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# SANDGROUSE

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Volume 21 (1)

1999



OSME

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ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF  
THE MIDDLE EAST

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OSME

OSME was founded in 1978 as the successor to the Ornithological Society of Turkey. Its primary aims are:

- To collect, collate, and publish data on all aspects of the birds of the Middle East.
- To promote an interest in ornithology and bird conservation throughout the Middle East.
- To develop productive working relationships with other governmental and non-governmental organisations with an interest in conservation and/or natural history in the region.

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OSME is open to all, and its membership spans over 40 countries.

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# ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

#### PUBLICATIONS

OSME publishes a scientific journal, *Sandgrouse*, containing papers, news and features on all aspects of Middle Eastern ornithology. Published twice yearly, it is issued free to members. Further copies are available for sale from OSME.

#### MEETINGS

An Annual General Meeting is held in London at which guest speakers provide new perspectives on ornithology in the region. There are also occasional special meetings, some taking place outside the UK.

#### PROJECTS

OSME organises field expeditions to collect data on birds in little-known parts of the region and in areas where OSME can assist by teaming up with local groups.

The Conservation & Research Committee grants funds to valuable field projects and desk studies which further knowledge and conservation of birds in the region. Grants have been awarded to over 30 projects since the Conservation & Research Fund was set up in 1982.

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# SANDGROUSE

Volume 21 (1)

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**Cover Photograph:**

Small Skylark *Alauda gulgula*,  
taken by Leo J. R. Boon  
at Eilat, Israel.

OSME is grateful for sponsorship  
from Julian Francis towards the cost of  
printing the colour photographs inside  
this issue.

# OSME News



## NEW COUNCIL MEMBER

Simon Busuttill has recently been co-opted as OSME's Country Co-ordinator, to develop a network of regional representatives within the region. It is envisaged that these in-country contacts can keep OSME informed of conser-

vation developments within the region, develop a list of ornithological projects and surveys required in their country or region, as well as recruiting new members and providing a point of contact for existing OSME members. Should you be interested in being involved in this scheme, please write to Simon Busuttill at OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, U. K.

## NEW ADDRESS FOR TURKEY BIRD REPORT

You can now e-mail records to the Turkey bird report. The address for submissions is: [turkishbirdreport@osme.org](mailto:turkishbirdreport@osme.org). Alternatively, you can write to Guy Kirwan & Rodney Martins, OSME, Turkey Bird Report, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, U. K. The latest report, covering the period 1992-1996, is scheduled for publication in *Sandgrouse* 21 part 2. Should you have unsubmitted bird observations from Turkey during this period please contact the editors at one of the above addresses as soon as possible.

# NEWS & INFORMATION

*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.*

## GENERAL

**Ramsar briefing paper available** The UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has produced a Guide to the Ramsar Convention which protects wetland sites. The guide provides clear explanation of the objectives, operations and instruments of the

convention. It is an invaluable reference tool for those individuals and organisations concerned with policy and lobbying on wetland issues, with the aim of securing the protection of important wetland sites and their biodiversity. It is available from John O'Sullivan, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, U. K. Tel: +44 (0)1767 680551. (Source: *BirdLife in Europe* 3 (3)).

**Slender-billed Curlew Working Group** A working group has been established to maintain and enhance the conservation status of the Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*. At present the database of Slender-billed Curlew records is being updated. 1998 records, some awaiting confirmation, include one in Morocco, several in Greece and one in the U. K. Any observations from the OSME area are urgently required. Please send them either to OSME, or to Nic

Peet, European Division, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA. E-mail: nic.peet@birdlife.org.uk. (Source: *BirdLife in Europe* 3 (3))

**Syrian Serin report** A report on the status of Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus* in the Middle East is being compiled in co-operation with CMS/UNEP (Bonn Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species) and the RSCN, Jordan. *Serinus syriacus* is the only regular breeding bird species endemic to the Near East where c. 2000 pairs are believed to exist. Recent and unpublished observations, or any information related to this species are welcomed and will be acknowledged. Information on breeding and wintering distribution, especially in Syria and Lebanon, on population trends at Mt. Hermon and conservation problems are very useful, and should be sent, as soon as possible, to Dr Fares Khoury, Dept. Ornithology, ZFMK, Adenauerallee 160, 53113 Bonn, Germany, or to fax: +96 265673199 (Jordan)

**Winning Eriksens** OSME members will need no reminding of the extremely high standard of bird photographs produced by Jens and Hanne Eriksen. Further proof of their ability came in this year's Bird Photograph of the Year competition, which is run annually by the monthly journal *British Birds*. Jens took first and second place with shots of a Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* and a Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*. Jens also won the competition in 1997, whilst Hanne took first place in 1989 and 1990. The fact that no-one had ever achieved both first and second place before is clear indication of the skill involved. Jens also took equal seventh place with a wonderful photo of a Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*. All three photos were taken in Oman. OSME offer the society's congratu-

lations on this marvellous achievement. The winning Sooty Falcon photograph is reproduced below. For a further reminder of Eriksen photographic quality, readers should refer to the first issue of the revamped *Sandgrouse*: the cover shot of a Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse perfectly captures this classic desert bird. (Contributed by Paul Doherty)

## ISRAEL

**Hula still threatened** The Hula Swamp Important Bird Area (IBA) is currently threatened by a proposed tourism development project. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel has recently appealed to the country's supreme court asking for an injunction to halt this potentially disastrous scheme. (Source: *World Birdwatch* 20 (2): 5)

## JORDAN

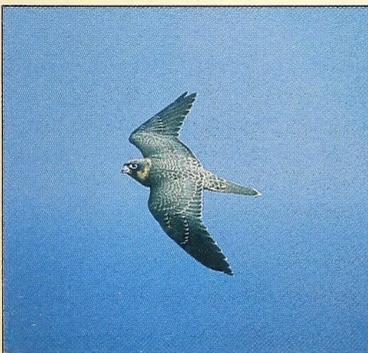
**Welcome news from Azraq** Since 1994 work has been in progress to restore the famous Azraq Wetland Reserve. The wetland had been drying out due to excessive water extraction from the underground aquifer that feeds the area, and below ground fires which spread through the dried peat soil. With UNDP / GEF funds, water has been pumped back into the wetlands, pools dredged and enlarged, and plans are in progress to restore some of the open water and low marsh communities. A visitors' centre is set to open at Azraq in late 1998. (Source: *Oryx* 32: 180-181)

## SYRIA

**Ramsar Convention ratified** Syria became a party to the Ramsar Convention in March 1998, when Lac de Sebkha al-Djabbul was designated as its first Ramsar site. (Source: *World Birdwatch* 20 (3): 3)

## TURKEY

**Biodiversity in the Konya basin** A three-month survey of biodiversity in the Konya basin, undertaken by DHKD and funded by Vogelbescherming Nederland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), has made a number of significant discoveries. New breeding areas for White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*, Great Bustard *Otis tarda* and Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus* were discovered. Surveys of montane areas produced



**Plate 1.** Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*, Sultanate of Oman, October 1997. Winner *British Birds* Bird Photograph of the Year 1998. (Jens Eriksen)

significant new data for Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*, Caspian Snowcock *Tetraogallus caspius* and Radde's Accentor *Prunella ocularis*, and discovered that Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* was substantially more widespread than previously supposed. Further details can be found on the internet at: <http://www.gironet.nl/home/renevov/konya/konya.htm>. (Source: *BirdLife in Europe* 3 (3): 2 and G. Eken *in litt.* 1998)

**Uluabat lake survey** This Important Bird Area (IBA) was designated as a Ramsar site in April 1998. A survey of the area in spring 1998 found important heronries and 823 pairs of Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* in the area, as well as identifying a number of threats to the lake's ecosystem: over-fishing, shoreline development and eutrophication caused by agricultural run-off and urban waste. In response, DHKD, the Turkish Ministry for the Environment and the State Water Works are collaborating to prepare a management plan for the area. The project also aims to establish a Ramsar National Committee, consisting of representatives from relevant government ministries, local authorities, NGOs and stakeholders, in order to establish a legal framework for multi-sectoral planning. (Source: *BirdLife in Europe* 3 (3): 4-5)

**Turna** Turkey's importance for birds is well known, but to date there has been no Turkish bird magazine. A new magazine from Turkey about the birds of Turkey has recently been launched. *TURNA*, the 48-page bulletin of the Ornithological Council of Turkey (TOK), is a twice-yearly periodical mix of news, papers, notes, reviews and remarkable sightings. The first issue includes papers and notes on several subjects, including: Recent information on the occurrence of the Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* in Turkey; Results of a survey of wintering waterbirds along the Turkish Black Sea coast; and Status and distribution of the Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* in Turkey. Both native and foreign scientists contributed to the first issue. The magazine is sponsored by NIKON and is kindly distributed by DHKD (BirdLife partner in Turkey) and RSPB (BirdLife partner in UK). For more information contact: [TURNA@wasp.bio.metu.edu.tr](mailto:TURNA@wasp.bio.metu.edu.tr)

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**Hunting ban** Ras Al Khaimah, one of the seven sheikhdoms of the United Arab Emirates banned bird and hare *Lepus capensis* hunting in August 1998. Penalties include two days in jail for a first offender, and one month in jail and seizure of equipment for repeat offenders. No mention was made of protection for birds' eggs. Most hunting has traditionally been carried out by local tribesmen and, in the past, quarry species have included Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* and large raptors, which are believed by local people to attack and occasionally kill Saker *Falco cherrug* and Peregrine Falcons *F. peregrinus*, species valued highly for falconry. Species known to have been captured include Black Vulture (the UAE's first and only record) and Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*. Ras Al Khaimah is a 'hot spot' for migrant large raptors during winter, including Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* and Imperial Eagles *A. heliaca*, some of which are believed to be shot at occasionally, although there is very little data. An official announcement accompanying the decree stated that the hunting ban was intended to help preserve local wildlife, and all police stations have been instructed to enforce the ban. Much of the hunting of raptors is, however, believed to take place in remote mountain districts, where tribesmen are unlikely to co-operate quickly with the new ban, and where enforcement is virtually impossible, as in similar locations in other countries. (Source: Peter Hellyer *in litt.* 1998)

## REQUESTS for INFORMATION

**Yemen: request for unpublished reports** Rod Martins and Richard Porter are preparing a status report on Yemen's birds for publication in a future issue of *Sandgrouse*. To assist them with this they would be grateful to receive any unpublished reports which will be fully acknowledged in the write-up. Reports should be sent to: **Richard Porter, c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, CB3 0NA, U. K.**

# PHOTO spot

## Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse

Birders holdidaying at Eilat are almost certain to have visited the local pumping station where Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii* drink at dusk. (In Israel, the species is limited to the Eilat region, but is not accorded any importance by the local and regional authorities. The International Birdwatching Center is currently fighting to save this area from being turned into a dog pound. We urge birdwatchers who have enjoyed watching these birds to protest in writing to the Mayor of Eilat, requesting a cessation of all development adjacent to the Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse drinking trough.). This species is rarely seen in the day, and then usually only a fleeting glance, so the pumping station provides a rare opportunity to see the species at its gregarious best.

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse is patchily distributed from Mauritania east, through the Sahara, to Somalia and thence through the Middle East to west Pakistan, and south to central Kenya. It is a true desert specialist, being adapted to extreme xeric conditions, but prefers bush-covered rocky or scrubby habitats. The species is crepuscular in its watering activities and the breast feathers are the highest in their ability to hold water in comparison to seven other sandgrouse

species. Little is known of its breeding biology; the few nests ever discovered were typically in the shade of a shrub or among scattered trees or rocks. It is assumed that the male provides water for the young, although no direct observations exist.

Although only snapshots of its life history can be obtained through observations at the water trough, it is possible to procure clues to their annual cycle. Based on year-round observations, we have ascertained that courtship (lek-like) occurs in January–May (mainly February–March), and fledglings appear in August–September. Hence, largest numbers are observed in late summer–early autumn (Shirihai 1996, *The birds of Israel*). Numbers are considerably lower during the cooler October–February period, probably due to reduced water requirement and greater availability of alternative sources owing to winter rain, dispersal, and reduced survival rates of the young—the latter are unstudied.

This a stocky, small-sized sandgrouse, with short tail and rounded wings; the plumage is generally pale and predominantly grey-buff with close barring/vermiculations. In flight, there is a typical (amongst sandgrouse) striking contrast to the upperwing with darker (brownish black) flight feathers, whilst the underwing is almost concolorously dark grey-brown. Males have a diagnostic buff-yellowish breast traversed by two narrow black bars, one across the centre and one separating the breast and belly. Unlike other sandgrouse in the region, it has a black-and-white striped 'forehead mask' and orange bill, and a pronounced series of gold-buff wingbars. Females, in contrast, are rather featureless and greyer, with finer and closer spaced bars. They lack most of male's distinctive characteristics including the breast bands, boldly decorated black and buff scapular markings and forehead pattern, but have a broad, pale (greenish grey instead of yellow) area of bare skin around the eye. The wingbars are formed by bold whitish tips rather than the broad white, buff and black bars of the male. Juveniles largely resemble females, but, compared to the adults, during the prolonged complete post-juvenile moult, have only partial or even no black-and-white facial markings and reduced and faded wingbars, scapular markings and breast bands.

Seven regular drinking spots are known between Eilat and c. 65 km north of the town. The principal sites are the Eilat pumping station and the sewage tanks c. 10 km north of Eilat where several tens of birds can be observed. The estimated breeding population in the 1980s was about 50–100 pairs (Shirihai 1996, *The birds of Israel*) and the population is apparently slowly increasing due to the increased number of available water sources.

Hadoram Shirihai, P. O. Box 4168,  
Eilat 88102, Israel.

Reuven Yosef, International Birdwatching Center  
Eilat, P. O. Box 774, Eilat 88000, Israel.

Paul Doherty, 28 Carousel Walk, Shoreburn-in-  
Elmet, North Yorkshire LS25 6LP, U. K.

Dan Alon, Israel Ornithological Center, 155  
Herzel Street, Tel Aviv 68101, Israel.



Plate 1. Female Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, in the hand, Israel. (Hadoram Shirihai)



Plate 2. Male Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Khawr Rouri, Oman. (Hanne & Jens Eriksen)



**Plate 3.** Female Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Eilat, Israel, December. (Arie de Knijff)



Plate 4. Male and female Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Eilat, Israel, December. (Arie de Knijff)



Plate 5. Male Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Eilat, Israel, December. (Arie de Knijff)

# PROFILE



*Hadoram Shirihai*

It is hard to find original things to say about Hadoram Shirihai. Put simply, he is the foremost ornithologist of the Middle East with a history of original publications which is the envy and admiration of many.

Shirihai was, in many ways, in the right place at the right time. Following several years of avifaunal studies in the Jerusalem area, Hadoram moved to Eilat in 1980 at a time when the area was beginning to be recognised as one of the most exciting migration watchpoints and vagrant hotspots in the Western Palearctic. Ever increasing numbers of West European birders, among them many of the leading ornithologists of modern times were to come into contact with a young Israeli birder of inquisitive mind and with an enviable list of discoveries, and many original ideas concerning bird migration, identification and taxonomy. Hadoram also conducted extensive studies of migrant raptors in the area, founded the International Birdwatching Center and played a leading role in the Eilat ringing station.

During the past ten years his contribution to the ornithology of the Western Palearctic has been immense: numerous keynote identification papers published in leading journals, culminating in his co-authorship, with David Christie and Alan Harris, of *The Macmillan birder's guide to European and Middle Eastern birds*; a comprehensive avifaunal survey of his homeland, *The birds of Israel*, which must be regarded as one of the most splendid avifaunas of modern times (and was awarded 'Best Book of the Year' by *Birdwatch* and *British Birds*); and an on-going monograph of the *Sylvia* warblers. To write one classic book in a lifetime can fairly be regarded as impressive, but to have almost completed a third borders on the unfair! In addition, he has found time to make a living, principally as a tour guide in Israel and abroad, particularly in Turkey, Sinai and Ethiopia.

Hadoram is currently working for the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and the International Birdwatching Center Eilat on a project to protect desert habitats, particularly those important for Arabian Warbler, Hoopoe Lark, Nubian Nightjar and Houbara Bustard. For the first-named organisation, he is also working to protect wintering populations of Greater Spotted and Imperial Eagles in Israel.

Widely fêted by his colleagues abroad, Hadoram has accomplished what many would regard as a lifetime's work at 36. Nonetheless few that know him suspect he has the capacity for rest, and we therefore look forward to many more illuminating and groundbreaking contributions in the future, including a recently commenced cooperative project with Cees Roselaar, the *Handbook of Palearctic Geographical Variation*.

*Guy M. Kirwan and Richard Porter*

# Jordan Bird Report 1995–97

IAN J. ANDREWS, FARES KHOURY AND HADORAM SHIRIHAI

THIS FIRST JORDAN BIRD REPORT, has been compiled by IJA in cooperation with FK and HS. Significant records submitted to IJA or OSME, since the publication of Andrews (1995) in March 1995, are listed. The report covers 1995–1997, but some previously unpublished reports from earlier years are included.

The number of birdwatchers visiting Jordan remains very low (less than five groups per year). Nonetheless, there are still gaps in our knowledge, and our understanding of Jordan's bird fauna advances slowly. Several major surveys undertaken by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) have added substantially to our knowledge of the Dana (RSCN 1995a,b, 1997a,b) and Wadi al Mujib Reserves (RSCN 1996). In 1996, surveys were undertaken in the proposed Rum Reserve, Al Karak Governorate and at Petra. Selected results of on-going research by Durham University in the north-east desert (Badia) area are included, but this work has yet to be published in full.

Israel and Jordan share a border along the Jordan River and through Wadi Araba to the Gulf of Aqaba. Knowledge of the avifauna of the Jordanian side is limited due to poor coverage and restricted access. Records from four geographic areas are included here as they are directly relevant to Jordan (HS): (a) birds seen in the Gulf of Aqaba (from Eilat) over or on Jordanian waters, (b) birds seen over the border fence in Aqaba (from Eilat), (c) birds seen on the east bank of the Jordan River (from Israel) and (d) birds seen in Wadi Araba between the 1949 Armistice Line and the limit of Israeli military advance in 1968–70. The latter is an area of 344 km<sup>2</sup> which was returned to Jordan in October 1994 as part of the Jordan–Israel Peace Treaty (Fig. 1). It has been decided to include species seen in categories a to c (above) on the Jordan List, but with the caveat that they were only seen from adjacent territory and with the proviso that the record must be accepted by the Israeli Rarities and Distribution Committee.

All visitors are encouraged to submit trip reports to IJA at the address at the end of this paper, since these can still add significantly of our understanding of the country's avifauna. It is hoped to compile a second Jordan Bird Report in the future.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

The introductory paragraph for each species summarises its status in Jordan (based on Andrews 1995). Selected records for 1995–97 are listed. Where all available 1995–97 records are given, the species is marked with an asterisk (\*). All records refer to singles unless otherwise stated. Records of birds seen in Jordan from Israel are marked (I). Observers' initials are given in parentheses for more important records.

**\*Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

1987-88: Aqaba (I) 10 Nov–16 Mar.

This bird was seen in Jordanian waters several times during its stay off Eilat (Shirihai 1996). The first record in Jordan.

**\*Atlantic Petrel** *Pterodroma incerta*

1982: Aqaba (I) 31 May.

1989: Aqaba (I) 18–24 Apr (van der Schot 1989).

Both birds were seen from Eilat (Shirihai 1996) and in Jordanian waters (HS). The first and second records in Jordan.

**\*Soft-plumaged Petrel** *Pterodroma mollis*

1997: Aqaba (I) 25 Mar (E. Hirschfeld, HS *et al.*).

This bird flew from Aqaba to Eilat (Shirihai 1999). The first record in Jordan.

**\*Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*

1992: 2–3, Aqaba (I) 21 Jun–18 Sep (Plate 1).

1993: Aqaba (I) early May–summer.

