part-funded by OSME. The Kizilirmak Delta is the largest remaining wetland ecosystem along the Turkish Black Sea coast but is under threat from drainage and other developments. The survey carried out work on all of the birds occurring in the delta, identified those areas of greatest importance for breeding species and made recommendations for the protection, recommendations for the protection for the protection and future work. Copies of the report are available from WIWO, c/o Driebergseweg 16 C, NL-3708 JB Zeist, The Netherlands, cost 25 Dutch guilders (+15 Df for administration), by payment to postal giro account 2666009, to ABN bank account 57.02.16.613 of Stichting WIWO, van Stuivenbergweg 4, 6644 AB Ewijk, The Netherlands or by Eurocheque (deduct administration costs) to the same address.

**Kasperek, M. (1994).** *Marine Turtle Conservation in the Mediterranean - Marine Turtles in Syria, Survey of the Syrian coast.* MEDASSET, London. This report details the findings of a survey of the entire 193km length of the Syrian coast in June 1991 by the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET) and highlights the conservation problems facing turtles in the area. No details of price or availability are given but MEDASSET can be contacted at c/o Daphne Corporation, 24 Park Towers, 2 Brick Street, London W1Y 7DF, U.K. or 1(c) Licavitou Street, 10672 Athens, Greece.

**Mansoori, J. (1994).** *The Hamoun Wildlife Refuge.* Kasperek Verlag, Heidelberg. This refuge protects the Iranian part of a freshwater system shared between Iran and Afghanistan. This booklet summarises various aspects of its natural and human ecology, documents some threats and, of particular interest, gives a bird checklist (187 spp.) and some mid-winter counts (including, most spectacularly, 694047 unidentified Anatidae in 1973, 89550 Coot in 1984, and 19589 Teal in 1993).

**Meininger, P. L. & Atta, G. A. M. (eds) (1994).** *Ornithological Studies in Egyptian Wetlands 1989/90.* FORE-report 94-01, WIWO-report 40, Vlissingen/Zeist. This volume of 402 pages comprises 21 papers on Egyptian wetlands and their birds based on observations from December 1989 to June 1990; there are also notes on other fauna. As well as wildfowl, wader, and migrating bird of prey counts, there are also single-species studies, wetland portraits, and (significantly) an account of the hunting and exploitation of 37 species from Great-crested Grebe to Avocet and House Sparrow. An abbreviated version of the report is available in Arabic free from P. L. Meininger, Lisztlaan 5, NL-4384 KM, Vlissingen, The Netherlands. The full version costs 35 Df (+15 Df administration costs) from WIWO address (see above).

**Oman Bird Records Committee (1994).** *Oman Bird List.* 4th edition. Privately printed, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. Knowledge of Oman's birds continues to grow apace: 432 species are listed here, with brief accounts of their status, whilst a further two were accepted by the Records Committee whilst the List was in press. When, where and by whom will Jouanin's Petrel be proved to breed?

**Tarrant, I. B. (no date).** *Bird Observations in Saudi Arabia and the UAE 1992-1993.* Privately published typescript and video. The 14 page report focuses mainly on the 200+ species seen round Riyadh from March 1992-October 1993. For each species, status is discussed briefly. There are few references to previous work in the area.

van den Berk, V. M., Cronau, J. P. & van der Have, T. M. (1993). *Waterbirds in the Van Province, Eastern Turkey, May 1989*. WIWO - report 34, Zeist. This study took place from 1-11 May 1989 with the aims of counting waterbirds on the largest wetlands in Van Province, and of researching the feasibility of more detailed wader migration studies and the possibilities of trapping and studying Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus*. The report can be obtained from WIWO - see above - price 15 Dutch guilders (+15 Df for administration).

Warr, F. E. (1994). *Recent Literature for the OSME Region (mainly 1991-1992)*. Privately published typescript.

*Zoology in the Middle East 10*. This 1994 volume, edited by R. Kinzelbach and M. Kasperek, contains ornithological papers on observations from Yemen (including first record of Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*), the occurrence of an American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* in Turkey, and the first breeding record there of the Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*. Present subscription costs Dm 27; orders should be addressed to Max Kasperek Verlag, Bleichstr. 1, 69120 Heidelberg, Germany.





## Reviews

**Ramadan Bakig, A. and Khiyami Horani, H. (1992).** *Birds of Jordan*. Arslan Ramadan Bakig, Amman: pp. 213; \$25.00 (excl. mail service). Obtainable from Arslan Ramadan Bakig, PO Box 1871, Amman, Jordan.