Both Eilat records (Morgan & Shirihai 1992, Shirihai 1996) concerned birds seen from Israel commuting near-daily between Israeli and Jordanian waters. The first and second records in Jordan.

**\*Pale-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*

1980: Aqaba (I) 15 Aug (HS).

This bird, seen from Eilat (Shirihai 1996), was also in Jordanian waters. The first record in Jordan.

**\*Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

Variable numbers occur in the northern Gulf of Aqaba in spring.

1993: Aqaba 28 Apr (MIE).

1995: Aqaba 19–20 Apr (IJA, NSR).

1996: Aqaba 9 Apr (IJA).

The 4–6th records in Jordan. All Israeli records since 1978 refer to birds also seen in Jordanian waters. For status in northern Gulf of Aqaba see Shirihai (1996).

**\*Wilson's Petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*

1983: Aqaba (I) 1 Jun.

This Eilat sighting (Shirihai 1996) was also seen in Jordanian waters. The first record in Jordan.

**\*Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus*

1983: 2, Aqaba (I) 5 Jul.

These birds seen off Eilat (Shirihai 1996), also flew over Jordanian waters. The first record in Jordan.

**\*Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster*

Occurs in variable numbers in the northern Gulf of Aqaba, probably throughout the year.

1995: Aqaba 26 Jan.

1996: 2, Aqaba 12 Feb, up to 4, 5–8 Dec (IJA).

1997: Aqaba 16 Feb, 14 and 21 Mar, 8–9 and 21 Apr.

First winter (Dec–Feb) records.

**\*Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Scarce winter and spring visitor to Aqaba and Azraq.

1996: 20+ northern Jordan and Yarmouk Valleys 18 Feb (FK).

In winters 1990–97, 8–23 birds wintered in Eilat and Aqaba waters (HS).

**\*Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*

1997: immature male, Aqaba (I) 1 Dec (RR, JMR).

The first record in Israel, Jordan and the Western Palearctic.

**\*Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare winter visitor to Azraq and the Jordan River Valley.

1996: released into Jordan (I) (from Eilat) 23 Apr (RAB).

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant in spring, fewer in autumn. Rare away from Azraq, where formerly bred.

1985: pair Jordan River during Jun (behaviour suggested breeding), and family parties at two sites 2 Jul (HS).

1996: immature, Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi 4 Dec.

First proof of breeding away from Azraq and first winter record.

**Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Uncommon migrant.

1989: a colony of a few hundred pairs in Kefar Ruppin area (Israel) (Plate 2) with nests on both sides of the Jordan River (HS). The first breeding record in Jordan.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

Fairly common migrant. Formerly bred Azraq.

1989: a few pairs nested on both sides of the Jordan River in Kefar Ruppin area (Israel) (HS).

1995: 2–5 pairs, Azraq until mid-Jun, then 20 immatures (Khoury 1996).

1996: 3 including an apparent pair in breeding plumage, Sahl as Suwwan 14 Jun; Ghor as Safi 2 Jul (MIE).

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Fairly common non-breeding resident in the Jordan Valley; passage migrant elsewhere. Summer records away from the Jordan Valley are presented.

1989: 10s of pairs nested on both sides of the Jordan River in Kefar Ruppin area (Israel) (HS). The first breeding in Jordan.

1996: 2 in breeding plumage, Sahl as Suwwan 14 Jun, 4 on 12th; Ghor as Safi 2 Jul (MIE).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Common non-breeding resident, with largest numbers on spring passage.

1989: a colony of a few hundred pairs, Kefar Ruppin (Israel) (Plate 3) spread to both sides of the Jordan River (HS). The first breeding in Jordan.

**\*Great White Egret** *Egretta alba*

Scarce winter visitor and spring migrant at Azraq, Aqaba and Jordan Valley.

1996: Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi 2 Jul (MIE). The first summer record in Jordan.

In 1990–97, 10–17 birds wintered in Eilat/Aqaba waters, often roosting at Aqaba sewage works (HS).

**\*Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*

1987: Aqaba (I) 19 Oct–15 Dec.

This bird occasionally visited the Eilat salt ponds (Shirihai 1996), but spent most time in Aqaba (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

Scarce passage migrant which formerly bred at Azraq.

1989: a few pairs bred on both sides of the Jordan River (HS).

1995: a pair probably bred Azraq, juvenile seen later (Khoury 1996).

**\*Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath*

1977: Aqaba 23 Mar (Kinzelbach 1986).

The first record in Jordan which also appeared in Israel (Shirihai 1996).

**\*Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis*

1996: Aqaba sewage works (I) 18 Apr (RAB).

The first record in Jordan. No description available.

**\*Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

Three records in 1983–91, all in Apr at Azraq.

1995: Aqaba sewage works 19 Apr.

1996: Aqaba sewage works 11 Apr.

1997: 4, Aqaba sewage works 4 Oct, 2 on 24 Oct. The first autumn records.

**\*Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Scarce winter visitor to Azraq, Dead Sea and Aqaba.

1995: Azraq 7 Apr (FK).

**\*Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*

1988–89: Aqaba (I) 18 Nov–17 Jan.

This bird was first seen at Eilat (Shirihai 1996), but during its stay the bird was mostly observed in Aqaba (from Eilat) (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**\*White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

Two records at Azraq: in 1979 and 1991.

1986–87: Aqaba Dec–Feb (Plate 4).

This bird commuted almost daily between Eilat and Aqaba (HS). The third record in Jordan.

**\*Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*

1993–94: 2–3, Aqaba (I) Nov–Feb.

These birds were sometimes seen in Aqaba from neighbouring Israel (HS). The first record in Jordan. Shirihai (1996) quotes Hardy (1946) and W. K. Bigger (private notes of 1918–43) that it was "a very rare winter visitor [in Israel] also recorded at Aqaba". However, Hardy (1946) only gives the vague statement that it "occasionally visits Gulf of Aqaba".

**\*Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

A rare winter visitor to Azraq.

1994–5: photographed at Aqaba sewage works in winter (JR).

**\*Cotton Teal** *Nettapus coromandelianus*

1997: female, Aqaba sewage works 9–10 Apr (Bashford 1997).  
The first record in Jordan.

**\*Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Scarce winter visitor to Azraq.  
1995: 4, Ghadir Burqu' 31 Dec (MIE, SAM).  
1996: 2, Aqaba sewage works 5 Dec (IJA).  
No previous December records.

**\*Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

1983: pair, Aqaba (I) 4–8 Jan.  
These birds off Eilat (Shirihai 1996) were also seen in Jordanian waters (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**\*White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*

1987–88: 2, Aqaba (I) Dec–Feb.  
These birds frequented ponds near the Israel/Jordan border (Shirihai 1996). When disturbed they occasionally flew over Jordanian territory (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

1995: adult male, Kibbutz Lotan, Israel 13 May; flew into Jordan. The first record in Jordan.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

Common passage migrant particularly along the Rift Margins in spring.  
1996: few resembling *M. m. lineatus* in Apr (RvdV); immature, Disi 7 Dec.  
1997: one resembling *M. m. lineatus*, Petra 20 Apr (RBB, KLE).  
Those birds resembling *M. m. lineatus* occurring in Israel (and presumably also in Jordan) may belong to an eastern population of *M. m. migrans* where the two subspecies intergrade (Shirihai 1996).

**\*Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

Status uncertain due to confusion with rufous Black Kites. Only three published records and probably only a rare winter visitor (Shirihai 1996).  
1996: 3+, between Al Qatrana and Al Husayniyya 14 Mar (FK).  
The only recent record.

**\*Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus*

Formerly bred in several Rift Margin wadis and on Jabal Umm Ishrin. Paucity of recent sightings suggests it may be extinct.  
1985: Aqaba (I) 3 Apr.  
This bird, seen at Eilat (Shirihai & Christie 1992), later flew into Jordan (HS).

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*

Probably breeds in small numbers in the Rift Margins and Rum Desert, but no proof since single nest in 1960s. Passage birds occur in spring and autumn.  
1995: lone adults occasionally seen Wadi Araba, Wadi Dana and Wadi al Mujib in Jul–Aug (MIE).  
1996: pair displaying, Wadi al Mujib late Feb–mid-Mar, then 1 Apr–May; adult, Jabal Sua'yfan Kabir, Disi 12 Jun; pair and sub-adult, Jabal Umm Ishrin 16 Jun (MIE).

**Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus*

Formerly bred in several Rift Margin wadis, but only the colony in Wadi Dana probably remains. Wanderers occur elsewhere in the Rift Margins and the interior desert. All records away from Dana are given.  
1995: 6–7+ active nests, Wadi Dana (RSCN 1995b). First proven breeding for many years, although suspected at Wadi Dana. 11 roosting, Zarqa River valley 31 Mar (FK); Disi 19 Apr; 1–2, Wadi Shuqeiq (Wadi al Mujib Reserve) 2–20 Dec.  
1996: Umm Qays 5 Apr; Wadi al Mujib 5 Apr; Petra 11 Apr; 4, Mukawir 9 May; 2, north of At Tayyiba and 1, north of Ash Shawbak 8 Dec.  
1997: 4 active nests in one area, Wadi Dana 20 Feb (IJA).

**\*Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotus*

Only one published record, in 1963, but may have formerly bred in Wadi Araba.  
c.1953–55: nest probably of this species in acacia, Wadi al Khrayjiyah, east of Wadi Tasan springs (Evans & Al-Mashaqbah 1996).  
1980s: many birds flew between Israel and Jordan in Wadi Araba (HS).  
1986: a very old nest was found between Iddan–Hazeva (now Jordan) (HS).

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*

Little breeding data, but thought to breed in small numbers in the Northern Highlands, Southern Rift Margins and Rum Desert. Fairly common on passage along the Rift Margins and in the interior desert.

1985: pair with fledgling, few km north of Damiya (I) in Jul (HS).

1995: 3 pairs bred, Wadi Dana (MIE).

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

Rare spring and fairly common autumn migrant, especially in eastern areas in Sept.

1996: apparent pair frequenting wheat prairie in Faqu' area late Apr–early May (MIE). In possible breeding habitat, although not known to breed nearer than Turkey.

**\*Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Rare spring migrant, with only c.5 records 1963–1994. True status uncertain, due to potential confusion with Sparrowhawk *A. nisus*.

1995: Dana 27 Feb and 10 Mar (MIE); Petra 17 Apr (NSR).

1997: Petra 20 Mar (RBB, KLE); near Qattafi 1 Apr (RMW).

**Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

Abundant on spring and autumn migration, particularly along the Rift Margins in late Mar and early Apr. Few may overwinter.

1996: 40,000 in one hour, Aqaba 1 Apr (RvdV). An exceptional count, even by Eilat standards.

1997: 1 resembling *B. b. menetriesi*, Azraq 14 Mar (RBB, KLE). However, *B. b. menetriesi*, from the Caucasus, closely resembles the fox-red or dark morph of *B. b. vulpinus* and may be inseparable from it in the field (Shirihai 1996).

**\*Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*

Vagrant with four records in spring and autumn.

1996: 3 adults Dana 7 Feb (FK); Ash Shawbak 8 Feb (FK).

The 5–6th records and first (not unexpected) winter records.

**Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*

Regular winter visitor in significant numbers to at least the Eastern and Basalt Deserts. Passage also recorded in several areas.

1995: 15–20 roosting on pylons between Ar Ruwayshid and Iraqi border 31 Dec (MIE, SAM). This unprecedented count involved 8–10 adults, 1–3 sub-adults and 6–7 juveniles.

Also suggestion of additional wintering area at Disi (records in 1996–1997).

**Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii*

Single pair resident and breeds in the Rum Desert, with sightings at Feinan suggesting a further resident pair.

1995: adult, Feinan 3 Apr (MIE). Same site as 1994 records.

Only record away from traditional site at Wadi Rum.

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

About 10 pairs breed in the Central and Southern Rift Margins. Rare elsewhere.

1995: 3 pairs bred raising 3 young, Wadi Dana (RSCN 1995b).

1996: unoccupied, large stick-nest, almost certainly of this species, in a wadi draining into the Dead Sea; immature, near Ghor Fifa 2 Jul; pair, Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi 4 Dec.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

A localised summer visitor, breeding in several small colonies along the Rift Margins. Also occurs as a spring and late autumn migrant. Khoury & Al-Mahasneh (1997) estimate 100–300 pairs in Jordan.

1995: 24–28+ pairs breeding in 5+ colonies, Dana Reserve (RSCN 1995b), these had migrated by late Jul (MIE).

1996: c. 40, north of Madaba 1 Mar (FK); 25+, north of Faqu' 22 Mar (RSCN 1996), c. 15–20 pairs breeding, Wadi al Mujib Reserve (M. A. Yousef pers. comm.); pair nesting, Al Bayda, Petra 6 Apr (IJA).

1997: 26–28+ pairs breeding, Dana Reserve, 3+ at Busayra and 13 at Ash Shawbak (RSCN 1997b); 10+, Wadi Araba near Fidan 4 Apr.

**\*Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus*

Rare migrant to Azraq and the Southern Rift Margins.

1996: Aqaba (I) 16 Apr (RAB).

**\*Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonora*

Five previous spring records in 1987–93.

1995: Azraq 14 Jun (Khoury 1996).

1996: Aqaba (I) 25 Apr (RAB).

**\*Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug*

Status uncertain, but few available records refer to birds on spring passage. Potentially also a winter visitor to the interior deserts.

1995: confiscated juvenile female (originally from Iraq), released Shaumari (per MIE).

1996: Ar Rashadiyya 9 Oct (DRM).

1997: north of Wadi Dahal, Wadi Araba 26 Mar (RSCN 1997a).

**\*Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

Status unclear, due to confusion with Barbary Falcon *F. pelegrioides*. Published records indicate scarce wintering and passage in the interior deserts.

1994: Dana 24-25 Oct (RSCN 1995a, RFP).

1996: Dana 5 Oct (DRM).

1997: north of Aqaba 23 Mar (RBB, KLE).

First records away from the eastern deserts.

**Chukar** *Alectoris chukar*

Fairly common resident of the Rift Margins and adjacent highlands. A few also occur in the Eastern and Basalt Deserts. Locally endangered, or even extinct, due to hunting and egg collecting (Sutari 1996).

1995: 2, Wadi Rajil dam 16 Feb; 25 km west of Azraq 11 May (MIE); 32, Feinan 18 May; 43 roosting west of Faqu' 28 Nov; 800+ pairs estimated breeding, Dana Reserve (FK).

1996: 2, near As Safawi 3 Apr.

**Sand Partridge/See-see** *Ammoperdix heyi* / *A. griseogularis*.

1997: pairs noted Wadi Selma (3), wadi near Qattafi (1) and Wadi Qattafi (2) in late Mar-early Apr (RMW); pair with 8+ young, Wadi Selma 28 Apr (RL).

Further research is necessary to clarify the identity of the *Ammoperdix* partridges that occur in the Basalt Desert.

**\*Corncrake** *Crex crex*

Scarce spring migrant. One autumn record.

1994: 2 dead, Aqaba marine station in autumn (per MIE).

**\*Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio*

No previous records, although mentioned for the Jordan Valley in 1898.

1989: overwintering bird at Bet Shean (Israel) was seen several times on both sides of the Jordan River (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*

Suspected of breeding at Azraq in the past. Otherwise a common winter visitor to Azraq and Aqaba, and in Rift Margin wadis.

1995: 1576, Azraq 11 Feb (MIE); 8-15 pairs each with 4-5 young, Qa' al Azraq (Khoury 1996). First confirmed breeding in Jordan, although considered likely at Azraq in the 1960s (Nelson 1973).

**Common Crane** *Grus grus*

Locally abundant winter visitor to the Eastern Desert especially around Azraq. Small numbers are also reported on passage in the Rift Valley and its margins.

1995: 4, west of Faqu' 2 Dec; 4, south of Al Qadissiya 7 Dec (FK). First records for the Southern Highlands.

**\*Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo*

1995: Aqaba sewage works (I) 20-21 Mar (KM, PB, DMJ, KBW *et al.*).

The first record in Jordan. Description available.

**\*Houbara Bustard** *Chlamydotis undulata*

Formerly widespread and not uncommon, but brought almost to extinction by indiscriminate hunting. Few confirmed reports since 1979.

1980s: up to four wintered in the Qa' Saidiyin and Yotvata area and often flew into Jordan when disturbed (Shirihai 1996).

1995: tracks regularly found on 25% of transects in Wadi Araba during gazelle survey in Jul-Aug (T. Wachter and J. Boef per MIE).

1996: central Wadi Araba early May (RSCN ranger per MIE); reported by locals, Buq'awiyya Oct (per MIE).

1997: Basalt Desert 30 km north-east of As Safawi 1 May (RL).

**Great Bustard** *Otis tarda*

The occurrence of Great Bustard in Jordan (Shirihai 1996) is probably based on old and undocumented records, and therefore best considered as unconfirmed until more evidence is forthcoming (HS).

\***Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

A rare spring migrant to Azraq and Aqaba.

1996: Aqaba south beaches 6–7 Dec (IJA).

The first winter record.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

Breeds commonly in wet years at Qa' al Azraq, and possibly elsewhere. Also a common migrant, especially in spring.

1996: 27 including 5 half-grown young, Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi 2 Jul (MIE). The first breeding away from Azraq. 2, Aqaba sewage works 5 Dec. The first winter record.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Breeds in small numbers at Azraq after wet winters, also occurs there on passage. Rather scarce elsewhere. Few winter records.

1995: 105, c.30 paired and displaying, Qa' al Buq'awiyya 16 Apr (RFP); 4+ pairs probably bred Qa' al Azraq, flocks of up to 60 including juveniles later (Khoury 1996).

\***Crab Plover** *Dromas ardeola*

1987: 4, Aqaba (I) 19 Jul (Shirihai 1996).

The first record in Jordan.

**Stone Curlew** *Burhinus oedipnemus*

A scarce migrant breeder in the Eastern Desert and Northern Steppes. Migrants also scarce.

1995: 15–20, Qasr al Hallabat 12 Nov (CB).

1996: 2, mouth of Wadi al Mujib 5 Jan. The first winter record. 3, mouth of Wadi Ibn Hamad (Ghor Mazra'a) 26 Jun. Not previously noted in the Southern Ghor in the breeding season.

\***Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni*

Only seven records 1980–93.

1980: Azraq 2 May (Kappes & Kappes 1981).

1983: Azraq 27 Apr (Wittenberg 1983).

1995: photographed, Aqaba sewage works 19 Apr (IJA). Eighth record.

The 1980s records were inadvertently omitted from Andrews (1995).

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Breeds in small numbers on flooded desert mudflats. Otherwise a common migrant, especially in spring at wetlands and Aqaba.

1996: 2, Aqaba south beaches 7 Dec. The first December record.

\***Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

An uncommon winter visitor to the Eastern Desert and possibly elsewhere.

1988–89: 4 wintered, Qa' Saidiyin (HS).

1995: west of Faqu' 3 Dec (MIE). The first record in this area since those seen by Tristram (1873).

\***Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

A scarce passage migrant in Apr–May and once in Aug.

1997: Aqaba sewage works 5 Dec (IJA); 3 Aqaba south beaches 6 Dec (IJA). The first winter records.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Common passage migrant especially at Azraq and Al Khirba as Samra. Formerly abundant winterer at Azraq, very few in recent years.

1996: Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi 2 Jul (MIE), 100 on 4 Dec (IJA). The first summer record at possibly Jordan's only wintering site.

\***Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Scarce on passage and in winter, mainly at Azraq.

1995: Qa' al Buq'awiyya 15 Apr (RFP).

1996: 2, Suwayma 5 Apr (RvdV).

\***Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*

1984: Aqaba (I) 3 Nov.

A bird seen and trapped at Eilat, Israel (Shirihai 1996) was once flushed over the border fence to Jordan (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**\*Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Two records from Azraq: in Oct 1968 and Jan 1979.

1995: 2, Dana 27 Feb, 11–15 Mar (MIE). Both records were in dense *Juniperus* woodland on steep hillsides.