This bilingual (English/Arabic) book presents colour photographs by Arslan Ramadan Bakig of 164 species of birds taken in Jordan, (the national list comprises c.340 species). A number of species relatively rare in Jordan are included, such as Black Francolin, Oystercatcher, Syrian Woodpecker, Thick-billed Lark, and Hooded Wheatear. However, many common species are missing, such as Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cuckoo, all species of swifts, African Rock Martin, Olivaceous Warbler and Rock Sparrow.

This rather haphazard choice of species as well as a rather high proportion of blurred pictures (in spite of a generally passable printing quality) are somewhat unsatisfactory. The author might have improved the value of his book considerably by including the work of other photographers. Some of the photographs offered here simply are too badly defined for publication; others, although blurred, are acceptable here for purposes of documentation (e.g. of Syrian Woodpecker and Thick-billed Lark).

Collaborator Hala Khiyami Horani and advisers (e.g. Ramsis Lufti, Ian Andrews) helped to reduce mistakes in identification, but obviously such advice was not always heeded. In my opinion, the picture on p. 93 shows a Wood Sandpiper not a Green Sandpiper, and the 'female Stonechat' on p. 156 is in fact a Redstart (male first winter)! I also doubt the identification of Herring and Common Gull (both pictures blurred), of Lanner (perhaps Saker?), of Lesser Short-toed Lark, and of the 'female Whinchat' (perhaps first record of Stonechat of subspecies *maura*?).

The very brief texts for each species on identification, habitat, food and breeding were obviously gleaned from standard textbooks. Under habitat, however, there are indications of the status of species in Jordan. These are mostly from Disi & Bouran (1987), a source which is incomplete and contains several errors (c.f. review in *OSME Bull.* 21).

Although Ramadan refers to observations of his own, he never gives exact dates, either of rarer species (e.g. Black Francolin, Thick-billed Lark, Black-headed Bunting) or of those which the author (mostly

erroneously) believes to be first records for Jordan (e.g. Ring-necked Parakeet and Great Tit). The introductory chapters describe the country (history, natural history, development of ornithological exploration) and present eleven important habitats with impressive photographs.

These deficiencies notwithstanding (which the author personally asked me to name), the publication of this book is to be warmly welcomed. As a textbook in Jordanian schools, it will undoubtedly contribute to a growing interest in the indigenous fauna among teachers and students alike - urgently needed in view of drastically increasing environmental damage. It is, however, certainly desirable that this book be offered at a considerably lower price, at least in Jordan.

Jörg Wittenberg (translated by Andreas Zeugner)



*Records in Around the Region are published for interest only, and their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. To submit records for OSME Bulletin 34, covering mainly the period September 1994 to February 1995, please write to Around the Region, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, U.K.*

*Compiled by Guy Kirwan*

Records refer to 1994 and to single birds unless stated otherwise.

### **CYPRUS**

*Records were submitted by J Sadler on behalf of Cyprus Ornithological Society (1957), unless stated otherwise.*

**Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*** Larnaca Airport pool, 19 December 1993. Only previous record was in February 1991.



**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* four or five, Ayias Thekla, spring, exact dates unknown.



**Houbara Bustard** *Chlamydotis undulata* Paphos, 11 October 1993. Second recent record, previous was 3 November 1979.

**Dupont's Lark** *Chersuphilus dupontii* Phassouri reedbeds, 8 April. First record.

**Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* Ezousa River, 21 April 1993. Second record (first was in 1991; BB 87:323).