1997: Petra 18 Mar (RBB, KLE).

Three additional records, the first from the Southern Rift Margins.

**\*Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Four records from Azraq and Aqaba.

1996: Aqaba sewage works 11 Apr (IJA), Aqaba (I) 2 May (RAB).

Fifth and sixth records.

**\*Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

A rare migrant to wetland sites in spring and autumn.

1995: Azraq 11 Apr (NSR).

1996: Aqaba sewage works 11 Apr (IJA); Ghor Mazra'a 27 Jun (MIE). The first summer record.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce migrant between Apr and Oct.

1995: 36, Qa' al Buq'awiyya 16 Apr. Highest count since 1960s.

1997: 2, Qa' al Azraq 14 Mar.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

Fairly common passage migrant.

1996: Aqaba sewage works 6 Dec. The first winter record.

1997: Shuna Resr. 30 Mar. Earliest date.

**\*Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

A scarce migrant, mainly in autumn.

1997: Aqaba sewage works 15 May (FK).

**\*South Polar Skua** *Stercorarius maccormicki*

1983: Aqaba (I) 3–6 Jun.

This bird, seen from Eilat (Shirihai 1996), was also seen in Jordanian waters. The first record in Jordan.

**\*Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii*

1989: first-summer, Aqaba (I) 29 Apr.

This bird remained off Eilat 29–30 Apr (Shirihai 1996) but was also seen on the Aqaba side of the Gulf.

The first record in Jordan.

**White-eyed Gull** *Larus leucophthalmus*

Small numbers occur in the Gulf of Aqaba in spring and autumn (at least).

1995: 3, Aqaba 26 Jan. The first winter record. 10 adults Aqaba port 2 Jul. Confirmation that birds summer.

**\*Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*

A rare migrant to Aqaba and Azraq in Apr.

1996: 3, Aqaba 12 Feb (JH, HB); 2, Aqaba sewage works 5 Dec (IJA). The first winter records (see below).

1997: 2, Aqaba sewage works 16 Feb, 3 on 22nd (IJA); 2, Qa' al Azraq 14 Mar (RBB, KLE); 4, off Aqaba (I)

25 Mar, 2 on 29th (MG); 4, Aqaba sewage works 15 May (FK).

**\*Little Gull** *Larus minutus*

Three records at Aqaba and Azraq in Apr, Sep and Oct.

1996: Aqaba (I) 20 May (RAB).

1997: second-winter, Aqaba sewage works 21 Apr (DRM).

**\*Sabine's Gull** *Larus sabini*

1989: first-summer, Aqaba (I) 3 Jul–2 Aug.

This bird was seen off Eilat (Shirihai 1996) and on several occasions off Aqaba. The first record in Jordan.

**\*Common Gull** *Larus canus*

A scarce winter visitor to Aqaba and Azraq (once).

1996: Aqaba sewage works 5 Dec.

1997: Aqaba sewage works 16 Feb.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

A passage bird, more common in spring than autumn, which occurs at Aqaba and to a lesser extent inland. None in winter (but see below).

1997: Aqaba sewage works 16 Feb, 6 on 22nd; 5, Qa' al Azraq 14 Mar. Only record away from Aqaba in this period. 2 adult *L. f. heuglini* (known as Siberian Gull), Aqaba sewage works 16 Feb (IJA); first-winter *heuglini*, Aqaba Tourist Camp 23 Mar (RBB, KLE).

First records of this (sub)species for Jordan. Descriptions available.

\***Armenian Gull** *Larus armenicus*

One record at Aqaba in 1992, but likely to occur there on passage and in winter.

1995: Aqaba sewage works 19 Apr.

1996: Aqaba sewage works 10–11 Apr.

1997: Aqaba sewage works 16 and 22 Feb, 2 adults, 21 Apr; Aqaba 22 Feb, 2 on 23 Mar.

\***Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

1997: first-winter Aqaba (I) 27 Nov and 1 Dec (RR, JMR).

The first record in Jordan.

\***Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*

1983: 3+, Aqaba (I) Jun–Aug.

At least three of the nine which summered off Eilat in 1983 (Shirihai 1996) were seen flying to or from Jordanian waters (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

A few pairs nest on Qa' al Azraq when conditions are suitable. Also an uncommon spring migrant to wetland sites including Aqaba. Very rare after end July.

1996: 14 pairs, Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi 2 Jul (MIE). A new summering locality with suitable breeding habitat.

1997: Aqaba sewage works 9 Apr (RIB). Earliest date.

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Very common passage migrant.

1995: 5–20, Qa' al Azraq in Jun, 180, including juveniles, on 8th (Khoury 1996).

1996: 10,000–12,000 Aqaba sewage works (I) 30 Apr (RAB).

\***Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles lichtensteini*

Unrecorded in Jordan, but considered likely to occur.

Birds drinking at Samar sewage ponds, Israel (32 km north of Eilat) regularly arrive from the east (i.e. from Jordan) (HS). The most recent record concerns 25 on 8 May 1996. Four, 20 km north of Eilat 26 Mar 1996 flew into Jordan at dusk (MCD).

This is the first evidence to support the hypothesis that the species does occur in Jordan, a fact implied by the map (of unknown source) in *BWP* and a statement by Sutari (1996) that it occurs rarely in Wadi Rum and the Aqaba Mountains. Samar lies on the opposite side of Wadi Araba to Wadi Duhayla in the Aqaba Mountains. It is interesting that they should chose (or be forced) to drink 10 km away to the west. A new species for Jordan.

\***Crowned Sandgrouse** *Pterocles coronatus*

A local (presumed) resident of Wadi Araba.

1989: few pairs bred, Qa Sa'idiyin May–Jun (HS).

1995: 1–4, Fidan 24 Apr, 2–3 on 19–20 May.

1997: 4, Wadi Araba (west of Fidan) 25 Mar.

The resident population in Wadi Araba (Shirihai 1996) probably also breeds on the Jordanian side (HS).

**Spotted Sandgrouse** *Pterocles senegallus*

Breeding suspected in interior deserts and Wadi Araba. Presumed resident.

1980s: flocks of 10s seen crossing Wadi Araba between Israel and Jordan at high altitude (Shirihai 1996).

1989: few 10s of pairs bred, Qa Sa'idiyin May (Shirihai 1996) (Plate 5).

1995: 3 males, Wadi Abu Dubana 26 Apr; nest with eggs, Wadi Araba 21 Jul (T. Wachter & J. Boef per MIE). First proved breeding in Jordan.

**Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *Pterocles alchata*

Breeds sporadically in the Eastern and Basalt Deserts, where most frequently seen in late winter and early spring.

1993–94: large flocks (including one of c. 900 birds) on both sides of Wadi Araba (Hazeva and between Yahel and Be'er Menula, Israel).

1994: 9, 25 km north of Aqaba (I) 18 Apr (RAB).

1997: 900, As Safawi 26 Mar (RMW); 2200+, Wadi Selma 26 Mar, 3000+ on 27th (RMW); 100s, over Marrib

and Qa' Selma 28th (RMW); 500 WNW 25+S Dakhikiya 4 Apr (RMW). Large movements, presumably to and from drinking pools.

The 1993–94 records predate the published first for Wadi Araba.

\***Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

Winter visitor to the Eastern and Basalt Deserts, formerly rare but now known to be numerous in most winters.

1995: 60, 5 km east of Wadi Rajil dam 16 Feb (MIE); 160+, between Burqu' and Azraq 22 Feb (MIE); 180+, between As Safawi, Ar Ruwayshid and Iraqi border 31 Dec (MIE, SAM).

1996: 17, Wadi al Butm 3 Dec (IJA); 160, between Wadi al Butm and Qasr al Kharana 3 Dec (IJA).

\***African Collared Dove** *Streptopelia roseogrisea*

1997: Aqaba (I) 19 Oct (HS).

A bird from Eilat fields (Israel) flew east to Jordan. The first record in Jordan.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common resident breeder in the highlands and Rift Margins of the north, and the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba. Few in Eastern Desert. First recorded in 1979.

1996: 2, Wadi Rum 13 Feb (JH, HB); 10, Sahl as Suwwan 14 Jun (MIE), first records in Rum Desert; 10, Ash Shawbak castle 8 Dec (IJA). First in Sharra Highlands.

1997: displaying male, Al Barra, Dana (c. 1200 metres) 14 May (FK).

First records from three areas in the highlands in the south, although perhaps fairly common at Disi agricultural station in winter (e.g. 50 on 7 Dec 1996).

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

Widespread breeder in the Northern Highlands and Jordan Valley. Elsewhere, a very common passage migrant.

1994: 2, Jordan Valley 17 Mar (NC). Earliest record.

1995: up to 44 per day, wooded areas of the Southern Highlands e.g. Nijil, Ash Shawbak, Al Mansura, Al Bayda (Petra) and At Tafila late Apr–mid-Aug (juveniles seen).

1996: up to 3 singing, Disi 12–18 Jun; up to 31 per day, in well-vegetated areas from the Ghor to the highlands (1100 metres), with breeding suspected in all areas 25 Jun–2 Jul, newly-fledged juveniles Al Karak late Jun; common breeder at Dana, where c. 600 pairs (FK), nests in all types of extensive woodland at higher altitudes (>800 metres), also high density in orchards at Dana and in the Ash Shawbak area, and locally in mature pine plantations. Several nests and fledged juveniles seen Al Barra and Dana orchards in Jun. Large post-breeding flocks congregate on fields on the edge of the Sharra Highland plateau Jun-Sep (Khoury 1998).

1995–97: pair bred in Amman garden.

\***Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*

Rarely reported; most spring records from Aqaba.

1995: male, mouth of Wadi al Mujib 8 Apr (ASH); pair, Azraq Apr–Jun, another male in Jun (Khoury 1996).

First summer records.

1996: several, Aqaba (I) Feb–May (RAB); Suwayma 31 Mar (IJA); male, Qasr Amra 9 Apr (PGS, MR) (Plate 6).

1997: Aqaba sewage works 9 Apr (RIB); male, Azraq 14 Apr (FK, DRM).

This species breeds in *Suaeda monoica* scrub in the Eilat–Aqaba border zone and also just within Aqaba (HS).

\***Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius*

May breed in the Jordan Valley and side wadis. Scarce passage migrant in spring, only one autumn record.

1997: Hazeem 21 Apr (RL).

Breeds on both sides of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo*

Resident breeder, perhaps more widespread than records suggest.

1988: several pellets on rocky ledge on north bank of Zarqa River 19 Oct (Bates & Harrison 1989)

1995: 2–3 pairs, Dana Reserve; near Farqu' 5 Dec (MIE); 17 pellets Al Nakheel, Azraq in Mar–Jul (Amr *et al.* 1997).

1997: nests, Dakhikiya and Hazeem (ML, RMW, ZSA).

Several new breeding sites. Adult-like birds recorded along both banks of the Jordan River but no nest found (Shirihai 1996).

**European Scops Owl** *Otus scops*

Uncommon migrant breeder in the Northern Highlands and Rift Margins south to Petra. Also occurs on passage in the interior deserts.

1995: 5, Dana 26 Feb–21 May at least (MIE); up to 5, Jabal Amman, Amman 9–29 Jul (DD).

1996: Wadi al Butm 2 Apr (IJA); Sayl al Hasa (c. 200 metres) 1 Jul (MIE).

1997: 3 heard, Dana 19 Feb (IJA). Earliest record.

All records away from Dana and Petra are given. A common breeder on both banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

\***Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

Scarce resident of the Northern Highland forests.

1996: heard, Dibbin Forest 8 Apr (PH). New site.

**Hume's Tawny Owl** *Strix butleri*

Resident in mountainous deserts, notably at Petra, Wadi Dana and Wadi Rum.

1995: Al Mansura 4 Aug (MIE).

Only record away from Petra and Dana: c. 10–20 pairs in the Dana Reserve in 1995 (RSCN 1995b).

\***Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

Rare migrant in spring and formerly in winter.

1988: near Yahel 11 Dec.

This area of Wadi Araba is now Jordanian territory (HS).

**Nubian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus nubicus*

Three records (all in 1963).

Some of the 1980s breeding sites in Wadi Araba are in an area now partially Jordan e.g. the Iddan and Yahel areas (Shirihai 1996).

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*

Resident in small numbers in the Jordan Valley. A few reach Azraq in autumn and winter.

1995: 3, Azraq 4–15 Jun. First summer records at Azraq.

1996: 2, Aqaba sewage works 10 Apr, 2, 5–6 Dec (IJA). First at Aqaba.

A few pairs breed on both banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**Little Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis*

Resident in Wadi Araba. First recorded in 1979.

1995: 2, Dead Sea Hotel 9 Apr. Northern limit of range.

1996: pair at nest hole, Aqaba sewage works 11 Apr. Apparently first recorded nest in Jordan.

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops superciliosus*

Breeding colony at Azraq until c. 1969. Scarce on passage.

1996: 6 pairs, Ghor as Safi and Ghor Fifa 2 Jul (MIE), mainly in marginal areas, between cultivation with large *Ziziphus* trees and the lower altitude tussock-grass 'saltmarshes' with extensive *Tamarix* scrub.

New breeding site.

A few pairs breed on both banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; one winter record in Jordan Valley.

1997: Dana terraces (1100 metres) 31 Dec.

A rare winter visitor to both banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**Syrian Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos syriacus*

Resident in the Northern Highlands.

Frequently seen, and locally breeds, in trees on both banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

\***Black-crowned Finch Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps*

1988–89: 5–10, Qa' Saidiyin 21 Nov–20 Mar (Shirihai 1996) (Plate 7).

This area now lies mostly within Jordan. The first record in Jordan.

**Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunni*

Nests sporadically in small numbers in Wadi Araba and the Eastern Desert.

1988–89: birds at Qa' Saidiyin used both sides of the Israel–Jordan border. Most suitable habitat is on the Jordan side. A minimum of 500–1000 were estimated in Wadi Araba, on both sides of the border (Shirihai 1996). Some breeders in May 1989 were in an area now returned to Jordan.

1994: 14–19, Wadi Abu Dubana and Wadi Tasan 22 Oct–16 Nov (RSCN 1995a, RFP). Not seen at this site in 1995–97.

1995: 3, 25 km north of Aqaba (I) 21 Mar.

1997: Wadi al Qattafi 1 Apr (RMW).

### **Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra*

Very common winter visitor, and scarce breeder in agricultural and steppe country in the north.

1994: 11 flew south, Wadi Araba, near Fidan 13 Nov, 10 flew south, 18th (and unidentified *Melanocorypha* larks, probably this species, 10 south, 20 Oct, 3 flew south, 23rd) (RSCN 1995a). First evidence of passage.

1995: 45, 10 km east of Mu'ta 30 Jun (MIE).

1996: up to 10 (singing males and pairs), east and south of Al Qadisiyya in Apr–May (Khoury 1998). First sign of breeding in Sharra Highlands.

### \***Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata*

Scarce early spring migrant to highland fringe and Eastern Desert. Rare in autumn.

1988–89: Qa' Saidiyin Dec–Jan (HS).

1995: 4 (2 displaying), 9 km east of As Safawi (700 metres) 13 Apr (IJA); 16 (2 displaying, 5 singing), Wadi Selma and Wadi Hashad area 16 Apr (RFP); 14 (including 8 singing, 2 nest-building), between Burqu' and Mugat (650 metres) 17 Apr (RFP).

1996: 15 (1 displaying), Wadi Selma 19 Mar (CAH).

1997: Aqaba (I) 25 Mar (MG) landed on the beach in both countries; 25–50 Qa' Selma 28 Mar (RMW); 8, Burqu' 29 Mar (RMW).

First evidence of nesting (1995) followed vegetation growth in Basalt Desert after winter rains. Based on the sample counts listed above, there may have been in excess of 500 pairs in the Basalt Desert in Apr 1995 (RFP). Subsequent records in similar areas in 1996–97 suggest that small numbers may be present annually. The nearest recorded breeding occurs on the northern Golan and Jabal Sheikh (Mount Hermon) slopes (Shirihai 1996).

### **Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Few breed in the Northern Highlands and steppes, and Azraq (at least in the 1960s). Locally common migrant, especially in autumn in the east. No winter records.

1995: singing, Shaumari 11 Apr; 5 singing, Burqu'-Mugat area 17 Apr (RFP); Azraq Jun (Khoury 1996).

1996: c. 1000 pairs bred in Sharra Highlands (Khoury 1998). New breeding area, now recognised as the stronghold for this species in Jordan. 10, Mu'ta University 26 Jun; 28, 10 km east of Mu'ta 30 Jun.

### **Asian Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cheleënsis*

*BWP Concise* indicates a general area of probable wintering which includes much of Jordan, except the far north-west and south-west. There are no Jordanian sight or specimen records for this species which has only recently been considered to occur in the Western Palearctic (Roselaar 1995).

### **Woodlark** *Lullula arborea*

Evidence of breeding at Dana and Ajlun requires confirmation. Relatively common winter visitor to Rift Margins, highlands and steppes of north-west Jordan.

1995: singing birds, Dana 8–13 Mar and 27 Apr–26 May; family parties, Jabal Rummana, Dana (1000–1250 metres) 27 Apr and 24 May (MIE).

1996: 22, Al Barra 11 Jan; small numbers Wadi Hamra (Dana), Dana village and school 21–26 Jan (JD), 2 singing, 5 Apr (PGS, MR); c. 28, Amman National Park 30 Nov; 6, 5 km north of Wadi Musa 8 Dec.

1997: 8, Al Barra 19 Feb; 2, Dana 17 Mar, 2 (1 singing) 20 Oct.

Extension of winter range south to Southern Rift Margins, and first proof of breeding in Jordan.

### **House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

Fairly common spring migrant, especially in the Rift Valley and Rift Margins. Scarce in the east, and rare in autumn.

1996: 35 Al 'Ayna, Wadi al Hasa 28 Jun (MIE). The first summer record in Jordan and suggestive of local breeding (previously unsuspected).

### **Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

Scarce passage migrant across the country. Evidence of breeding from Sharra Highlands in 1955.

1995: probably bred in highland steppe agriculture near Al Qadisiyya (paired, singing and territorial) late March–mid-May (MIE).

1996: 5+ pairs bred, Sharra Highlands, young 15 Jun (Khoury 1998). First breeding in Jordan.

Regular winterer at Qa' Saidiyin e.g. 6, 10 Jan 1989 (Shirihai 1996).

**Long-billed Pipit** *Anthus similis*

Localised resident in the Rift Margins and Northern Highlands.

1995: near Feinan (600 metres) 2–3 Apr and 2 (c. 850 metres), 16th (MIE) during cold spell when Al Barra plateau was shrouded in cloud and rain.

1996: 'Ain Khawkha and Tayyibiyeh (near Al Karak, 700 metres) 29 Jun; 3, Sayl al Hasa (200 metres) 1 Jul; c. 20 pairs bred, Sharra Highlands (Khoury 1998); c. 100+ pairs, Sharra Highland Plateau and Southern Rift Margins (Busayra to Ash Shawbak, 900–1600 metres). Not present above 1000 metres in winter, evidence of altitudinal movements (FK).

1997: Wadi Araba (W of Fidan) 25 Mar (RSCN 1997a).

Pre-1994 data implied that the species did not breed between Wadi al Mujib and At Tafila (Andrews 1995).

**\*Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

1982: 2, Aqaba (I) 19–30 Nov.

These birds, at the north-east corner of Eilat palm groves, were seen several times flying into Jordan (HS). The first record in Jordan.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*

Common spring migrant, particularly at Azraq, less common in autumn and winter.

1996: 500, Disi 7 Dec (IJA). New wintering site.

**\*White-cheeked Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucogenys*

One record at Aqaba in 1990.

1997: Azraq 14 Apr (FK, DRM). Second record in Jordan.

**Yellow-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Very common resident in the west. Absent from the east.

1995: c. 1000–5000 pairs, Dana Reserve (RSCN 1995b); 2, Rum 18 Apr (IJA) were first for site (1–2 subsequently).

**\*Duncock** *Prunella modularis*

A scarce winter visitor to the Northern Highlands and Dead Sea Rift Margins.

1995: Dana terraces 2 Feb (MIE). Most southerly locality.

1996: Dana orchards 6 Mar, Wadi Ahmar (Dana) 7 Mar (FK).

1997: 3, Dana terraces 31 Dec.

**\*Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis*

1997: Dana terraces 31 Dec (Hansson *et al.* 1998).

The first record in Jordan.

**\*Alpine Accentor** *Prunella modularis*

1995: 2, Dana 26 Feb (Evans 1996).

The first record in Jordan.

**Rufous Bush Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes*

Common breeding summer visitor to the Northern Highlands, Rift Margins, Rift Valley and Azraq.

Widespread on migration.

1996: c. 200 pairs bred Dana Reserve (700–1300 metres) in *Raetama* and *Tamarix* thickets in upper Wadi Dana, in orchards and in open juniper and oak-juniper woodland (FK), juveniles seen Dana orchards in Jul; 2, Al Ghal 15 Jun; 2, Disi 18 Jun (MIE): males were singing and were in suitable breeding habitat.

Previously only known to breed in the south at Petra (Andrews 1995). This and other new data show it to be a far more widespread and common breeder in the Southern Rift Margins. Probable breeding in the Rum Desert is also new.

**\*White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis*

A scarce passage migrant, principally in spring.

1995: male, Feinan 26 Apr (MIE, RFP).

1997: male, Wadi ar Rattami 14 Apr (FK, DRM).

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Common winter visitor to highlands; less common elsewhere. Rufous-bellied races occur rarely in Mar and Oct.

1994: 1+ *semirufus*, King Talal Dam 1 Nov.

1995: male resembling *P. o. ochruros*, near Feinan 16 Nov (IM). In Israel, *P. o. ochruros* is considerably rarer than *phoenicuroides* and *semirufus*, but perhaps overlooked (Shirihai 1996).

1996: orange-bellied male, Wadi al Mujib 3 Jan (MIE). First winter record of one of these races.

**Blackstart** *Cercomela melanura*

A characteristic member of the Rift Margin avifauna.

1997: between Azraq and Shaumari 14 Mar (RRB, KLE). First away from Rift Margins.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Common winter visitor, especially to the Northern Highlands, Jordan Valley and Azraq. *S. t. maura* and *stejnegeri* occur rarely in winter and on passage.

1995: male eastern race, near South Shuna 24 Nov (MIE, FK).

1996: male *variegata*, Azraq 7–8 Apr (RvdV, PGS, MR). First record of this Caspian race in Jordan.

Description supplied. Male *maura* or *stejnegeri*, Shaumari 7 Apr (RvdV).

1997: 2 *maura* or *stejnegeri*, near Azraq 14 Mar (RBB, KLE); male eastern race, As Safawi 25 Apr (RMW).

**\*Cyprus Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca*

Scarce early spring migrant, mostly in the Eastern Desert.

1995: female, Wadi Fidan 29 Mar (MIE).

1997: male, As Safawi 25–29 Mar, 2 males on 26th (RMW); 2 males, Wadi al Qattafi 1 Apr (RMW); Qa' al Azraq 2 Apr (RIB); Wadi ar Rattami 14 Apr (DRM); Azraq 15 Apr (DRM); Qasr al Kharana 15 Apr (DRM).

**The following records refer to Pied *O. pleschanka* or Cyprus Pied Wheatear.**

1994: male, Wadi Dahal 18 Nov (MIE, RIB).

1996: first-summer male, Shaumari 7 Apr (RvdV).

1997: Qasr Amra 7 Oct (RFP).

There are no confirmed records of *O. pleschanka* in Jordan.

**Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica*

Relatively common migrant breeder in the highlands and Rift Margins, south to Ma'an. Widespread on passage.

1996: Wadi Dana 1 Feb (FK). Earliest date

**Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii*

Relatively common winter visitor to the Northern Highlands, Northern and Central Rift Margins and Eastern Desert.

1995–96: fairly common between Busayra and Ash Shawbak late Nov–mid-Feb, few to late Feb (FK).

Density of 45 birds/km<sup>2</sup> in open rocky, semi-cultivated areas.

1996: Gharandal (Sharra Highlands) 17 Oct (FK). Earliest record. 1–4, many localities between Ar Rajif and Ash Shawbak 8 Dec (IJA).

Now known to winter fairly commonly in the Sharra Highlands and adjacent Southern Rift Margins.

**\*Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna*

Three records: in 1955, 1975 and 1994.

1997: male, Wadi Musa 27 Mar (TA).

**Mourning Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugens*

A characteristic bird of the Rift Margin mountains from the Dead Sea south to Wadi Rum and Aqaba. Also found locally in the interior deserts. A distinctive black morph is resident on the Basalt Desert.

1994: common, Wadi Feinan below 300 m in Nov. Usually breeds at 300–700 metres (FK). Evidence of altitudinal movement.

1996: partial albino Basalt Desert morph, near As Safawi 7 Apr (RvdV) (Plate 8).

**Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha*

Local resident of the Central and Southern Rift Margins and Rum Desert.

1994: male, 5 km north of Wadi al Mujib bridge 26 Dec.

1995: pair, female food-carrying, Wadi al Mhash (lower part of Dana Reserve, c. 100 metres) 20 May (FK); c. 5–20 pairs in Dana Reserve (Evans and Al-Mashaqbah 1995).

1996: pair, Lisan peninsular 4 Jan; 2 males, 5–10 km south of Aqaba 27 Mar.

**White-crowned Black Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucopyga*

Common resident of the Central and Southern Rift Margins and Rum Desert. May occur in the Basalt Desert.

1995: Jabal Rummana, Dana 23 Mar (1000 metres) and 24 May (600 metres) (MIE). Unusually high. Common in Wadi Dana only below 300 metres.

1996: 3, Wadi Selma 1 Jan (MIE, SAM). Presence in eastern Basalt Desert confirmed. South of Al Qadisiyya (1400 metres) 1 Apr (FK). Unusually high. Usually below 400 m in the Southern Rift Margins.

**Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*

Scarce spring migrant in the south and east. One autumn record.

1996: Ajlun Castle 4 Oct (DRM). Second autumn record.

It is possible the species could breed in the highest Sharra Highlands (max. 1736 metres) as it nests at 1650–2400 metres on Mount Hermon.

**\*Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

One record: at Wadi Musa in Nov 1986.

1995: 9–10, Dana 11 Mar, 6+, 13th and 15th, 1, 17th (MIE).

Only the second record, but this small influx suggests it could be more regular in the Southern Rift Margins in winter.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Common breeding resident in the Northern Highlands, and may breed further south (e.g. Dana). In winter small numbers reach the Jordan Valley and Azraq.

1996: up to 6 per day in well-vegetated areas, from Ghor Haditha to Karak and upper Wadi al Hasa (1100 metres) 25 Jun–1 Jul (MIE); c.5 pairs bred, Dana orchards and max. 5 pairs, Dana woodlands, nest early May (FK).

These records expand the species' known breeding range into the Central and Southern Rift Margins. Previously recorded breeding only as far south as Na'ur (Andrews 1995). Summer records from the Southern Ghor also suggests breeding. Breeds along both banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**\*Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

Uncommon winter visitor to the Northern Highlands and Eastern Desert. Recently recorded at Dana, where it may also winter.

1995: 33, Azraq 10 Feb (MIE); Dana 11–15 Mar (MIE).

1996: Aqaba sewage works 6 Dec (IJA).

**\*Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Two records: in 1979 and 1994.

1996: 5, Dana 12 Jan (FK). Third record in Jordan.

**\*Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

Scarce winter visitor to the Northern Highlands and Azraq.

1995: 10, Dana 20 Mar (MIE); Jabal Sarab, Dana 6 Dec (FK); 8, Al Qadisiyya 8 Dec (FK).

First records in the Southern Rift Margins and Southern Highlands.

**\*Fan-tailed Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*

Formerly bred Azraq. Very small numbers may breed in the Jordan Valley and Southern Ghor.

1985: bred at a few sites along the Jordan River (both sides) north and south of Beit Shean Valley (Israel) (HS).

1997: 2 singing males, Azraq 7 Oct (RFP). First record at Azraq since single on 5 April 1985 (Andrews 1995).

**Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis*

Common resident in the north-west (the Jordan Valley, Rift Margins and Northern Highlands). Present on cultivated land in the east (e.g. Azraq and Shumari), but rare in the south.

1994: Wadi Ghuweib 14 Nov; Dana (1100 metres) 22 Nov; up to 10, Fawwara/Wadi Tasan springs 24 Oct–20 Nov (RSCN 1995a).

1995: Dana 22 Mar; small numbers, Feinan area 30 Mar–19 May, including 22, Wadi Tasan and Fawwara 19 May.

1996: present throughout the year, Dana orchards (FK), max. 3 pairs bred, juvenile in Jun.

First breeding in the south, but a few pairs are now known to be resident at Aqaba sewage works (IJA).

**\*Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

One record: at Azraq in 1966.

1994: Wadi al Mujib 15 May (RH).

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Summer visitor to Azraq, numbers reduced since 1960s. Breeds along the Jordan River and probably elsewhere in the Jordan Valley. Scarce migrant elsewhere.

1996: 5 singing, Aqaba sewage works 10–11 Apr (IJA); 9+ singing in *Phragmites*, Al Burbayta 28 Jun (MIE); 4+ singing, Sahl as Suwwan pool 14 Jun (MIE).

1997: Azraq 14 Mar, 2, 15th (RBB, KLE). Earliest record.

Three new breeding sites (one natural and two man-made), well south of previously known range in Jordan.



Plate 1. Streaked *Calonectris leucomelas* (right) and Cory's Shearwaters *C. diomedea*, Gulf of Aqaba, June 1992. (H. Shirihai).



Plate 2. Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* at nest, Jordan River. (H. Shirihai).



Plate 3. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* at nest, Jordan River. (H. Shirihai).



Plate 4. White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*, Eilat, Israel, winter 1986-87. (H. Shirihai).

**\*Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Extinct at Azraq. Perhaps resident on Yarmouk River, Jordan River and at As Safi.

1995: singing, Al Burbayta 15 Apr (NSR).

Locally common breeder along the Jordan River and south of the Dead Sea in suitable habitat (Shirihai 1996).

**Olivaceous Warbler** *Hippolais pallida*

Common migrant breeder in the Rift Margin highlands south to Petra. Perhaps breeds in the Jordan Valley. Fairly common migrant through most of Jordan.

1995: 3 singing males, Azraq 14–15 Jun (Khoury 1996). No breeding records.

1996: 2 singing males (probably migrants), upper Wadi Dana in Apr; singing, Dana orchards in Jun (FK).

1997: pair nest-building, Al Barra, Dana Apr–May (FK).

Rare breeder in the Southern Rift Margins, but now known to breed sporadically at Dana with no more than five pairs.

**Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida*

Local migrant breeder in the Northern Highlands and perhaps elsewhere. More widespread on spring passage, including Eastern and Rum Deserts, rare in autumn.

1995: presumed breeding at high density, up to 15/day, Dana (1000 m) 21 Apr–16 Aug, most left by late Jul, pairs, song and territorial behaviour observed (MIE). August records are latest recorded. c. 200–400 pairs in Dana Reserve (RSCN 1995b).

1996: Al Yarut, near Al Karak 26 Jun. In breeding habitat. Ghor as Safi 2 Jul. Presumably a wandering non-breeder or failed breeder.

Important new breeding area at Dana now mapped.

**\*Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum*

Rare passage migrant, most in spring.

1995: Feinan 20 Aug (MIE).

1997: 2, Wadi Rum 5 Aug (CG).

**Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata*

Breeds in low densities in the highlands and higher Rift Margins south to Ras an Naqab. Small numbers reach Wadi Araba and Eastern Desert in winter.

1996: c. 15 in 2 one-km transects, near Faqu' 23 Mar (RSCN 1996); up to 500 pairs bred, Sharra Highlands (Khoury 1998).

1997: pair, Shaumari 15 Apr (FK) in suitable breeding habitat. Breeding previously unknown in Eastern Desert.

**\*Ménétries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea*

Two records: in 1965 and 1989.

1995: male, Qasr Amra 7 Apr (FK).

1996: male, Qasr Amra 6 Apr (RvdV) (Plate 9).

1997: female, Dana 17 Mar (RBB, KLE); female, As Safawi 2 and 4 Apr (RMW); male, Dakhikiya 3 Apr, female, 4th (RMW); 2 males and 1 female, Etive 6 Apr (RMW); male, Wadi ar Rattami 14 Apr (DRM); 6 (5 males and 1 female), Wadi al Butm 15 Apr (FK, DRM).

Apparently regular in small numbers in the Eastern Desert.

**\*Cyprus Warbler** *Sylvia melanothorax*

Three records from Wadi Araba foothills in Nov 1994.

1995: male in *Nitraria* bushes, Azraq 12 Feb (MIE). First in Eastern Desert.

1996: male in *Ochradenus* bushes, mouth of Wadi al Mujib 7 Jan (MIE), 3+, 30 Jan (FK, JD); 2–5 daily, Wadi al Mujib Reserve 6–13 Mar with total of up to 25, presumably on passage (RSCN 1996).

Previously only recorded in 1994 (three records), but increase not unexpected. On the opposite side of the Dead Sea and Wadi Araba, c. 300 winter in vegetated wadis from Nov–Mar (Shirihai 1996).

**\*Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana*

Rare winter visitor to southern deserts and Wadi Araba. Rare in the east.

1995: between Sahl as Suwwan and Al Mudawwara 14 Nov (IM).

1997: Wadi Abu Dubana 21 Feb (IJA); 25 km north of Aqaba (I) 28 Mar (MG, EABH); Wadi Rum 29 Dec (EH, AM, PE).

Birds in sandy desert 25 km north of Eilat are often flushed onto the Jordanian side of the border (HS).

**Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensis*

Breeds at Dana. Scarce spring migrant, principally in west and south. No autumn records.

1996: c. 400+ pairs breeding Dana Reserve (FK).

Substantial breeding population at Dana now more accurately counted.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

Breeds in the Northern Highlands (*S. c. caucasica*). Abundant migrant in spring and autumn. A few may winter at Azraq.

1995: resembling *minula*, Azraq 11 Feb (MIE); ringed bird, Amman 20 Mar, had been ringed near Doncaster (U. K.) on 13 Aug 1994. First U. K. recovery in Jordan (Appleton *et al.* 1997).

1996: resembling *minula*, Dana 7 Oct (DRM).

1997: resembling *minula*, Aqaba 20 Mar (RBB, KLE); resembling *althaea*, Wadi al Mujib 16 Mar (RBB, KLE). Subspecific identification of birds in the field is considered unwise, and none of the subspecies records listed above are regarded as substantiated.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

May breed in the northern Jordan Valley. Uncommon on migration.

1994: 2 singing, Dana 17 May (RH); Feinan 18 Nov (RSCN 1995a). Latest record.

Very widespread breeder along both sides of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

Breeds in the Northern Highlands. Common passage migrant, especially in the east.

1995: pair with young, Jibayha, Amman 12 Aug (MIE).

1996: 3+, Dana orchards May–Sep, pair feeding young 10 Jun (FK). First breeding in the south.

Breeds locally on both sides of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

**\*Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

Rare migrant, most often recorded in late autumn.

1995: Al Khirba as Samra 12 Nov (CB).

1996: Dana 25 Sep (FK).

1997: Petra 5 Oct (RFP); 2, Shaumari 7 Oct (RFP).

**\*Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*

Rare winter visitor to the Rift Valley and Azraq.

1995: 2, Ain Fidan 16 Nov (per IM).

1996: 8, Wadi Tasan springs 24 Jan (FK).

1997: 2, Wadi al Mujib 4 Dec (IJA); Aqaba sewage works 5–6 Dec (IJA).

**Palestine Sunbird** *Nectarinia osea*

Common breeder in Rift Margin highlands south to Petra. Small numbers winter in Wadi Araba. Rare in Wadi Rum and unrecorded at Azraq.

1994: Dana to at least 10 Oct; Feinan 17 Oct–20 Nov at least (RSCN 1995a).

1995: present, Dana from 9 Mar, max. 40 on 16 Mar.

1996: common, Wadi Dana (200–800 metres) Jan–Mar, also at Feinan. Few, Dana at 900–1100 metres from mid-Jan. Common at 800–1400 metres from early Mar, altitudinal movements at Dana; c. 1000+ pairs breeding, Dana (FK); up to 13, Rum, Disi and Al Ghal Jun (MIE). Increase following settlement.

**\*Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant, mainly in the east.

1997: female, Dakhikiya 3 Apr (RMW).

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

Common passage migrant, sometimes in large numbers.

1996: immature, Disi 7 Dec (IJA). First winter record

**Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius pallidirostris*

Fairly common resident in the Rift Valley, Highlands and interior deserts.

1994: photographed, Aqaba 10 Oct (IJA, TL) (Plate 10). First record of this species. Description provided.

**Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus*

Fairly common migrant. Small numbers breed in the Northern Highlands, possibly elsewhere.

1996: singles frequent, Jabal Sarab May–Jun (FK). May breed at Dana.



Plate 5. Spotted Sandgrouse chick *Pterocles senegallus*, Qa' Saidiyin. (H. Shirihai).



Plate 6. Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*, Qasr Amra, 9 April 1996 (P. G. Schrijvershof).



Plate 7. Black-crowned Finch Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*, Qa' Saidiyin, November 1988. (H. Shirihai).

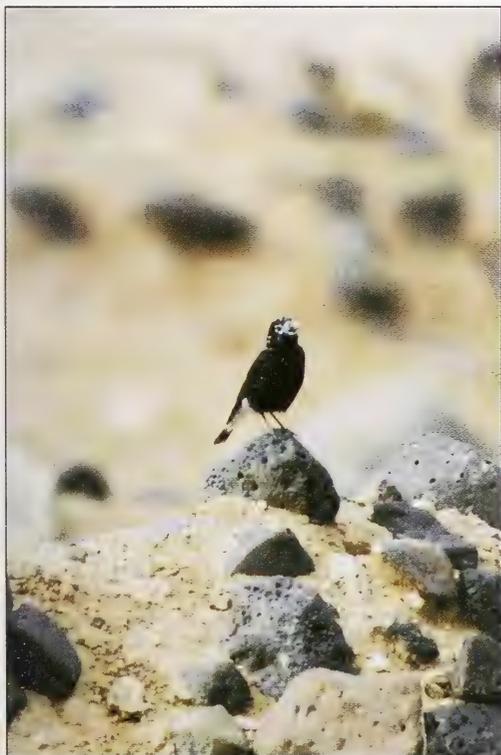


Plate 8. Partial albino basalt morph Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*, As Safawi, 7 April 1996. (R. de Lange).



Plate 9. Ménétries's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*, Qasr Amra, 6 April 1996. (R. de Lange).

\***Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

Rare breeder at Pella (Jordan Valley). Scarce winter visitor to Jordan Valley, Northern Highlands and Azraq, formerly more common.

1995: 3, Shuna Resr 28 Mar, 2, 9 Apr.

1996: 10, Shuna Resr 31 Mar.

1997: 4, Shuna Resr 30 Mar.

The spring records at Shuna Resr suggest a second breeding site south of Pella. A few pairs breed in the banks of the Jordan River (Shirihai 1996).

\***Raven** *Corvus corax*

Formerly widespread in north and west Jordan, but no confirmed records since the 1960s.

1995: pair, Al Barra, Dana 28 Feb (MIE), Mount Nebo 12 Apr (NSR); pair, Ash Shawbak early Dec–mid-Feb 1996 (FK).

1996: 2, Dana 12 Jan (JD); Al Karak area 30 Jan (FK); Faqu' 23 Mar (RSCN 1996), adult feeding begging juvenile, Wadi al Mujib 6 May (MIE); pair, Wadi Dana 1 Apr (FK); up to 8, near Ar Rashadiyya Sep–Oct (Khoury 1998).