**Pale Rock Sparrow** *Carpospiza brachydactyla* Paphos Lighthouse, 22 - 26 April. First record.

**Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus* Kathikas, 13 March. Third record.

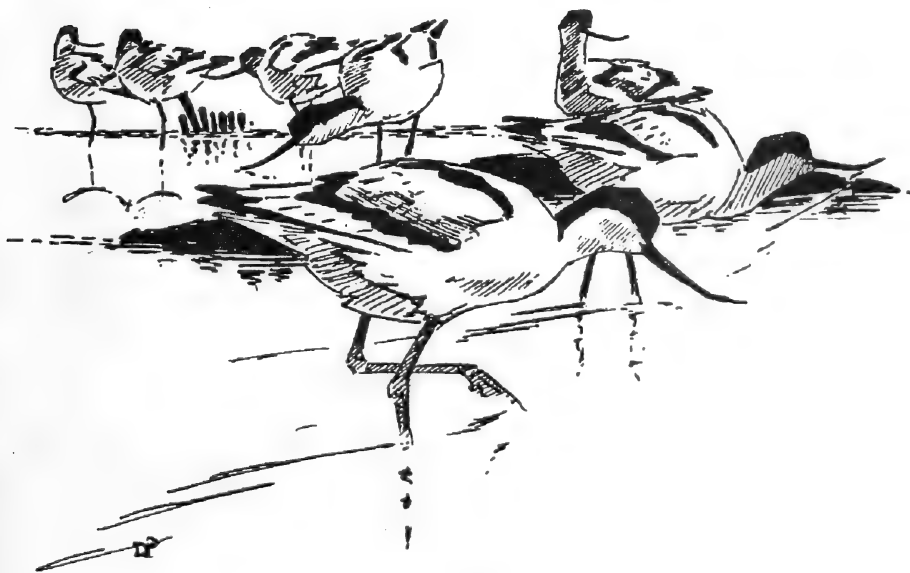
## EGYPT

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* 95, Abu Simbel, 1 - 2 May. J Higgott.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* Abu Simbel, 26 March; 30 km south of Safaga, 5 May. J Higgott, C Walters.

**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* 87, Abu Simbel, 1 - 2 May. P J Dubois, J Higgott.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* three pairs breeding, Zaranik Protected Area, 1 June. The first breeding record since 1990. per S & M Baha el Din.



**Little Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis* race *cyanophrys* breeding at two localities in South Sinai, at Taba and junction of Taba-Naqab road, 24 May. First confirmed breeding of this race. per S & M Baha el Din.

**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* Al Alamein, 20 March. S & M Baha el Din.

**Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* six, Al Alamein, 13 - 14 March. Probably overwintered there. S & M Baha el Din.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* two, Sidi Rahman, 20 March. S & M Baha el Din.



**Dupont's Lark** *Chersophilus dupontii* eight, including young, near Marsah Matruh, 15 - 16 March. S & M Baha el Din.

**Thekla Lark** *Galerida theklae* three displaying males, near Salum, 15 March. S & M Baha el Din.

**Red-rumped Wheatear** *Oenanthe moesta* pair, near Hamma, 13 March. S & M Baha el Din.

**Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti* Sidi Rahman, 20 March. S & M Baha el Din.

## ISRAEL

**Little Shearwater** *Puffinus assimilis* Eilat record, 18 - 21 July 1992 (cf. OSME Bull. 29:39), is not considered now to be this species, but as similar to other small (and unidentified) shearwaters seen in the southern Indian Ocean (see Berruti 1990) and may relate to an undescribed taxon (Shirhai and Sinclair 1994).

**Socotra Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax socotranus* immature reported, Eilat, 22 April. Potentially first record. per M P Lawlor, M G Prince.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath*  
Ma'ayan Zeri fishponds, 5 April  
1993 (BB 87:312).

**Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus  
columbianus* two, north side of  
Lake Tiberias, 10 March. per *H*  
*Dufourny*.

**Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser  
erythropus* two (from 1992) latterly  
three (from 29 January), Eilat, until  
28 February. *H Shirihai*.

**Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus  
leucoryphus* adult reported, Eilat,  
31 March. Potentially first record  
for Israel. per *M P Lawlor, M G  
Prince*.

**Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo  
vulpinus* 43,000, Eilat, 28 March.  
*I.B.C.E.*

**Levant Sparrowhawk** *Accipter  
brevipes* 25,522, Eilat, 25 April.  
Largest ever single day count in  
Israel or world. *I.B.C.E.*

**Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxi*  
adult, Eilat, 23 January; on eight  
days during March; 8 - 10 April.  
per *M P Lawlor, M G Prince*.

**Sociable Plover** *Chettusia gregaria*  
two, Kfar Ruppim, 9 October,  
rising to eight on 19 October 1993.  
*M G Prince et al.*

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* Newe  
Eton fishponds, 25 August 1993.  
*W v d Bassche, M G Prince et al.*

**White-eyed Gull** *Larus  
leucophthalmus* autumn 1993  
*maxima*, Eilat, 64 in October, 20

in November and five in  
December; spring maximum 19,  
April. *J Morgan et al.*

**Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii* North  
Beach, Eilat, 31 October 1993; first  
winter, Eilat, 4 - 6 March; adult  
there, 20 March. About 20  
previous records. *H Shirihai*.

**Striated Scops Owl** *Otus brucei*  
two, Eilat, until 16 February (from  
mid November 1993). *M P Lawlor,  
M G Prince*.

**Didric Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx  
caprius* male, Eilat, 12 - 26 March.  
First record for Israel and second  
for the Western Palearctic (first  
was in Cyprus in June 1982). per  
*H Shirihai*.

**Temminck's Horned Lark**  
*Eremophila biphola* total of 932  
throughout south Arava Valley,  
6 - 29 March, with smaller  
numbers remaining into April;  
12 pairs bred at km33. *H Shirihai*.

**Thick-billed Lark** *Rhamphocoris  
clotbey* up to six, south Arava  
Valley, Eilat, early March - late  
April. *M P Lawlor, M G Prince, H  
Shirihai*.

**Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunni* up  
to four, south Arava Valley, Eilat,  
early March - 18 April. *M P  
Lawlor, M G Prince, H Shirihai*.

**Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* two,  
Eilat, 30 October - late November  
1993. *M P Lawlor, M G Prince, G  
Wichers et al.*

**White-cheeked Bulbul**

*Pycnonotus leucotis* adult, Eilat, 20 October 1993; up to three, Eilat, 14 March - April (exact dates unavailable). Fourth and fifth records. *P de Knijff, H Shirihai et al.*

**Booted Warbler** *Hippolais caligata rama* Eilat, 3 December - 7 April. All previous records (c. eight) relate to passage birds. *H Shirihai et al.*

**Rüppell's Warbler** *Sylvia rueppelli* Be'er Sheva, 14 February. Earliest ever spring migrant. *H Shirihai.*

**Ménétries Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea* male, Eilat, 6 March. Very scarce migrant. *H Dufourny.*

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope* male, Eilat, 25 April. First record for Israel, but see recent claim in Egypt in November 1993 (*OSME Bull.* 32:44). *M P Lawlor, M G Prince.*

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Parano, Arava Valley, 27 October 1993. *M P Lawlor, M G Prince.*

**Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola* female/immature, Eilat, 1 November 1993 (not October as previously stated; *OSME Bull.* 32:44). Observers were *J Morgan, K Mullarney, G Wichers et al.*

**JORDAN**

**Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunni* three, Wadi Fidan, 16 May. *R Hofland.*

**Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata* male, Ariha, 15 May; three males, one female, Wadi Dama, 17 May. *R Hofland.*

**Pale Rock Sparrow** *Carpospiza brachydactyla* six, including two singing males and adult feeding two fledged young, Wadi Dama, 18 May. *R Hofland.*

**KUWAIT**

**Bearded Tit** *Panurus biarmicus* pair, Jahra Pool, 11 February at least. First record for the Arabian Peninsula. *B K Wright.*



## OMAN

All records are accepted by Oman Bird Records Committee.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Khawr Rouri, 25 January - 3 March. Fifth record. H & J Eriksen, W F Simpson.

**Black-bellied Storm-Petrel** *Fregata tropica* two, off Saqirah, 14 June 1993. Third record. A P Benson.

**Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* male, Masirah, 5 - 8 July 1993. Second record. C M Greaves.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* Khawr Rouri, 25 January - 26 May. Second record. H & J Eriksen, M & B Simpson.

**Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus* first year, Khawr Sawli, 18 November 1993 - 10 January. First record. A Blomdahl, I J A Brown, C M Greaves.

**Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Al Ansab lagoons, 30 July 1993; Sun Farms, Sohar, 11 November 1993. Second and third records. D J G Foster, A Blomdahl et al.

**Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* Sunub dump, 20 - 24 November 1993. Second record. H Eriksen, A Blomdahl et al.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* 150, Sun Farms, Sohar, 15 April. Largest numbers ever recorded (cf. UAE). H & J Eriksen.

**Lesser Moorhen** *Gallinula angulata* Hilf, Masirah, 7 - 9 November 1991. First record. J Bryan, C M Greaves.

**Painted Snipe** *Rostrulata benghalensis* Masirah, 14 October - 5 November 1993. Fourth record. J Bryan, C M Greaves, D J G Foster.

**Great Stone Plover** *Esacus recurvirostris* Shnass, 12 November 1993. Third record. A Blomdahl et al.

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Khawr Mughsayl, 20 November & 9 December 1993. Second record. A Blomdahl, M A L Cummins et al.

**White-eyed Gull** *Larus leucoptthalmus* one Raysut, 9 September 1992 and two, 30 September 1993. Sixth and seventh records. I J A Brown.



- Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* Ras Rassas, Masirah, 4 November 1993. Third record. J Bryan.
- Hume's Tawny Owl** *Strix butleri* Jebel Samhan, 31 January; two, Wadi Shuwaymirah, 14 March. Second and third records (first record was two at Wadi Ayun, 8 - 12 October 1977). M R Brown et al.
- Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus* Hilf, Masirah, 27 January - 8 March. Third record. J Bryan, C M Greaves.
- Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Khawr Rouri, 18 November 1993. Eighth record. A Blomdahl et al.
- Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Dibbah, 16 May & 3 August 1991. Second and third records. R P Morris, R Digby.
- Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* female at nest with three eggs, Sun Farms, Sohar, 5 May. First confirmed breeding. Observer not given.
- Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* female or imm., Montasar, 15 November 1993. Fifth record. A Blomdahl et al.
- Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* Fossil Valley, 16 March 1993. Second record. C Richardson, D Mitchell.
- Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Sayh, 30 April; adult male, Sultan Qaboos University campus, 3 - 4 May. Second and third records. H & J Eriksen, CH Fry, E Hirschfeld.
- Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Sultan Qaboos University campus, 21 January - 3 February. Fourth record. A M & H With Jensen, H & J Eriksen.
- Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* two, Montasar, 16 November 1993; four, Dauka, 16 November 1993 and six, 26 January. Second to fourth records (cf. Saudi Arabia and Qatar). A Blomdahl, H & J Eriksen.
- Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* pair, Mahdah, 30 March 1993; pair, Sayh, 12 April. First and second records. S Aspinall, E Moller, C Richardson.
- Cretzschmar's Bunting** *Emberiza caesia* male, Hilf, Masirah, 23 - 27 February. First record. J Bryan, C M Greaves.

## QATAR

- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* 400, Dhakira mangroves, 14 January. Previous maximum count was 30. B & H Nation et al.
- Red-wattled Lapwing** *Hoplopterus indicus* Dhakira mangroves, 1 & 7 January. Second record, previous was in February 1983. B & H Nation.
- Sociable Plover** *Chettusia gregaria* Mukainas Farm Lake, 4 - 26 November 1985. Third record, previous records in 1981 and 1985. A Hooper, C Kermode, B & H Nation.



**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*  
three males, Mukainas Farm  
Lake, 26 November 1993; male,  
Doha, 1 January. Fifth and sixth  
records. *A Hooper, C Kermode, B  
& H Nation.*

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
Mukainas Farm Lake, 25  
February. Third record. *B Nation,  
D A Scott et al.*

**Pale Rock Sparrow** *Carpospiza  
brachydactyla* two, near Mukainas  
Farm, 25 February. Third or  
fourth record. *D A Scott et al.*

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* 15, Ramada  
Hotel, Doha, 25 - 27 February.  
First record. *D A Scott et al.*

## SAUDI ARABIA

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*  
three, Medina Airport, 18  
November and one, 2 December  
1993. *J-O Hedin.*

**Abdim's Stork** *Ciconia abdimii* two,  
Malaki Dam, Jizan, 31 March - 4  
April. About fourth record for  
Saudi Arabia. *per P Symens.*

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* up  
to 25, Riyadh, throughout June -  
July. Potential breeding bird.  
*I Saville.*

**Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita* Al  
Dahnas waterfall, 110 km north  
of Abha, 10 November 1993.  
*J-O Hedin.*

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Medina  
Airport, 18 November; three,  
Yanbu al-Bahr, 26 November  
1993; two, Yanbu al-Bahr, 27  
January. *J-O Hedin, B Meadows.*

**Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus  
caerulus* 35 km north of Jizan, 25  
December 1993; Wadi Dahem, 2  
February. About five previous  
records. *J-O Hedin, P Symens.*

**Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus  
leucorhynchus* imm., Malaki Dam,  
1 February. Eighth record since  
1987 in S.W. Saudi Arabia,  
suggesting that this may be a  
regular wintering area (see p. 3).  
*P Symens.*

**Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*  
ten, Harrat-al Harrah, 13 - 17  
December 1993 (breeding is  
suspected there); five, near  
Mahazet as Said, between Taif  
and Riyadh, 6 February.  
*P Symens.*

**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar*  
pair, Malaki Dam, 24 December  
1993. *J-O Hedin.*

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* male,  
Riyadh, 25 March. Second or  
third record for this area. *I Saville.*

**Little Button-quail** *Turnix sylvatica*  
two, Malaki Dam, 2 - 3 February.  
Several records also from this area  
1990 - 1993 suggest this species is  
a very local resident in S.W. Saudi  
Arabia. *P Symens.*

**Senegal Thick-knee** *Burhinus  
senegalensis* Malaki Dam, 1  
February. First record for Arabia,  
and first outside Africa  
(see p. 12). *P Symens.*

**Red-wattled Lapwing** *Hoplopterus  
indicus* Thumamah, Riyadh, 16 -  
22 January. Fifth record away  
from the Gulf region. *P Symens.*

**Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*  
Riyadh, 18 July. *I Saville.*

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* Shuqaiq,  
28 April. Second record for  
Saudi Arabia. *I Saville.*

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius*  
*longicaudus* Karan, late April or  
early May. Perhaps first record  
for Saudi Arabia. per *P Symens.*

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandwicensis*  
Yanbu al-Sinaiyah, 22 March.  
Relatively scarce off Red Sea  
coast. *B Meadows.*



**Saunders's Little Tern** *Sterna*  
*saundersii* Riyadh, 5 June. Third  
record for this area. *I Saville.*

**Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator*  
*glandarius* 95 km north of Medina,  
18 December 1993; Yanbu al-  
Sinaiyah, 9 March; Yanbu al-  
Bahr, 11 March. Only one  
previous spring record from  
Yanbu al-Sinaiyah. *J-O Hedin, B*  
*Meadows.*

**White-collared Kingfisher**  
*Halcyon chloris* survey of  
mangroves along Red Sea coast  
revealed population of over 150  
individuals in late March.  
*P Symens.*

**Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*  
Thumamah, Riyadh, 10 March.  
First record for Central Province.  
*P Symens.*

**Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius*  
*ampelinus* 200 - 300 at roost,  
Riyadh, 23 March. Very large  
numbers. *I Saville.*

**White-throated Robin** *Iranai*  
*gutturalis* two, Riyadh, April  
(exact dates unknown). First  
record in Central Province for  
three years. *I Saville.*

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe*  
*isabellina* Riyadh, 14 June. First  
ever June record. *I Saville.*

**Yemen Thrush** *Turdus menachensis*  
Al Dahnas waterfall, 110 km  
north of Abha, 10 November  
1993. Rare in Saudi Arabia in the  
winter. *J-O Hedin.*

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*  
Yanbu, 26 November 1993.  
Unusually far south. *J-O Hedin.*

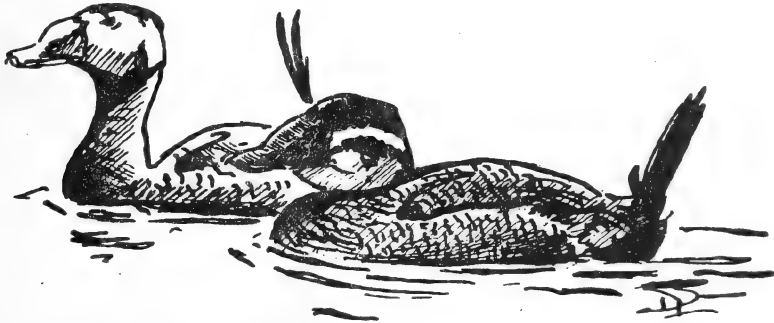
**African Reed Warbler**  
*Acrocephalus baeticatus* survey of  
mangroves along southern Red  
Sea coast in late March revealed  
a much larger population than  
envisaged. *P Symens.*

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*  
Riyadh, 6-7 May. Less than five  
previous records in this area.  
*I Saville.*

**Shining Sunbird** *Nectarinia*  
*habessinica* three, Jebel Figrah, 14  
March. Most northerly record of  
this species. *B Meadows.*

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* nine,  
Deffi Park, Jubail, November  
1993 - late March. Apparently  
now a regular winter visitor to  
Eastern Province. *P Symens.*

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*  
11, Deffi Park, November 1993 -  
late March. Apparently now  
regular in Eastern Province in  
winter. *P Symens.*



**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus* recorded  
at several localities in Eastern and  
Central Provinces between 3.  
November 1993 - 15 March;  
maximum 36, Jubail, 14 March  
(cf. records in Egypt, Qatar and  
UAE). *P Symens.*

## SYRIA

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* Lake  
Jabbul, 4 & 25 February. *E Bailey.*

**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor* Lake  
Jabbul, 25 February. *E Bailey,*  
*G Manners.*

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* pair, Lake  
Jabbul, 13 May. Late migrants.  
per *G Manners.*

**Pintail** *Anas acuta* male, Lake  
Jabbul, 27 May. Late migrant.  
per *G Manners.*

**Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta*  
*angustirostris* pair, Lake Jabbul,  
13 May; seven pairs,  
Muhaymidah, 1 June; eight, Al-  
Ashara, 2 June. Only one other  
recent record, in 1975. *R Hofland,*  
*G Manners.*

**White-headed Duck** *Oxyura*  
*leucocephala* male, Lake Jabbul, 9  
June. Presumably over-  
summering. *G Manners, R Miller.*