1997: pair, Ash Shawbak early Apr–late May (FK); pair, near Mount Nebo 29 Apr (FK).

Now known to be a rare resident in the high Rift Margins.

\***Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus*

Vagrant to Azraq in May 1966 and May 1976.

1995: Aqaba Royal Diving Centre 20 Apr (NSR). Fourth record in Jordan.

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*

Uncommon breeder in Rift Margin wadis south to Wadi al Hasa. More widespread and common in winter, especially in desert areas.

1996: c.10 pairs bred, Dana orchards (FK); 300+ birds with 130+ nests in three colonies at Disi and Sahl as Suwwan on 14 Jun (MIE) in tall *Eucalyptus* and *Casuarina* trees; pair nesting, Sharra Highlands (Khoury 1998).

Breeding in Jordan had previously only been recorded as far south as Wadi al Hasa, 150 km to the north (Andrews 1995).

**Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer moabiticus*

Breeds in loose colonies along the Jordan River and locally around the Dead Sea. Flocks in winter wander in the southern Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba.

1995: c. 250, near South Shuna 24 Nov (FK, MIE).

1996: 56+ (including c. 50 singing males), As Safi–Fifa area 27 Jun and 2 Jul (MIE). Five colonies located: mouth of Wadi Bin Hamed; Ghor Haditha; south-east of Dyke 10 wetland, As Safi; un-named locality, north-west of As Safi; between Khandaq al Hasan and border watchtower. Colony sizes unknown. All were in *Tamarix* scrub on saline, water-logged soil, which covers much of the uncultivated, lowest land in the Southern Ghor. *Tamarix* is virtually continuous in this area, suggesting that the total population there is probably much larger.

\***Pale Rock Sparrow** *Petronia brachydactyla*

Breeding proved only at Dana in 1994. Late spring migrant in some years especially around Azraq.

1995: 2 singing, 9 km east of As Safawi 13 Apr (IJA); Qa' al Buq'awiyya 16 Apr (RFP); 11 (8 singing, pair displaying and pair nest-building) Burqu'–Mugat area 17 Apr (RFP); 2+ in *Artemisia* steppe, 10 km north of Ras an Naqab 2 Jul (MIE).

1997: 50, Qa' Selma 25 Mar (RMW); 30, Marrib Selma 28 Mar (RMW); 2, Dana 17 Apr (FK, DRM); 2 singing, 1 km north of Mount Nebo 29 Apr (FK).

First evidence of breeding in the Basalt Desert.

\***Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon winter visitor to the Northern Highlands. Vagrant at Azraq.

1995: Jibayha, Amman 8 Feb.

\***Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus*

1996: near Al Mansura 21 Feb (Khoury 1997).

The first record in Jordan.

**Syrian Serin** *Serinus syriacus*

Isolated breeding population in oak and juniper woodland at Dana. Small numbers occur elsewhere in winter and in spring.

**1995:** up to 67/day, Dana Mar–May; census 9–28 Mar found 48.5 birds/km<sup>2</sup> in habitat which covers c. 34.2 km<sup>2</sup> of the reserve. Reserve population estimated at c. 800 pairs (RSCN 1995b), most departed by mid-Aug (MIE); 10, Al Ghal oasis 14 Nov (IM). First in Rum Desert; 98+ roosting, Dana Reserve 21 Nov (FK); 1–2, west of Faqu' 29 Nov–22 Dec (MIE); up to 60 daily, Wadi as Sidd, east of Al Qadisiyya Dec (FK).

**1996:** 2, Raddas 6 Mar (CAH). First in Dead Sea area. 2, Petra 10 Mar; daily max. 450, Dana Reserve to Al Mansura in Jan–Feb; up to 50+ in small cultivated areas, Feinan 27–28 Mar (CAH); 600–650 pairs breeding, Al Barra area, Dana Reserve (FK); up to 100 daily, Al Qadisiyya and Ar Rashadiyya Jul–Oct (FK, DRM); near Rum 1 Apr (PGS, MR).

**1997:** Ajlun Castle 16 May (RL). Late. Some localities around Ajlun have suitable breeding habitat (FK).

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Very common resident in Highlands and Rift Margins south to Petra. Some wander in winter.

Hundreds for sale in Friday markets, Amman Nov 1995 (FK). As a result of the cagebird market, this species is extinct in some area (Sutari 1996), e.g. none were recorded in two hours in Wadi as Sir in May 1997 (FK). Although previously very common here, locals claim it is very rare or extinct due to catching and collecting of young birds from nests.

**\*Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Uncommon winter visitor to the Northern Highlands. Few migrants elsewhere.

**1996:** 2, Disi 7 Dec (IJA).

**Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

An increasingly common resident in the Azraq area. Elsewhere, occurs on the desert fringe and southern Jordan Valley.

**1994:** up to 15, Feinan area 18 Oct–20 Nov (RSCN 1995a, RIB).

**1996:** up to 8, Disi Jun, pair feeding 2+ begging juveniles, 18 Jun (MIE). First breeding in south Jordan; 2, Mu'ta University 26 Jun; present, Al Qadisiyya summer and autumn (FK); 6, Ar Rashadiyya 20 Oct; 154, Azraq fish pools 3 Dec (IJA); 15, Aqaba sewage works 6 Dec; 16, Disi 7 Dec.

**1997:** 40, Suwayma 13 Mar; up to 5, As Safawi late Mar–early Apr; 5, including a pair with nest, Wadi Fidan near Israeli border 8 Apr (FK). First nest found in Jordan.

Continues to expand range with several breeding sites located in south Jordan. Large flock at Azraq suggests increase there. Locally common breeder in Jordan River Valley (Shirihai 1996).

**Sinai Rosefinch** *Carpodacus synoicus*

Common resident of the Southern Rift Margins and Rum Desert. Rare north to the Dead Sea.

**1995:** c. 500–1000 pairs in Dana Reserve (RSCN 1995b); 40+, Raddas Jan (MIE), up to 10, 6–12 Mar (RSCN 1996) possibly wintering.

**\*Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare winter visitor to the Northern Highlands.

**1996:** Wadi Dana 20 Feb (FK); Ar Rummana, Dana 29 Feb (FK). First in south Jordan and both feeding in *Pistacia atlantica*.

**1997:** Amman 28 Mar (FK).

**\*Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalus*

**1995:** 3, 15 km north of Wadi Musa 14 Dec (Minshull 1996).

**1997:** first-winter male and 1–2 females, Dana 31 Dec (EH, AM, PE).

The first and second records in Jordan.

**\*Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*

Uncommon winter visitor to the Northern Highlands.

**1996:** max. 30, Al Qadisiyya, Jabal Sarab and Dana early Dec 1995–late Feb (FK); 4, Dana 10 Jan, 3, 11th (JD); Petra 12 Feb (MIE); 8, Amman National Park 30 Nov (IJA); 15, 5 km north of Wadi Musa 8 Dec (IJA).

**1997:** c. 40, Dana 31 Dec (EH, AM, PE).

Southern extension of known wintering range into Southern Rift Margins.

**\*Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea*

Very rare spring migrant.

**1996:** 3, Dana 25 Mar (FK).



**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*

Common and widespread passage migrant.

1995: single singing males, As Safawi 16 Apr and Burqu' 17 Apr (RFP)

The first indication of breeding behaviour in Jordan (cf. Bimaculated Lark records in same habitat). On Syrian Jabal Sheikh (Mount Hermon) and to lesser extent in Israel, the species breeds at 1500–1900 metres, but predominantly above 1700 metres (Shirihai 1996).

**Cretzschmar's Bunting** *Emberiza caesia*

Uncommon migrant breeder in the western Northern Highlands and at Dana. Common migrant, especially in the west.

1996: pair at nest, Dana early Jun (FK). First proof of breeding in the south. Localised breeder in southern mountains (population c. 200 pairs) apparently concentrated around Dana village (FK).

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*

Small numbers breed in the north-west. Very common in winter in the Northern Highlands, desert fringe and Eastern Desert.

1995: Ain Lahda, Dana 28 Apr; 2 (1 singing), above Dana village (1300–1350 metres) 1 May; singing, below Dana village (1200 metres) 3 May.

1996: 2 singing males, Ar Rashadiyya and Dana orchards Apr–Jun (FK).

1997: 2–4 singing males, Ar Rashadiyya and Busayra. Singing, Dana orchards Apr–May (FK).

First evidence of breeding in the south.

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#### APPENDIX 1. LIST OF SPECIES NOT INCLUDED IN THE MAIN REPORT.

Records of the following species were submitted to the Jordan Bird Report, but were not included due to constraints of space. Full details for any of these species are available from IJA on request. **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (new maximum count), **Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* (new maximum count), **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea* (first in February), **White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* (one record), **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis*, **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* (summer records), **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* (earliest date), **White Stork** *C. ciconia* (first winter record), **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* (large numbers), **Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*, **Wigeon** *Anas penelope*, **Mallard** *A. platyrhynchos*, **Pintail** *A. acuta* (late record), **Garganey** *A. querquedula* (first in winter), **Shoveler** *A. clypeata* (late record), **Pochard** *Aythya ferina* (new winter site), **Ferruginous Duck** *A. nyroca*, **Tufted Duck** *A. fuligula* (large numbers), **Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* (largest single-day count), **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* (winter), **Hen Harrier** *C. cyaneus* (winter range extension), **Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* (first summer records in the south), **Levant Sparrowhawk** *A. brevipes* (early and late dates), **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* (nest sites), **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina* (latest records in spring and autumn), **Steppe Eagle** *A. nipalensis* (possible wintering), **Golden Eagle** *A. chrysaetos* (may breed in Southern Rift margins), **Booted Eagle** *Hieraetus pennatus* (first winter record), **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*, **Merlin** *Falco columbarius* (first in Wadi Araba), **Hobby** *F. subbuteo* (further breeding evidence), **Sooty Falcon** *F. concolor*, **Lanner Falcon** *F. biarmicus*, **Barbary Falcon** *F. pelegrinoides* (breeding sites), **Sand Partridge** *Ammoperdix heyi*, **Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus* (one record), **Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* (earliest date and July record), **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus* (new sites), **Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana*, **Little Crane** *P. parva*, **Baillon's Crane** *P. pusilla* (first record away from Azraq), **Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*, **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor*, **Collared Partincole** *Glareola pratincola*, **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* (new possible breeding sites), **Ringed Plover** *C. hiaticula* (first winter record since 1960s), **Kentish Plover** *C. alexandrinus* (new possible breeding sites), **Spur-winged Plover** *Hoplopterus spinosus* (new possible breeding site), **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

(winter flock), **Temminck's Stint** *C. temminckii* (earliest date), **Curlew Sandpiper** *C. ferruginea*, **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* (winter record), **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*, **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*, **Greenshank** *T. nebularia* (winter record), **Green Sandpiper** *T. ochropus* (summer records), **Wood Sandpiper** *T. glareola*, **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* (first winter record since 1960s), **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* (first Aqaba record), **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*, **Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*, **Slender-billed Gull** *L. genei* (winter records), **Yellow-legged Gull** *L. cachinnans* (winter records), **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* (autumn records), **Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*, **Sandwich Tern** *S. sandwichensis*, **Common Tern** *S. hirundo*, **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*, **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus* (few records), **Rock Dove** *Columba livia* (large counts), **Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis* (increase in Rum Desert and new site), **Ring-necked Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* (continued expansion), **Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* (earliest record), **Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* (new site), **Little Owl** *Athene noctua*, **Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*, **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus* (new sites), **Common Swift** *Apus apus* (latest record and probable breeding), **Pallid Swift** *A. pallidus* (earliest record), **Alpine Swift** *A. melba*, **Little Swift** *A. affinis*, **Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*, **European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* (range extension), **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus* (range extension), **Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* (range extension), **Bar-tailed Desert Lark** *Ammomanes cincturus*, **Desert Lark** *A. deserti* (large flock and altitudinal movements), **Thick-billed Lark** *Ramphocoris clotbey*, **Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens* (more breeding records), **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*, **Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* (southward winter range extension), **Temminck's Horned Lark** *Eremophila bilopha* (first record in Wadi Araba), **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* (earliest and latest records), **African Rock Martin** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* (large counts), **Crag Martin** *P. rupestris*, **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*, **Red-rumped Swallow** *H. daurica* (evidence of nesting in south), **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* (latest record), **Meadow Pipit** *A. pratensis*, **Water Pipit** *A. spinoletta* (new sites), **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*, **Citrine Wagtail** *M. citreola*, **Grey Wagtail** *M. cinerea*, **White Wagtail** *M. alba*, **Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*, **Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* (large fall), **Common Nightingale** *L. megarhynchos* (breeding along Jordan River), **Bluethroat** *L. svecica*, **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (latest record), **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* (winter records), **Desert Wheatear** *O. deserti* (possible Asian migrant), **Red-rumped Wheatear** *O. moesta*, **Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*, **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* (earliest record), **Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*, **Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*, **Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* (breeding along Jordan River), **Great Reed Warbler** *A. arundinaceus*, **Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*, **Sardinian Warbler** *S. melanocephalus* (records from Dana area), **Rüppell's Warbler** *S. rueppelli*, **Arabian Warbler** *S. leucomelaena*, **Barred Warbler** *S. nisoria*, **Garden Warbler** *S. borin*, **Blackcap** *S. atricapilla*, **Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* (latest spring record), **Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis*, **Great Tit** *Parus major* (late breeding), **Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor*, **Woodchat Shrike** *L. senator*, **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis*, **Fan-tailed Raven** *C. rhipidurus* (large flocks), **Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* (records in south), **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* (colonisation of Dana camp), **Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia* (first Rum record), **Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* (latest record), **European Serin** *Serinus serinus* (earliest record), **Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris* (southward range extension), **Linnet** *C. cannabina*, **Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia* (latest record and two new winter sites in south), **House Bunting** *E. striolata*, and **Black-headed Bunting** *E. melanocephala*.

#### APPENDIX 2. ESCAPES

\***Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria* (Amman 1 Apr 1995: first record); \***Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica* (c. 8, Jordan Valley 27 Oct 1994 and one at Aqaba (I) 29 Mar 1997, 4, 1 Apr).

#### APPENDIX 3. ADDITIONAL SPECIES MENTIONED IN SUTARI (1996)

The following potential new species for Jordan are mentioned without supporting details: **Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* (rare migrant to Azraq and the Jordan Valley); **Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor* (rare and irregular winter visitor to Azraq and reservoirs [presumably those in the Northern Rift Margins], which has since been recorded at Azraq: Hansson *et al.* 1998); **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* (rare winter visitor to Aqaba).

# A checklist of the birds of Israel and Jordan

HADORAM SHIRIHAI, IAN J. ANDREWS, GUY M. KIRWAN  
AND PETER DAVIDSON

## INTRODUCTION

This checklist is based on information available up to and including August 1998. Taxonomy and nomenclature largely follows *BWP Concise*. All species currently regarded as having been reliably recorded in Israel and Jordan are included. Israel is defined as the state of Israel, West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights. Breeding species regarded as nationally threatened in Israel are denoted \* in accordance with Nathan, R., Safriel, U. N. and Shirihai, H. (1996) Extinction and vulnerability to extinction at distribution peripheries: an analysis of the Israeli breeding avifauna. *Isr. J. Zool.* 42: 1-23. Information concerning the status abbreviations used is presented below.

## STATUS ABBREVIATIONS

R resident with definite breeding records	PM passage migrant
SB breeding summer visitor	t transient (present throughout the year without breeding)
S non-breeding summer visitor	v vagrant
ob occasional breeder and regular non-breeding summer visitor	[v] vagrant recorded in Jordanian territory/waters from outside the country
fb former breeder	e extinct
WV winter visitor	? status uncertain during the relevant season

Lower case abbreviations e.g. *wv* or *pm* denote species which are generally uncommon during the relevant season. This is a necessarily subjective categorisation which is designed merely to offer an unavoidably crude assessment of status. Inevitably, future revision will become appropriate in some cases.

## Species

Species	Status in Israel	Status in Jordan
<input type="checkbox"/> Ostrich <i>Struthio camelus</i>	e	e
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Diver <i>Gavia stellata</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	?fb,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	ob,fb,s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Slavonian Grebe <i>Podiceps auritus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	fb,s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Shy Albatross <i>Diomedea cauta</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Soft-plumaged Petrel <i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Fea's Petrel <i>Pterodroma feae</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Atlantic Petrel <i>Pterodroma incerta</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	pm,wv,s	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Streaked Shearwater <i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Flesh-footed Shearwater <i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Shearwater <i>Puffinus gravis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sooty Shearwater <i>Puffinus griseus</i>	pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Balearic Shearwater <i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yelkouan Shearwater <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Shearwater <i>Puffinus assimilis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Persian Shearwater <i>Puffinus persicus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mascarene/Audubon's Shearwater <i>P. atrodorsalis/lhermihieri</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson's Storm-petrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Storm Petrel <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Leach's Storm-petrel <i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>	wv	

<input type="checkbox"/>	Swinhoe's Storm-petrel <i>Oceanodroma monorhis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Madeiran Storm-petrel <i>Oceanodroma castro</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-billed Tropicbird <i>Phaethon aethereus</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Booby <i>Sula leucogaster</i>	wv,t	wv, t
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gannet <i>Morus bassanus</i>	wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	White-breasted Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax (carbo) lucidus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pygmy Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i>	r*,pm,wv	wv (formerly)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Darter <i>Anhinga rufa</i>	wv (formerly)	wv (formerly)
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Pelican <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	s,PM,WV	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dalmatian Pelican <i>Pelecanus crispus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pink-backed Pelican <i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Frigatebird <i>Fregata ariel</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	sb*,PM,wv	sb,PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green-backed Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	wv,s	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	sb,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	R,pm,wv	r,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Heron <i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Reef Heron <i>Egretta gularis</i>	t	t
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	r,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate Egret <i>Egretta intermedia</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great White Egret <i>Egretta alba</i>	s,pm,WV	pm,wv,?s
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Heron <i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	fb,s,PM,WV	r,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	sb*,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goliath Heron <i>Ardea goliath</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow-billed Stork <i>Mycteria ibis</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>	s,PM,WV	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	s,sb*,PM,WV	PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marabou <i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	r*,S,PM,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bald Ibis <i>Geronticus eremita</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	s,pm,WV	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	s,pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Whistling Duck <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	White-fronted Goose <i>Anser albifrons</i>	wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser White-fronted Goose <i>Anser erythropus</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i>	pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Goose <i>Branta ruficollis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruddy Shelduck <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	s,pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	s,pm,WV	ob,pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cotton Pygmy-goose <i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>	s,PM,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Falcated Duck <i>Anas falcata</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	s,pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	s,PM,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cape Teal <i>Anas capensis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	r,PM,WV	fb,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>	s,PM,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-billed Duck <i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i>	ob,PM,wv	?fb,PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	ob,PM,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marbled Teal <i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	r*,pm,wv	pb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-crested Pochard <i>Netta rufina</i>	s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southern Pochard <i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>	s,PM,WV	pm,wv