**White-tailed Plover** *Chettusia*  
*leucura* four pairs, Muhaymidah,  
1 June. *R Hofland.*

**Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus*  
*ichthyaetus* two adults, Arzus, 9  
March. per *G Manners.*

**Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*  
numerous, Lake Jabbul, 9 June.  
Potential breeding locality. *G*  
*Manners, R Miller.*

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
female, Muhaymidah, 1 June.  
Unusually late for a migrant.  
*R Hofland.*

**Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer*  
*moabiticus* maximum 12 - 19, Tel  
Hadya lagoon, 25 March - 15 May.  
Breeding not proven; status at  
this locality requires  
confirmation. *L Bailey, A V Gastel,*  
*G Manners, R Miller.*

**Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta*  
male, Tel Hadya, 30 April and  
three, 15 May; Deir Samaan, 20  
May. Status at these localities  
requires confirmation. *A V Gastel,*  
*G Manners, R Miller.*

## TURKEY

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius*  
*leschenaultii* breeding, north of  
Tuzluca, 9 June. First breeding  
record for the East. *W Smith.*

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius*  
*longicaudus* pale phase adult,  
Duden Gölü, Sultan Marshes, 10  
June. Seventh record and second  
inland occurrence. *H Meyer.*

**River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis*  
singing, Bozkir, 17 May. Scarce  
passage migrant which may  
breed. *L Boon.*

**Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus*  
*agricola* five, Van Marshes, 7 - 8  
June. *H Shirihai, W Smith.*

**Mongolian Trumpeter Finch**  
*Bucanetes mongolicus* two, 38 km  
south of Dogubayazit, 29 May;  
male, Dogubayazit, 29 May; five,  
7.5 km east of Aydinkavak, 8 June;  
two, 40 km south of Dogubayazit,  
9 June. *L Boon, A Rosier, W Smith.*

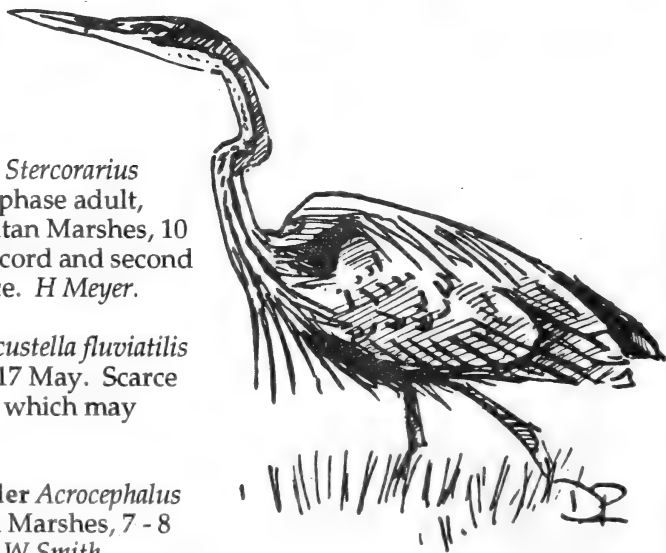
## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

*Records were submitted by Colin*  
*Richardson, on behalf the*  
*Emirates Bird Records Committee.*

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel** *Oceanites*  
*oceanicus*, ten, off Khor Fakkan,  
30 June - 1 July. Status poorly  
known in Arabian Gulf.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*  
Ramtha Tip, Sharjah, 1 June & 21  
July; Zabeel fish ponds, 15 - 16  
July. Unusual in summer.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* two,  
Zabeel fish farm, 29 May - end of  
July at least. Unusual in summer.



**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*  
Emirates Golf Course, 26 May -  
19 June; Zabeel fish farm,  
throughout July. Unusual in  
summer.

**Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos*  
*tracheliotus* 12, Sumayni, 1 March;  
Masafi, 1 July.

**Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila*  
*pomarina* Khor Dubai, 23  
February. Fourth record.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* 109,  
Hamraniyah, 7 April. Largest  
numbers ever recorded.

**Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*  
Emirates Golf Course, 26  
February. Unusually early  
migrant.