<input type="checkbox"/> Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	sb*,pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	s,PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eider <i>Somateria mollissima</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Duck <i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Velvet Scoter <i>Melanitta fusca</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>	s,pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-headed Duck <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	fb,wv	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Crested Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-winged Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	sb*,s,PM,WV	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> White-tailed Eagle <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	fb,pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lammergeier <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	r*(prob. extinct breeder)	fb
<input type="checkbox"/> Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	SB,PM,wv	ob,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Griffon Vulture <i>Gyps fulvus</i>	r,pm,wv	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Lappet-faced Vulture <i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	r* (extinct as breeder)	fb,v
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Vulture <i>Aegypius monachus</i>	fb,s,pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-toed Eagle <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Bateleur <i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	fb,s,PM,WV	?fb,PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i>	s,PM,wv	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Dark Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax metabates</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	sb*,PM,WV	?sb,pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Levant Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	ob,PM,WV	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo rufinus</i>	R,pm,WV	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Rough-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo lagopus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila pomarina</i>	PM,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i>	fb,s,pm	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Tawny Eagle <i>Aquila rapax</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Steppe Eagle <i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	PM,wv	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Imperial Eagle <i>Aquila heliaca</i>	pm,wv	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	R*	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Verreaux's Eagle <i>Aquila verreauxii</i>	fb,wv	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Booted Eagle <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	PM,wv	PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraetus fasciatus</i>	r*,pm,wv	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	s,pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	R,PM,WV	R,pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco vespertinus</i>	PM	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>	pm,wv	WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	SB,pm	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Eleonora's Falcon <i>Falco eleonora</i>	pm	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Sooty Falcon <i>Falco concolor</i>	SB	SB
<input type="checkbox"/> Lanner <i>Falco biarmicus</i>	r*,pm,wv	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Saker <i>Falco cherrug</i>	pm,wv	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	fb,s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Barbary Falcon <i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>	r	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Chukar <i>Alectoris chukar</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Sand Partridge <i>Ammoperdix heyi</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Francolin <i>Francolinus francolinus</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	sb*,PM,wv	PM,?s
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	ob,PM,WV	fb,pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Crake <i>Porzana porzana</i>	PM,wv	pm

<input type="checkbox"/> Little Crane <i>Porzana parva</i>	s,PM,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Baillon's Crane <i>Porzana pusilla</i>	fb,s,pm,wv	sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	?r,pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Gallinule <i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	ob*,PM,WV	r,pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Crane <i>Grus grus</i>	PM,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Demoiselle Crane <i>Anthropoides virgo</i>	pm	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Bustard <i>Tetrax tetrax</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Houbara <i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>	R*	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Bustard <i>Otis tarda</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Painted Snipe <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	v (ob)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	s,ob,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Crab Plover <i>Dromas ardeola</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Stone Curlew <i>Burhinus oedinemus</i>	R,pm,WV	sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Cream-coloured Courser <i>Cursorius cursor</i>	r,SB,pm	SB,pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Collared Pratincole <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	sb*,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-winged Pratincole <i>Glareola nordmanni</i>	PM	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	sb*,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	s,PM,WV	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	r*,PM,WV	SB,PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Sand Plover <i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Sand Plover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	s,PM,wv	SB,PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Caspian Plover <i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Dotterel <i>Charadrius morinellus</i>	pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	pm,WV	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	s,PM,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Spur-winged Plover <i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	R,PM,WV	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackhead Plover <i>Vanellus tectus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-wattled Plover <i>Vanellus indicus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sociable Plover <i>Vanellus gregarius</i>	pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> White-tailed Plover <i>Vanellus leucurus</i>	pm,wv	sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	s (ob),PM,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Knot <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	PM,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Semipalmated Sandpiper <i>Calidris pusilla</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	PM,WV	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-toed Stint <i>Calidris subminuta</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pectoral Sandpiper <i>Calidris melanotos</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	PM,wv	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>	pm,wv	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Snipe <i>Gallinago media</i>	pm	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Pintail Snipe <i>Gallinago stenura</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Swinhoe's Snipe <i>Gallinago megala</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-billed Dowitcher <i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	pm,WV	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	PM,WV	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	s,pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Slender-billed Curlew <i>Numenius tenuirostris</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	s,pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	PM,WV	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	s,PM,WV	PM,WV

<input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	PM,wv	PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV,?s
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	pm	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	PM,WV	PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	PM,WV	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	s,pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey Phalarope <i>Phalaropus fulicaria</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pomarine Skua <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	s,pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	s,PM,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Skua <i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	s,pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Skua <i>Catharacta skua</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> South Polar Skua <i>Catharacta maccormicki</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Sooty Gull <i>Larus hemprichii</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> White-eyed Gull <i>Larus leucoptthalmus</i>	S,R (without breeding)	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>	pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Mediterranean Gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i>	s,pm,WV	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Sabine's Gull <i>Larus sabini</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	s,PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Gull <i>Larus brunicephalus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey-headed Gull <i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Slender-billed Gull <i>Larus genei</i>	s,PM,wv	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Audouin's Gull <i>Larus audouinii</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i>	pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	s,PM,WV	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i>	r*,PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Armenian Gull <i>Larus armenicus</i>	s,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Heuglin's Gull <i>Larus heuglini</i>	PM,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Glaucous Gull <i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Black-backed Gull <i>Larus marinus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gull-billed Tern <i>Sterna nilotica</i>	PM	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Caspian Tern <i>Sterna caspia</i>	pm,t	t
<input type="checkbox"/> Swift Tern <i>Sterna bergii</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Crested Tern <i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	s	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandwicensis</i>	s,pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	SB,PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> White-cheeked Tern <i>Sterna repressa</i>	s	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Bridled Tern <i>Sterna anaethetus</i>	s	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Sooty Tern <i>Sterna fuscata</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>	SB*,PM	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Saunders' Tern <i>Sterna saundersi</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	fb,s,PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	fb,s,pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Black Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	s,PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> African Skimmer <i>Rynchops flavirostris</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles lichtensteinii</i>	r*	[?r]
<input type="checkbox"/> Crowned Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles coronatus</i>	R	?r
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles senegallus</i>	R	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles exustus</i>		v
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-bellied Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles orientalis</i>	R,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Pin-tailed Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles alchata</i>	R*,WV	r
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Dove <i>Columba livia</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	pm,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	pm,WV	v
<input type="checkbox"/> African Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	R	R

<input type="checkbox"/>	Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rufous Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Namaqua Dove <i>Oena capensis</i>	r*,sb,wv	?r,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ring-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	r (introduced)	R (introduced)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Spotted Cuckoo <i>Clamator glandarius</i>	SB,pm,wv	?sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Didric Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	sb,PM	?sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oriental Cuckoo <i>Cuculus saturatus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	R	r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Striated Scops Owl <i>Otus brucei</i>	fb,wv	?r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bubo</i>	R	r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Fish Owl <i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	e (formerly r)	?r (prob. extinct)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	R	r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hume's Tawny Owl <i>Strix butleri</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-eared Owl <i>Asio otus</i>	r,pm,wv	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	fb/ob,pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nubian Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus nubicus</i>	r*,s	?r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	fb,s,PM,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Egyptian Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus aegyptius</i>	fb,s,pm	ob,?pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	SB,PM,wv	?sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Swift <i>Apus affinis</i>	R,pm,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	White-breasted Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	s,PM,wv	?sb,PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle ridis</i>	R	r,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Green Bee-eater <i>Merops orientalis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater <i>Merops persicus</i>	sb*,pm	sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i>	SB,PM	?sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	r,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	s,PM,wv	PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Syrian Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chestnut-headed Sparrow-lark <i>Eremopterix signata</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-crowned Sparrow-lark <i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunn's Lark <i>Eremalauda dunnii</i>	nomadic breeder	r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bar-tailed Desert Lark <i>Ammomanes cincturus</i>	r	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Desert Lark <i>Ammomanes deserti</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hoopoe Lark <i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	r*	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thick-billed Lark <i>Ramphocoris clotbey</i>	v	r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calandra Lark <i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	R,pm,wv	r,pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bimaculated Lark <i>Melanocorypha bimaculata</i>	sb*,pm,wv	sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	sb,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hume's Lark <i>Calandrella acutirostris</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	R,pm	SB,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	sb*,PM,WV	sb,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	PM,WV	WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Skylark <i>Alauda gulgula</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shore Lark <i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	r/sb*	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Temminck's Horned Lark <i>Eremophila bilopha</i>	r*,sb,pm	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown-throated Sand Martin <i>Riparia paludicola</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	fb,s,PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pale Crag Martin <i>Hirundo fuligula obsoleta</i>	R,PM,WV	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crag Martin <i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	sb*,pm,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	R,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethiopian Swallow <i>Hirundo aethiopica</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo daurica</i>	SB,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	sb,PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Richard's Pipit <i>Anthus richardi</i>	pm,wv	pm

<input type="checkbox"/> Blyth's Pipit <i>Anthus godlewskii</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>	sb*,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-billed Pipit <i>Anthus similis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	v	[v]
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	pm,WV	pm,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	PM,WV	WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Buff-bellied Pipit <i>Anthus rubescens</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	sb*,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>	sb?,pm,wv	pm,?sb
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	PM,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	sb*,PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> White-cheeked Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-vented Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus xanthopygos</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Waxwing <i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey Hypocolius <i>Hypocolius ampelinus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	R,wv	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	pm,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Radde's Accentor <i>Prunella ocularis</i>	wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Accentor <i>Prunella atrogularis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Accentor <i>Prunella collaris</i>	wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Rufous Bush Robin <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Bush Robin <i>Cercotrichas podobe</i>	sb? (otherwise v)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	s,PM,WV	WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Thrush Nightingale <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	sb,PM	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-flanked Bluetail <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Robin <i>Irania gutturalis</i>	sb*,pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Eversmann's Redstart <i>Phoenicurus erythronotus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	SB*,PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackstart <i>Cercomela melanura</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Pied Stonechat <i>Saxicola caprata</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	r,PM,wv	SB,pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	sb*,PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Pied Wheatear <i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	pm	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus Wheatear <i>Oenanthe cypriaca</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Desert Wheatear <i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	R,pm,wv	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Finsch's Wheatear <i>Oenanthe finschii</i>	ob,pm,WV	WV
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-rumped Wheatear <i>Oenanthe moesta</i>	ob	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Wheatear <i>Oenanthe xanthopygma</i>	pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Pied Wheatear <i>Oenanthe picata</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Wheatear <i>Oenanthe lugens</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Wheatear <i>Oenanthe monacha</i>	r	R
<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Black Wheatear <i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Wheatear <i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	sb*,pm	PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Rock Thrush <i>Monticola solitarius</i>	R,pm,wv	R,pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	R,pm,wv	R,wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Eye-browed Thrush <i>Turdus obscurus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dusky Thrush <i>Turdus naumanni</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Thrush <i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	PM,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/> Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	pm,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/> Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	R,pm,WV	R

<input type="checkbox"/>	Zitting Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	R,SB	fb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Graceful Prinia <i>Prinia gracilis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scrub Warbler <i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella certhiola</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	sb*,PM,wv	fb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moustached Warbler <i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	r*,pm,WV	r,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>		v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	PM,wv	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paddyfield Warbler <i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	pm	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clamorous Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>	R	?r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	sb*,PM,wv	fb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Basra Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus griseldis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oriental Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Olivaceous Warbler <i>Hippolais pallida</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Booted Warbler <i>Hippolais calligata</i>	v	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Upcher's Warbler <i>Hippolais languida</i>	SB,pm	SB,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Olive-tree Warbler <i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>	sb*,pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spectacled Warbler <i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	R,pm,wv	R,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ménétries's Warbler <i>Sylvia mystacea</i>	v	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sardinian Warbler <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	R,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyprus Warbler <i>Sylvia melanothorax</i>	PM,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rüppell's Warbler <i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>	PM	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Desert Warbler <i>Sylvia nana</i>	pm,wv	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arabian Warbler <i>Sylvia leucomelaena</i>	r*	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Orphean Warbler <i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Barred Warbler <i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	pm	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Whitethroat <i>Sylvia curruca</i>	SB,PM,wv	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	SB,PM	sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	sb*,PM,wv	PM,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Warbler <i>Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pallas's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	pm,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hume's Leaf Warbler <i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eastern Bonelli's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus orientalis</i>	sb*,PM	ob,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plain Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus neglectus</i>		v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Caucasian Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus lorenzii</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	PM,WV	PM,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Semi-collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>	pm	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bearded Tit <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arabian Babbler <i>Turdoides squamiceps</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sombre Tit <i>Parus lugubris</i>	R*	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coal Tit <i>Parus ater</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Tit <i>Parus caeruleus</i>	v	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Nuthatch <i>Sitta neumayer</i>	r*	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wallcreeper <i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	wv	v

<input type="checkbox"/>	Penduline Tit <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	s,PM,WV	pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Palestine Sunbird <i>Nectarinia osea</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	sb,PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Isabelline Shrike <i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	pm,wv	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	SB*,PM	PM,?wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-tailed Shrike <i>Lanius schach</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Grey Shrike <i>Lanius minor</i>	PM	PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steppe Grey Shrike <i>Lanius pallidirostris</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southern Grey Shrike <i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Masked Shrike <i>Lanius nubicus</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alpine Chough <i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chough <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	R*,WV	r,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Crow <i>Corvus splendens</i>	R (introduced)	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	s,pm,WV	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hooded Crow <i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown-necked Raven <i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	r*	r
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fan-tailed Raven <i>Corvus rhipidurus</i>	r*	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tristram's Grackle <i>Onychognathus tristramii</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amethyst Starling <i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	s,PM,WV	WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rose-coloured Starling <i>Sturnus roseus</i>	pm (formerly bred)	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	R,SB,PM,WV	R,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dead Sea Sparrow <i>Passer moabiticus</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pale Rock Sparrow <i>Carospiza brachydactyla</i>	sb*,PM	sb,pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow-throated Sparrow <i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Sparrow <i>Petronia petronia</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian Silverbill <i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	r (introduced)	r (introduced)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	s,PM,WV	WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	pm,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-fronted Serin <i>Serinus pusillus</i>	pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>	R,PM,WV	r,WV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Syrian Serin <i>Serinus syriacus</i>	SB*,pm,wv	R,pm,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	R,PM,WV	R,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	R,PM,WV	R,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	pm,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	R,PM,WV	R,wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crossbill <i>Loxia curvirostris</i>	ob,wv	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crimson-winged Finch <i>Rhodopechys sanguinea</i>	sb*	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Desert Finch <i>Rhodospiza obsoleta</i>	R,pm,WV	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trumpeter Finch <i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scarlet Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	s,pm,wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sinai Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus synoicus</i>	r*,wv	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pine Bunting <i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	wv	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Bunting <i>Emberiza cia</i>	r*,wv	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Bunting <i>Emberiza striolata</i>	R	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cinereous Bunting <i>Emberiza cineracea</i>	pm	pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	sb,PM	?sb,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cretzschmar's Bunting <i>Emberiza caesia</i>	SB,PM	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rustic Bunting <i>Emberiza rustica</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	v	v
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	s,pm,WV	wv
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza bruniceps</i>	v	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	SB,PM,wv	SB,PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corn Bunting <i>Miliaria calandra</i>	r,SB,PM,WV	sb,WV

# Fifty species new to Israel, 1979–1998: their discovery and documentation, with tips on identification

HADORAM SHIRIHAI

## INTRODUCTION

MUCH OF THE LAST 15 YEARS I have spent writing and researching *The birds of Israel* (Shirihai 1996). I have also devoted time to a wide variety of papers, many based on migration studies at Eilat. Now appears an opportune moment to take a fresh look at some of the records of birds new to Israel in whose discovery I was involved. Most of the vagrants described here were discovered in the course of research and not through single-minded rarity hunting. Finding and identifying rare birds is always a pleasure, of course. Therefore, in a sense, this paper is an account of some of my most memorable days spent birding.

The discovery and identification of 50 species of bird new to Israel found between 1979–1998 is described. Of these, 48 were found prior to the publication of *The birds of Israel* and *BWP Concise* (Snow & Perrins 1998). The other two species included are Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* (March 1997 but not certainly identified until later that year) and Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala* (February 1998). All have been accepted by the Israeli Rarities and Distribution Committee (IRDC).

Each species account has been subdivided into five sections. The first lists all accepted records in Israel, the Western Palearctic and Middle East. For those species recorded regularly in the two latter-named regions, a summary of status is given. This is followed by an anecdotal account of the circumstances leading to the first Israeli occurrence, which provides the essential facts pertaining to the record. A full description follows, similar to a formal submission to a rarities committee. Where it appears helpful and my experience permits, I have included identification tips, concentrating on separation from confusion species and poorly known characters and plumages. The final section consists of a brief overview of the first record and its wider implications, e.g. any changes that may have occurred in the species' status.

Change is a recurring motif in this paper. The species accounts highlight changing birding activity in Israel and the widespread habitat destruction that has occurred at Eilat, where 45 of the new species were found. Relatively few European birdwatchers visited Israel in the early 1980s, although there was also a group of c. 20, mainly young, Israeli birders, who feature prominently in *The birds of Israel* and here. At that time, the cultivated habitats near Eilat were restricted, providing an oasis-like environment. Birders could watch the area with a thoroughness no longer possible—dramatic agricultural expansion over the last 10–15 years means that the density of migrants in the southern Arava Valley is now visibly much lower than it was in the 1980s, with birds occurring throughout the area (Shirihai 1996). On the other hand, the mean number of visiting birders has increased at least tenfold in this period, with c. 500 at Eilat in late March and smaller numbers in autumn and winter. The improved observer coverage has led to more birds being discovered.

**Table 1**

**A** First records from Eilat. **B** First records from elsewhere in Israel. **C** First records documented by photograph. **D** First records documented by trapping. **E** First records seen by observers other than HS. **F** Subsequent records from Israel. **G** Subsequent records from Israel documented by photograph. **H** First records for Western Palearctic.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<b>1979</b> African Collared Dove	■					■	■	
Yellow-breasted Bunting	■					■	■	
<b>1980</b> Pale-footed Shearwater	■				■			■
Bridled Tern	■				■	■	■	
Sooty Tern	■				■	■		
<b>1981</b> Buff-bellied Pipit	■					■	■	
Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler		■				■	■	
<b>1982</b> Atlantic Petrel	■				■	■	■	■
Balearic Shearwater		■						
European Storm-petrel		■			■	■		
Black Heron	■							■
Roseate Tern	■				■	■		
Arctic Tern	■					■	■	
Booted Warbler		■			■	■	■	
<b>1983</b> Wilson's Storm-petrel	■				■			
Madeiran Storm-petrel	■							
Lesser Sand Plover	■		■		■	■		
Pectoral Sandpiper	■		■		■	■	■	
South Polar Skua	■				■	■		■
Sooty Gull	■				■	■		
Chestnut-headed Finch Lark	■							■
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	■				■			
Caucasian Chiffchaff	■				■	■		
<b>1984</b> Pintail Snipe	■		■	■	■	■	■	
Rufous Turtle Dove	■		■	■	■	■		
Small Skylark	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
Basra Reed Warbler	■		■	■	■	■	■	
<b>1985</b> Brown-headed Gull	■				■			■
Oriental Cuckoo	■		■	■	■			
Brown-throated Sand Martin	■		■	■	■	■		
Blyth's Reed Warbler	■		■	■	■	■	■	
Amethyst Starling	■							■
<b>1986</b> Hume's Short-toed Lark	■		■	■	■			■
Eastern Pied Wheatear	■				■			■
<b>1987</b> Black-headed Heron	■		■		■			
Blyth's Pipit	■					■	■	
Green Warbler	■		■	■	■			
Steppe Grey Shrike	■		■	■	■	■	■	
<b>1988</b> Little Shearwater		■				■		
Saunders's Tern	■					■		
Eastern Reed Warbler	■				■	■		
<b>1989</b> Sabine's Gull	■		■		■	■		
Grey-headed Gull	■		■		■	■	■	
<b>1991</b> Long-toed Stint	■			■	■			
<b>1992</b> Streaked Shearwater	■		■		■	■		■
Mascarene/Audubon's Shearwater	■		■		■			■
Tawny Eagle	■		■		■	■	■	
<b>1994</b> Crested Honey Buzzard	■		■			■		■
<b>1997</b> Soft-plumaged Petrel	■				■			■
<b>1988</b> Swinhoe's Snipe	■				■			■

In connection with *The birds of Israel*, a rarities committee (IRDC) of three—Yaron Baser, Ehud Dovrat and HS—were elected by Israel's most active birders at Tel Aviv on 7 December 1987 (Shirihai 1996). A larger committee was not viable, due to the relatively small number of active Israeli birders. Indeed, a body organised according to the north-west European model, in which records are assessed by panel-judgement remains inappropriate to the situation in Israel. The immediate task facing the committee was to decide which species and which records to include in *The birds of Israel*, and to this end it received guidance from several well-established rarity committees in western and northern Europe. In practice, the committee's work proved straightforward, as the number of records to be considered was small and nearly all those of very rare birds involved at least one committee member as an observer. The committee was strict in its judgements: only nine species seen by a single observer and documented solely with field notes were admitted to the Israeli List. In each case the observer had a proven record in field identification (Shirihai 1996).