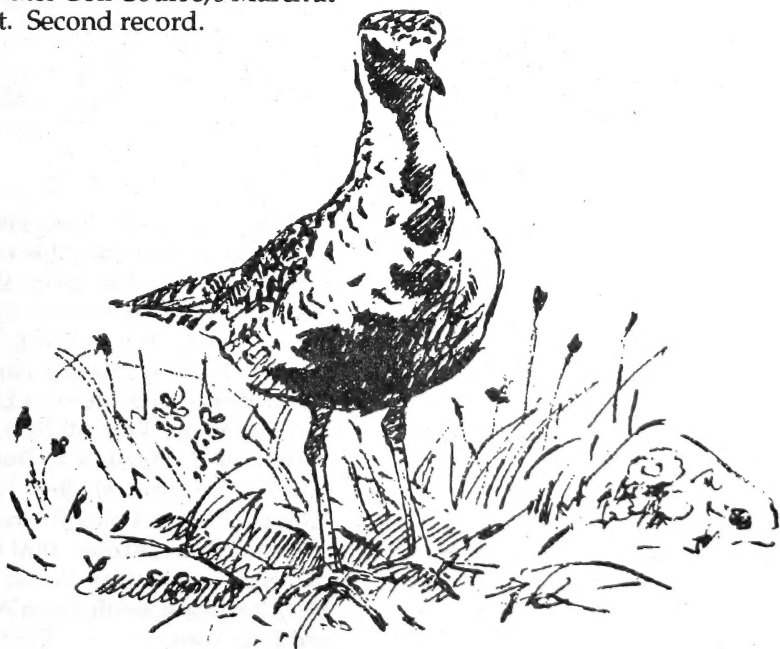
**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*  
Emirates Golf Course, 3 March at  
least. Second record.

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*  
nine, Emirates Golf Course, 26  
February.

**Great Snipe** *Gallinago media*  
Emirates Golf Course, 20  
February. Third record since  
1987, most recent at same locality  
in September 1993.

**White-eyed Gull** *Larus*  
*leucoptthalmus* Kalba, 9 May. First  
record.

**White-cheeked Tern** *Sterna*  
*repressa* 19,000 recorded during  
breeding survey of seabird  
colonies, principally on Qarnayn,  
Dayinah and Muhaiyimat islands  
in Arabian Gulf, 12 - 19 June; also  
50,000 **Bridled Tern** *S. anaethus*  
and 48,000 **Lesser Crested Tern**  
*S. bengalensis*.



**Striated Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* at least three, Mushrif Park, Dubai, 8 & 10 July. Status still uncertain.

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba* near Kalba, 31 March. Seventh record.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* two, Ras al Khaimah, 3 March; Al Ain, 5 April. Sixth and seventh records.

**Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Al Habab, 26 February.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Emirates Golf Course, 8 May. Eighth record.

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewski*, five, Al Wathba camel track, 13 February; three, Dibba, 27 March; two, near Abu Dhabi, 29 March. Fifth to seventh records.

**Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* ten, Liwa oasis, 18 March; 64, Al Wathba, 24 - 25 March. Latter is largest flock ever recorded in UAE.

**Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotos* male, Abu Dhabi, 14 February at least. Fifteenth record.

**Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* male, Emirates Golf Course, 7 May. First record and third record for Arabia (cf. recent record in Saudi Arabia OSME Bull. 32:45).

**Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* male, Al Wathba, 25 March.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* trapped and ringed, Zabeel Fish Farm, Dubai, 6 May. First confirmed record.

**Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida* Qaffay Island, 15 June. Unusually late migrant.

**Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus humei* Emirates Golf Course, 20 April.

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra* 20 singing from late February. No confirmed breeding records from Arabia.



I am grateful to the following for their help in compiling this review: Arnoud B van den Berg (*Dutch Birding*), Leo Boon, Duncan Brooks, Jens Eriksen, D A Ewbank, Steve Gantlett (*Birding World*), Jan-Olov Hedin, Remco Hofland, Mark Lawlor, Guy Manners, Rod Martins, Pete Maton, B S Meadows, Dominic Mitchell (*Birdwatch*), Bob Nation, Michael Prince, Colin Richardson, Iain Robertson (African Bird Club), Ashleigh Rosier, Jean Sadler (COS 1957), P William Smith, Colin Walters and Effie Warr.

## Ornithological Society of the Middle East

c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, U.K.

The Ornithological Society of the Middle East was formed in April 1978 as a successor to the Ornithological Society of Turkey. Its aims are as follows:

To collect, collate and publish ornithological data on the birds of the Middle East.

To encourage an interest in and conservation of birds of the Middle East.

To develop a mutually beneficial working relationship with all environmental and conservation bodies and natural history societies in and concerned with the Middle East.

**Membership** is open to all and spans over 40 countries. Membership subscriptions are: £10 individual, £15 family; airmail supplement £1.50 Europe, £3 rest of the world. Life membership £200.

**Publications.** *Sandgrouse* is the Society's journal and contains scientific papers on all aspects of the ornithology of the Middle East. The *OSME Bulletin*, issued twice yearly to all members, covers all aspects of birdwatching and conservation within the Middle East.

**For further details, please write to:**

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