This paper effectively submits 50 records to the international birdwatching community, including 15 records of species not previously recorded in the Western Palearctic. Details of 14 of these have already been published elsewhere. Most of the information presented here is previously unpublished and the original field descriptions have never been published collectively. It is hoped that birders will avail themselves of this opportunity to examine these records and that the paper will contribute to the evolution of ornithology in Israel and the Middle East.

### THE RECORDS AND THEIR DOCUMENTATION (SEE TABLE 1)

Full documentation is essential when dealing with records of extremely rare species, particularly if the species is new to a country or region. The finder's detailed field description (A) should ideally be supported by the descriptions of other observers (B), photographic evidence (C) and subsequent records from the same area (D). Of the 50 records presented here, 45 fulfill at least two of these criteria, nine meet two, 19 meet three and 17 all four. To date, 29 of the 50 species have been photographed in Israel: six (first and subsequent record(s)), 14 (first record only) and nine (subsequent record(s) only).

Only two of 23 first records were photographed during 1979–1983, but 18 of 27 first records were photographed in 1984–1998. This discrepancy is due to three factors: ringing became much more intensive at Eilat after 1983, enabling in-the-hand photographs; neither I or my colleagues owned a good camera in the early years; and a relatively high proportion of the first records in 1979–1983 were pelagic species.

### PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Photographs (Plates 1–20) of 20 species are included: 12 of first records and eight of subsequent records. The other 30 species are illustrated by drawings by James P. Smith, produced solely using only original descriptions and field sketches of the first record (supplemented by poor quality photographs for eight species).

#### ATLANTIC PETREL *Pterodroma incerta*

Southern Oceans

**First Israeli record:** one on 31 May 1982, Eilat (HS in Ben Dov & Golan 1983). Also observed by several European birders.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one on 18–24 April 1989, Eilat. Seen by many observers; photographed (van der Schot 1989).

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic occurrences (Snow & Perrins 1998). Recorded Gulf of Aden on 3 November 1985 (Welch & Welch 1986).



**Background:** at c. 06.00 hrs on 31 May, during the Eilat seabird survey in summer 1982, I sighted a distant petrel displaying the arcing flight typical of a *Pterodroma* species. It flew toward Eilat's North Beach from the Jordanian side of the Gulf of Aqaba and landed 0.5–1 km offshore among a raft of Cory's *Calonectris diomedea* and Sooty Shearwaters *Puffinus griseus*, revealing the striking combination of a mainly dark plumage and white belly. Soon, the shearwaters were disturbed by a mixed party of skuas and I lost contact with the petrel. I spent 30 minutes waiting for it to reappear, then went to check my field guides. My recollection of the bird appeared consistent with Atlantic Petrel, so I returned to North Beach at 08.30 hrs, where a small group of birders had gathered. I soon relocated the petrel, swimming alone just 150 metres offshore; its identification was immediately confirmed. Although comparative reference material on Atlantic Petrel was virtually unavailable in 1982, Peter Harrison studied the description and sketches I had made.

**Distinguishing characters:** a large petrel similar in size to Cory's Shearwater, with distinctly patterned, light-and-dark underparts. Compared to most *Pterodroma* species, the bird appeared relatively short-tailed and somewhat wedge-shaped at the tip, with longer, narrower wings giving it a proportionately broader and bulkier bodied appearance than other *Pterodroma* petrels. The bird's generally stocky feel was enhanced by its bull-neck and by large, broad black bill, which had obvious tubes when seen well. At most distances, it seemed to have almost uniformly dark, sooty brown upperparts, but at close range faint greyish brown mottling was visible on the upperwing-coverts, mantle and neck, and there was a hint of whitish grey mottling on the forehead and rear ear-coverts. The dark extended onto the head and onto the breast, abruptly meeting the pure white underparts at the point where the leading edge of the wing joined the body, the near-black underwing providing an equally strong contrast. The dark flanks, vent and undertail-coverts were less sharply demarcated from the white underparts. These plumage characters created the effect of a white belly patch (seldom exposed when swimming). The upper and lower surfaces of the flight and tail feathers were uniform, and the remiges lacked any indication of the pale basal area that often produces a distinctive pale patch in other species of *Pterodroma* (see below).

**Identification tips:** Mark Beaman, Peter Harrison and Steve Madge (pers. comm.) have pointed out that Atlantic Petrel could be confused with pale morph Herald Petrel *P. arminijouiana* at sea. The latter is smaller, with a different wing shape, more elongated tail and diagnostic white patch at the base of the primaries.

**Commentary:** the most logical explanation for the species' two occurrences in Eilat is that these birds followed a route through the western Indian Ocean, from where there are a handful of records (Harrison 1983, Shirihai 1987a, Enticott & Tipling 1997).

**SOFT-PLUMAGED PETREL** *Pterodroma mollis*

Southern Oceans

**First Israeli record:** one on 25 March 1997, Eilat. Observed by HS, E. Hirschfeld and 30–50 other birders.

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic records. Specimen collected from Dead Sea in November 1968 and proposed as *P. mollis* by B. Zonfrillo (Shirihai 1996) was re-examined by K. Mullarney and HS and found to be typical Fea's Petrel *P. feae*, as originally suggested by Bourne (1983a), Hovel (1987) and Shirihai (1987a).

**Background:** on the afternoon of 25 March, the line of birders must have stretched 150 metres along North Beach when, at c. 17.30 hrs, a petrel came arcing over the bay to within 400 metres of land. At least 30 birders managed to see the bird well for five minutes in the excellent late afternoon light. Erik Hirschfeld and others immediately suggested the petrel was *mollis* rather than *feae*, but its lack of a complete breast band led me to question this. Over the next weeks, Erik and I prepared descriptions of the bird, which were sent to other observers and experts on *Pterodroma* petrel identification. Finally, through experience of Soft-plumaged Petrel at sea in the sub-Antarctic and examination of the collection at the Natural History Museum, Tring, I concluded that the Eilat bird was *P. mollis*.

**Distinguishing characters:** (following sections co-authored by Erik Hirschfeld). Apparently a medium-sized *Pterodroma* and judged to be no larger than Sooty Shearwater—although there were no other birds with which to make a side-by-side comparison and the strong lighting conditions may have exaggerated the bird's actual size. Its wings were long and pointed, especially in relation to its bulky body. The tail, which remained closed throughout, was tapered and the body protruded well beyond the wings, giving it a rather elongated, wedge-shaped rear-end appearance (see photograph 2, p. 65, Enticott & Tipling 1997). It was darkest on the crown and the median- and greater-coverts; the rest of the upperwing was largely dark to mid-grey, with perhaps slightly darker 'hands' and wingtips. The distinct white forehead was sharply demarcated from the blackish crown, but there was no trace of a pale supercilium. The mantle, back, rump and tail were concolorously dark to mid-grey, eliminating Fea's Petrel, which has a diagnostic pale greyish rump and uppertail. The entire underwing appeared dark grey or black, and the throat to the undertail-coverts appeared white, except for an incomplete band formed by pectoral patches on the breast sides (which faded along their length, effectively reaching a point halfway between the wing-bases and centre of the body). The dark bill was prominent.

**Commentary:** the following literature was useful: Bourne (1983b), Marchant & Higgins (1990), Enticott (1991), Zonfrillo (1994), Gantlett (1995) and, especially, Tove (1997a,b). All of these support the identification of the Eilat petrel as *mollis*, based on the concolorously dark



**Soft-plumaged Petrel** *Pterodroma mollis*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



upperparts, rump and uppertail. These references also indicate that pectoral markings vary in extent within *mollis* as well as *feae*: the former's breast band is usually complete, appearing broken to a varying degree in some individuals (but with breast-side patches always present). The breast markings of the Eilat bird were sufficiently well developed to exclude the possibility of even the most heavily marked Fea's Petrel. The incomplete breast band, reduced facial markings and apparently large size of the Eilat bird may indicate that it was from the Southern Atlantic population, which is often regarded as subspecifically distinct (Marchant & Higgins 1990, Enticott & Tipling 1997). However, Bourne (1983b and pers. comm.) suggests that breeders on the Antipodes and Marion Islands (probably not *P. m. dubia*: contra Marchant & Higgins 1990) are best regarded as a pale morph of the nominate form. Soft-plumaged Petrel was recorded off Sri Lanka in September 1989, suggesting that the species can occur in the northern Indian Ocean. Three other Eilat records (all in March–May) of Southern Ocean Procellariiformes—one Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta* and two Atlantic Petrels—may have resulted from monsoon conditions in the western Indian Ocean forcing birds into the Red Sea.

### **STREAKED SHEARWATER** *Calonectris leucomelas*

western Pacific Ocean

**First Israeli record:** two, probably three, from 21 June (erroneously given as 27 June in Shirihai 1996) to 18 September 1992, Eilat (Morgan & Shirihai 1992, Shirihai 1996); two birds photographed.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one May–July 1993, Eilat (Shirihai 1996), possibly a returning individual.

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic occurrences; apparently a vagrant or scarce visitor to the Arabian Sea (Harrison 1983, Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** summer 1992 produced the best crop of seabird observations at Eilat since 1983. Within just five days in June, the appearance of one vagrant led to the discovery of another two, including Streaked Shearwater. On 17 June, I found the second Sabine's Gull *L. sabini* for Israel off Eilat's North Beach. Next day, John Morgan and I unsuccessfully tried to relocate it. Before long I located an elusive small shearwater. Unfortunately, the views were too poor to permit identification. On 21 June, Bill Fletcher, John and I took a boat out into the bay to obtain better views of the unidentified shearwater, which was eventually identified as Israel's first Mascarene Shearwater *Puffinus atrodorsalis*. Meanwhile, at c. 09.00 hrs, when we were c. 3km offshore, I located a slightly darker, lighter built and pale-faced bird in a party of Cory's Shearwaters, which I immediately recognised as Streaked Shearwater. Bill and John, who were paddling, automatically tried to take a look, nearly capsizing the boat. By the time we had managed to stabilise it and relocate the bird, it became clear that we were surrounded by a mixed flock of four species of shearwater, including over 50 Cory's, four Sooty, the Mascarene and at least two Streaked!

**Distinguishing characters:** smaller and more delicate than Cory's Shearwater, especially in flight. I was struck by the narrow wings and neck, smaller head, relatively slender bill and longer tail. The upperparts were clearly darker than Cory's; and the dorsal area was more evenly sooty brown, with the dark extending through the crown, nape and neck as far as the uppertail-coverts, upperwing and pectoral patches. The pale face was always obvious and there was no sign of either a dark head relative to the upperparts or a pale, U-shaped pattern on the uppertail-coverts (both characters shown by almost all Cory's). Diagnostically dark carpal patches (lacking in Cory's) and broad, dark trailing edges to the underwing almost reached the base of the remiges. In certain lighting, it seemed to have a rather distinct whitish forehead and loreal area; at close quarters a whitish eye-ring and fine, dark streaks on the face were evident. The bill was dull greyish, with a darker tip.

**Identification tips:** field experience of both species demonstrates that the flight action of Streaked Shearwater is less cumbersome than in Cory's Shearwater. It also has slower, more gentle wingbeats and holds its wings less stiffly, contributing to its rather graceful, 'elastic' flight quality. It is important to consider the possibility of confusion with a Cory's whose plumage has become discoloured through wear or bleaching, as this can result in birds with unusually pale foreheads. For more information on the separation of Streaked Shearwater

from Cory's Shearwater and other potential confusion species, see Harrison (1983), Morgan & Shirihai (1992) and Enticott & Tipling (1997).

**Commentary:** it would have been easy to overlook the first Streaked Shearwaters at Eilat, as they were among the similar-looking Cory's Shearwater far from the nearest locality of recorded vagrancy for their species (the Arabian Sea). It is exceptionally rare for these two species to be observed side-by-side. Good fortune and prior knowledge of *C. leucomelas* played a major part in the discovery.

**PALE-FOOTED SHEARWATER** *Puffinus carneipes*

south Pacific and Indian Oceans

**First Israeli record:** one on 15 August 1980, Eilat (HS in Ben Dov & Golan (1983)). Also observed by D. Stanton.

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic records, although regular non-breeding visitor Arabian Sea (Harrison 1983, Shirihai 1987a, Hirschfeld 1994, Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** time spent recording returning migrants proved doubly beneficial in 1980, because the seawatching was unexpectedly good that year (see also Bridled *Sterna anaethetus* and Sooty Terns *S. fuscata*). On 15 August, at c. 14.00 hrs, I found an unusual-looking shearwater among eight Cory's Shearwater off North Beach and watched it for two hours, during which it approached to within 400 metres. I was able to discount the superficially similar Sooty Shearwater, a species I was familiar with.

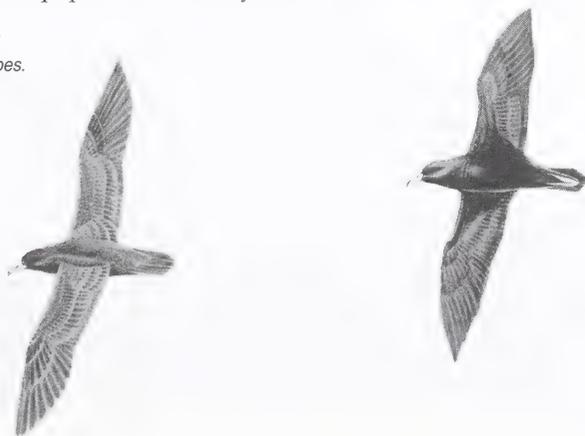
**Distinguishing characters:** size and mainly dark brown plumage similar to Sooty Shearwater, but with broader, more rounded wings and a heavier body, producing a rather bulkier jizz approaching Cory's Shearwater. The uniformly dark underwing lacked the whitish grey flash diagnostic of Sooty; the upperwing had pale or buffish upperwing-coverts (particularly noticeable on the rear of the greater-coverts), although the upperwing appeared rather uniform at a distance. At close range, the bill was strong-looking, with a pink base, and the legs were pale pink.

**Identification tips:** Wedge-tailed Shearwater *P. pacificus* is a potential vagrant to Middle Eastern waters, and its dark morph is reminiscent of Pale-footed Shearwater. However, the former can be readily eliminated by virtue of its elongated, wedge-shaped tail, smaller head and different wing shape, which is more angled at the carpal joint. Wedge-tailed also has a relatively slender, uniformly dark bill.

**Commentary:** the relative abundance of Pale-footed and Sooty Shearwaters in the Arabian Sea, where the former species occurs regularly and the latter is only a vagrant, is reversed in the northern Red Sea. Their differing migration strategies presumably account for this: Sooty reaches the Red Sea after moving north through the western Indian Ocean, continuing to Eilat in an attempt to reach the northern oceans; Pale-footed reaches the westernmost limit of its non-breeding range in the western Indian Ocean, and rarely reaches the Red Sea. Another factor is the much larger world population of Sooty Shearwater.

**Pale-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*.

Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.





**Plate 1.** Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*, Gulf of Aqaba, Eilat, June 1992. The first Israel and Western Palearctic record. (Hadoram Shirihai).



**Plate 2.** First-year Mascarene/Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus atrodorsalis* or *P. lherminieri*, Eilat, June 1992. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shirihai).



**Plate 3.** Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, Eilat, 14 May 1994. The first Israel and Western Palearctic record. (*Hadoram Shirihai*).



**Plate 4.** Subadult Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*, Urim, north-west Negev, 1 November 1992. The first Israel record. (*Hadoram Shirihai*).

**BALEARIC SHEARWATER** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

western Mediterranean

**First Israeli record:** one on 1 March 1982, Ma'agan Mikhael (HS sole observer).**Other regional records:** no other recent records.

**Background:** following a series of storms, the sea at Ma'agan Mikhael was teeming with birds on 1 March 1982. In mid-morning, while watching a Northern Gannet *Sula bassana*—scarce in the eastern Mediterranean—I noticed a number of birds in the background, including several Yelkouan/Mediterranean Shearwaters *P. yelkouan* (considered a race of Manx Shearwater *P. puffinus* at the time). Soon afterwards, several more shearwaters appeared, c. 150 metres offshore. One bird was unusual due to its heavily marked dusky underwing and body-sides. I realised that it was the western Mediterranean race of Manx Shearwater and followed it for ten minutes until it disappeared. While waiting in vain for it to return, I logged two Black-throated Divers *Gavia arctica*—only the third Mediterranean record of this species for Israel.

**Distinguishing characters:** distinctly brown and dusky underparts (i.e. it was a particularly well marked individual) quite different from the virtually black-and-white appearance of Manx and Yelkouan Shearwaters. It appeared marginally heavier than Yelkouan, but very similar in structure and jizz. However, it was much darker overall, almost recalling Sooty but with a pale belly, throat and underwing-coverts. Most notable was the extensive brown tinge to the chest, flanks, vent, undertail-coverts and axillaries; part of the underwing-coverts were also dirty-looking, with the remainder (the base of the remiges) pale. The pale areas on the throat, belly and underwing-coverts were washed, or mottled, pale brown, contributing to the dusky appearance. The slightly darker breast band almost separated the throat from the belly.

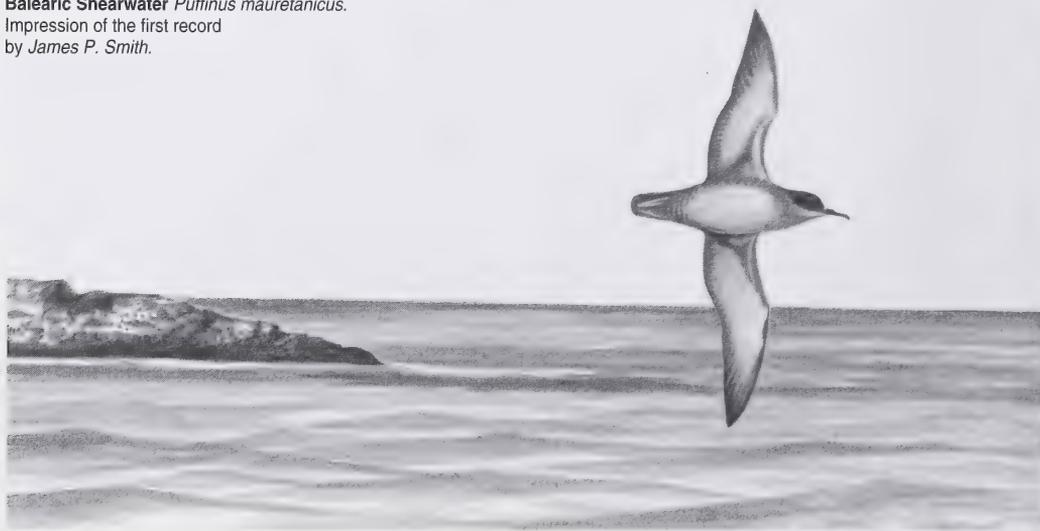
**Identification tips:** confusion with Sooty Shearwater may arise when confronted with heavily marked Balearic Shearwaters (usually young birds in autumn). However, the latter are usually markedly smaller, by c. 25%, with a less bulky body and more rounded, shorter wings held relatively stiffly (Sooty has narrower, pointed and angled wings). Unlike the near-uniform Sooty, Balearic is normally darker on the crown and ear-coverts, with a paler throat and belly set against broad, dark flanks. The pale area on Balearic's underwing, although frequently reduced by dusky brown markings, always appears larger and more diffuse than Sooty's restricted—almost rectangular—silver patch, concentrated on the outerwing and much narrower on the inner coverts. Balearic's flight is usually slower and less direct, appearing rather 'fluttering' compared to Sooty.

**Commentary:** the Balearic/Yelkouan Shearwater complex exhibits pronounced clinal variation, becoming paler and perhaps smaller from west to east, and the two forms are certainly very close genetically (Harrison 1983, Austin 1996, Shirihai *et al.* in press). This paper follows widely recognized splits, e.g. by Snow & Perrins (1998).

**Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*.

Impression of the first record

by James P. Smith.



**Little Shearwater** *Puffinus assimilis*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**LITTLE SHEARWATER** *Puffinus assimilis*

southern and Atlantic Oceans

**First Israeli record:** one *baroli* on 23 January 1988, Ma'agan Mikhael (HS sole observer).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one *baroli* at Ashdod Port on 15 January 1996 (B. Granit pers. comm.).

**Other regional records:** vagrant Mediterranean from central-eastern Atlantic (Snow & Perrins 1998); presumably, all records involve *baroli*. No Red Sea records (*contra* Porter *et al.* 1996); Eilat's only small shearwater record is of the recently described Mascarene Shearwater.

**Background:** I was watching ten Yelkouan Shearwater and several tens of Little Gull *L. minutus* at a freshwater outlet. The sea was calm and the lighting perfect. At c. 13.30 hrs, a distinctly smaller black-and-white shearwater paused to feed, but unfortunately did not join the group. I watched it for 3–4 minutes, and immediately identified it as a Little Shearwater of the subspecies *baroli*.

**Distinguishing characters:** the bird was clearly smaller than the accompanying Yelkouan Shearwaters, and had an eye-catching light-and-dark plumage. Overall, it looked compact, due to its rounded body, short rounded wings and very short rear. The calm conditions meant that the bird flew by rapid fluttering interspersed with short glides very low over the water, giving little impression of a shearing action. The upperparts, including the upperwing and crown, were jet black. The underparts, including the undertail-coverts, were white, but for an indistinct blackish thigh patch (which enhanced the pure white sides to the vent) and the relatively poorly developed blackish breast-side patches, which emphasised the white face: the white throat extended beyond the ear-coverts to the upper eye-level and lores, isolating the black eye from the narrow black crown. White underparts merged with the white underwing; the underwing's black leading and trailing edges, and wingtips were sharply defined, albeit of restricted width (the leading edge, especially, was very thin). The short bill and legs appeared dark.

**Commentary:** the occurrence of Little Shearwater in the eastern Mediterranean is a further indication that this sea can at times be rich in tubenoses, e.g. wintering flocks of Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* are regularly recorded off Israel's Mediterranean coastline (Shirihai 1996), including a flock of 123 at Jaffa Port on 29 January 1998 (B. Granit pers. comm.).

**MASCARENE/AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER** *Puffinus atrodorsalis/lherminieri*

western Indian Ocean

**First Israeli record:** one from 18–21 June 1992, Eilat. Found with J. Morgan and observed by several other birders, including E. Dovrat. Discussed at length, with photographs, in Shirihai & Sinclair (1994), but species' taxonomic status and identification require further study.

**Other regional records:** no other records outside western Indian Ocean.

**Background:** see Streaked Shearwater.



Plate 5. Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*, Eilat, August 1991. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shirihai).



Plate 6. Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, Eilat, May 1983. The first Israel record. (M. Meir).



Plate 7. Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*, Eilat, November 1984. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shirihai).



Plate 8. Second-summer Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*, Eilat, 15 March 1989. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shirihai).

**Distinguishing characters:** pure black above including the upperwing and head to below eye-level; all-white below including the undertail-coverts; and rather extensive dark breast-side patches. The pale underwing area was as extensive as in Little, but the remiges were clearly dark basally. The pale areas on the bill and legs were mainly greyish blue.

**Commentary:** although similar to juvenile Audubon's Shearwater of the race *bailloni* from the western Indian Ocean, the bird had a combination of characters unlike that of any form in the Little/Audubon's complex known to us. Its 'uniqueness' as a form seems similar to that of the race *boydi* of Little, which is regarded as specifically distinct by some authorities. The latter is dark on the vent/undertail-coverts as well as the remige bases, but otherwise resembles *assimilis*. At first, the Eilat bird was tentatively assigned to a southern form of Little Shearwater. Following further study including comparison with other unidentified birds seen off South Africa, the Comoros and the Mozambique Channel, HS and I. Sinclair speculated that it might constitute an unnamed form of small shearwater (Shirihai & Sinclair 1994). A specimen (Durban Museum, DNSM No. 36093) collected at Durban, South Africa, which apparently matched these unidentified birds, was proposed as the type-specimen. It was compared with extensive material (some of it loaned by other museums) at the Natural History Museum, Tring, leading to the description of a new taxon, *P. atrodorsalis* (Shirihai *et al.* 1995).

The main problem which arose in naming *P. atrodorsalis* was its similarity to juvenile *P. l. bailloni*, which also has white undertail-coverts. Compared to adult *bailloni*, the juvenile has a blacker dorsal area, narrower bill and greyer bare parts: all features closer to *atrodorsalis* (see Bretagnole & Attié 1996). The validity of *atrodorsalis* has recently been investigated by analysis of the type-specimen's DNA, skeleton and morphometrics compared to *bailloni* (Shirihai *et al.* in press). Two conclusions have been reached: the validation of *atrodorsalis* as a taxon must await further museum study and the discovery of its breeding grounds; and if the new taxon is accepted, its relationship with other, closely related, taxa in the Indian Ocean requires clarification. Until such studies have been undertaken, it is proposed to classify the type-specimen as *species inquirendae*. C. S. Roselaar (in *BWP*, CD-ROM edition) treats *atrodorsalis*, whose type-specimen he has examined, as a race of *P. lherminieri*, and suggests that the Indian Ocean forms of *lherminieri* might represent a separate species (c.f. Shirihai *et al.* 1995, Shirihai & Christie 1996). It is interesting to note that M. Le Corre (pers. comm.) has recently discovered a breeding population of a small shearwater on the Europa Islands, in the Mozambique Channel, geographically nearer the type-locality of *atrodorsalis* than to the known breeding range of *bailloni*. They possess long wings possibly close to *atrodorsalis*, but apparently *bailloni*-like plumage characters; moreover, birds matching *atrodorsalis* have been seen at sea in this area (Shirihai *et al.* 1995).

#### WILSON'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanites oceanicus*

southern Oceans

**First Israeli record:** one on 1 June 1983, Eilat. Also seen by O. Horin; full accounts in Ben Dov & Golan (1983) and Shirihai (1984).

**Other regional records:** no other recent records from northern Red Sea, although regular non-breeding summer visitor Arabian Sea (Harrison 1983, Shirihai 1987a, Hirschfeld 1994, Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** my excitement at finding Wilson's Storm-petrel has since been surpassed only by the discovery of Crested Honey Buzzard. Oz Horin and I were sponsored to census migrant birds from mid-February-late July 1983. At that time, Eilat's salt pans and the Kibbutz Eilat plantations were small enough to be explored thoroughly by a single observer in just half a day. We soon began a routine whereby one of us would spend the first half of the morning seawatching and then count the waders on the salt pans, while the other searched the plantations; the afternoon was used to cover the most productive areas again. I took the morning seawatching shift on 1 June. At 06.30 hrs, I located a dark bird flying north whose identity was a mystery. As it drew nearer I realized it was a storm-petrel; when it was 100 metres offshore, it circled several times in dipping feeding flight, before continuing toward Aqaba. My observation totalled seven minutes, including four minutes of excellent views.

**Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*.

Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



Convinced that it was a Wilson's Storm-petrel, I raced off to find Oz. By 07.10 hrs, we were at the beach. Eighty minutes later, I was amazed to notice three Sooty Gull *L. hemprichii* flying inland: the first Israeli record. I returned to the kibbutz, leaving Oz to try and relocate the storm-petrel; his patience paid off, and he enjoyed superb views of the bird for three minutes. The series of notable seabird discoveries was not finished: on 2 June, we found a breeding-plumaged Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* at North Beach and, the next day, I found the first South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki* in the Western Palearctic, which stayed for three days.

**Distinguishing characters:** at close quarters it was impossible to miss the U-shaped white rump patch, which extended to the vent-sides. The upperwing-coverts were tinged paler to a varying degree: the greater-coverts, especially, appeared greyish or even whitish at some angles, forming an ill-defined diagonal panel on the middle of the upperwing, while the remaining secondary coverts were tinged brown-buff. From both above and below, the body appeared browner than the relatively black head. The underwing remiges and primary-coverts were dark, with an ill-defined whitish panel on the greater-coverts and base of the remiges. In flight, appeared medium-sized—between Leach's and European Storm-petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Rather short, rounded and stiffly-held wings appeared scarcely angled at the carpal joint, and the trailing edge was almost straight. The tail was short and almost square-shaped, with the feet projecting beyond its tip; no yellow webbing was visible. The bird flew in a direct manner, making shorter glides than Leach's, but it was slower and less fluttering than European.

**Commentary:** Wilson's Storm-petrel is frequent in the Indian Ocean. The paucity of records from the Gulf of Aqaba is perhaps due to the species' nocturnal habits and tendency to remain well offshore.

**EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus* . . . . . central-eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean

**First Israeli record:** one on 27 September 1982, Ma'agan Mikhael. Found with D. Parkin (Ben Dov & Golan 1983, Shirihai 1984).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one on 27 January 1984, two on 14 December 1984, and one on 1 January 1992 at Jaffa Port (E. Dovrat, Y. Baser, R. Mizrachi and D. Tzfrir in Shirihai 1996); two on 2 November 1986, Carmel Coast (L. Gan in Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** rare visitor eastern Mediterranean in non-breeding season; recorded Lebanon in April 1997 (*Birding World* 11: 21). Vagrant Turkey and Syria; nearest breeding is in Greece (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** David Parkin and I were patrolling the beach between Tel Taninim and Dove Island. At 17.15 hrs, we spotted a storm-petrel c. 50 metres away and instantly identified it as European. It is difficult to ascertain the connection between this bird and the host of others seen that day, which included Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (one of the earliest records in Israel), Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (another rarity), six Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* (an unusually large number) and a very early Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Perhaps the only explanation is that we had a good day's birding?



Plate 9. Second-summer Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*, Eilat, 23 July 1983. (M. Meir).



Plate 10. Adult Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*, Eilat, 23 July 1983. (M. Meir).



Plates 11 & 12. Hume's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella acutirostris*, Eilat, February 1986. The first Israel and Western Palearctic record. (Hadoram Shiriha)





**European Storm-petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.

**Distinguishing characters:** the very small size and continuous flapping flight gave it an almost bat-like appearance. The tail was very short and square-ended, but even so, there was no sign of projecting legs; the wings were rather rounded, with the angle created at the carpals barely discernible. The plumage was predominantly black, with virtually uniform upperwing-coverts; the small and squared-off white rump patch was almost always visible. We did not see it well enough to check for European Storm-petrel's large whitish bar on the centre of the underwing.

**Commentary:** Shirihai (1984) reflects on the puzzling fact that this species is much rarer than Leach's Storm-petrel along Israel's Mediterranean coastline, despite breeding in the Mediterranean.

**MADEIRAN STORM-PETREL** *Oceanodroma castro*

Atlantic and Pacific Oceans

**First Israeli record:** one on 6 July 1983, Eilat (HS; Ben Dov & Golan 1983, Shirihai 1984).

**Other regional records:** no other recent records from eastern Mediterranean or Red Sea, although breeds as near as central-eastern Atlantic.

**Background:** on 6 July, sometime after 05.30 hrs, I heard a strange, wader-like call coming from above and behind me, but couldn't locate any likely source. Instead, I saw a distant dark bird heading south, gradually losing height as it neared the beach. I could now see it was a storm-petrel and, as it made several wide loops over the sea and commenced feeding, it showed characters diagnostic of Madeiran. It stayed for only a few minutes before continuing south, and was not seen again. Why this vagrant seabird should be flying from the desert toward the bay is a mystery. One explanation is that the bird had tried to head inland from the Gulf of Aqaba, before returning to the coast; behaviour which has been recorded for Sooty Shearwater at Eilat (Shirihai 1996).

**Distinguishing characters:** in size, structure and flight, generally resembled Leach's Storm-petrel, although certain characters approached Wilson's Storm-petrel. Its wings were notably long and were always held bowed at the carpals, as in Leach's; however, the wing-bases were broader and wingtips more rounded than in Leach's. The tail-length was intermediate between Leach's and Wilson's, and no foot projection was detected; the relatively shallow forking often regarded as diagnostic of Madeiran was practically indiscernible and therefore could not be evaluated. The bird's flight was as buoyant as in Leach's, albeit less erratic, and lacked the strong wingbeats typical of European Storm-petrel. The most striking plumage feature was a noticeably curved, almost horseshoe-shaped, white rump/uppertail-coverts patch, which was narrower than in Wilson's and barely reached as far as the vent-sides. In the rear of this area were two, sharply defined, dark crescentic markings, one on each side. The head was clearly blacker/darker than the rest of its sooty brown plumage, with the lesser- and median-coverts, and mantle appearing fractionally paler. The palest area of the upperwing was an ill-defined greyish brown bar on the greater-coverts, not as marked as in Leach's, but which nevertheless contrasted with the blackish remiges and primary coverts. The underwing seemed unpatterned and dark, the bare parts blackish.

**Identification tips:** following study of photographs and specimens, I found the small blackish crescents on the rear of Madeiran's white rump patch to be rather consistent; they should be visible if the species is seen well at close range (Harrison 1983).

**Commentary:** the most logical explanation for the occurrence of Madeiran Storm-petrel in Eilat is that, having left its Atlantic breeding grounds, the bird reached the Indian Ocean and, ultimately, the Red Sea via the Cape of Good Hope. Madeiran Storm-petrel is highly pelagic when not breeding (Enticott & Tipling 1997), but has occurred at a number of unusual locations, e.g. on an inland lake in Finland (*Birding World* 6: 65–66).



**Madeiran Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma castro*. Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.

**BLACK HERON** *Egretta ardesiaca*

central and southern Africa

**First Israeli record:** one on 19–20 October 1982, Eilat (HS sole observer).

**Other regional records:** one on Cape Verde Islands in February–March 1985 is only other Western Palearctic record (Snow & Perrins 1998); one at Aden Marshes, south Yemen, on 30 March–26 April 1996 (*Sandgrouse* 18 (2): 76–77), is second Middle Eastern record.

**Background:** during two unforgettable days at Kibbutz Eilat, I found the first Black Heron for the Western Palearctic and a mouthwatering supporting cast of 118 species. The heron frequented a flooded field of, herbs and corn, and was sometimes joined by two Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*. When alone, it usually fed by holding its wings in front of itself to shade the ground like an open umbrella; at other times, the bird was possibly influenced by the accompanying Cattle Egrets, as it kept its wings closed and picked insects from the ground. As if to remind me that I was in the Western Palearctic and not Africa, I also saw several Palearctic specialities and birds very rare in Eilat. On the morning of 19 October, I logged a Red Kite *Milvus milvus* (one of the few Eilat records), White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, three Siberian Stonechats *Saxicola torquata* (*maura* and *variegata*); and the salt pans held late Broad-billed *Limicola falcinellus* and Terek Sandpipers *Xenus cinereus*, and Red-necked



**Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca*. Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.



Plate 13. Small Skylark *Alauda gulgula*, Eilat, November 1992. (Leo J. R. Boon).



Plate 14. Small Skylark *Alauda gulgula* and Skylark *A. arvensis*, Eilat, November 1985. (Hadoram Shirihai).



Plate 15. Brown-throated Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola chinensis* (right) and Sand Martin *R. riparia*, Eilat, 6 May 1986. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shirihai).

Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*. On 20 October, when the Black Heron showed all day, I saw five Lesser Crested *Sterna bengalensis* and White-cheeked Terns *S. repressa* off North Beach, Israel's third Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* in the date palms, ten Richard's Pipits *A. richardi* in the kibbutz fields and 30 Crowned Sandgrouse *Pterocles coronatus* in the flooded fields. It is now inconceivable at Eilat that birds of this quality could be enjoyed by a single observer, as happened in 1982.

**Distinguishing characters:** rather small—perhaps slightly larger than Cattle Egret—with predominantly jet black plumage, especially on the upperparts, head-sides and tail, but sometimes appearing sooty brownish black, notably on the body and throat, and from certain angles, the crown and shaggy neck and mantle feathers appeared slaty or greyish black. Blackish legs accentuated the bright yellow feet.

**Commentary:** other Afrotropical vagrants recorded in Israel's Rift Valley include Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*, Marabout *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* and Yellow-billed Storks *Mycteria ibis*, and Cape Teal *Anas capensis* (Shirihai 1996).

**BLACK-HEADED HERON** *Ardea melanocephala*

central and southern Africa

**First Israeli record:** immature from 19 October–15 December 1987, Eilat. Found with B. Laird; photographed; observed by many birders.

**Other regional records:** very few Western Palearctic records, but several others in Middle East e.g. Yemen and Oman (Porter *et al.* 1996, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** after closing the ringing station, Bill Laird, several volunteers and I counted the waders on Eilat's salt pans, as was usual. Soon I spotted a darker heron among some Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* on the southernmost pond; the latter flew as we drove closer, leaving the Black-headed Heron to give excellent views. For most of its stay, the bird frequented the Jordanian side of the border, making occasional forays to the salt pans, but was present for long enough to allow many birders to see it.

**Distinguishing characters:** intermediate in size between Grey and Purple Herons *Ardea purpurea*, but with a proportionately thicker, longer neck and shorter legs; the bill was relatively short-looking, due largely to its broad base. Separated from the superficially similar young Grey Herons by the following: clearly darker and duskier grey above—especially toward the rear, since the tail, tertials and outermost greater-coverts were blackish; crown dark grey; nape and hindneck mid-grey and clearly separated from the whitish throat and foreneck; and the mid-foreneck showed some orange-brown as far as the breast, with the

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*.

Impression of the first record

by James P. Smith.



remainder of the underparts whitish, cream or pale grey. In flight, the creamy white underwing-coverts and blackish grey remiges were obvious, creating a two-toned impression. The legs appeared black when distant but very dark brownish or greenish grey at close quarters.

**Identification tips:** in East Africa, I have found that perched young Black-headed Herons are best located among similar-aged Grey Herons by searching for birds with a striking 'grassland-heron' profile, blackish legs and strongly contrasting pale underparts/dark upperparts.

**Commentary:** Eilat's location at the mouth of Israel's Rift Valley makes the species' occurrence there unsurprising (see Shirihai 1996).

**CRESTED HONEY BUZZARD** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* eastern Asia

**First Israeli record:** adult male on 14 May 1994, Eilat. Photographed by HS (Shirihai 1994a).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** adult male on 13 May 1995, Kibbutz Lotan (J. P. Smith pers. comm.); one on 10 November 1996, Nizzana (HS pers. obs.); one on 1 May 1997, Qetura (B. Granit pers. comm.).

Other regional records: other Western Palearctic records are one photographed at Borçka, north-east Turkey, on 27 September 1979 (Laine 1996), an adult male in the same place on 25 September 1997 (*Sandgrouse* 19: 157) and one near Quseir, Egypt, on 9 May 1996 (Baha el Din & Baha el Din 1997). Approximately ten Arabian records since December 1992.

**Background:** two years following the publication of Shirihai & Christie (1992), which included a series of Honey Buzzard photographs taken at Eilat, Dick Forsman contacted me to ask if I could lend him some of these photos for a paper on the identification of Crested Honey Buzzard (Forsman 1994). Dick wondered aloud whether a vagrant Crested Honey Buzzard might one day occur in Israel, as he had seen 135 in Kazakhstan the previous autumn. I listened with interest, and took note of his suggestion that size and shape were probably the best characters for separating the two species. Between 28 April–21 May 1994, I spent many hours photographing the Honey Buzzard migration from a precarious cliff-top hide on Mount Yoash, Eilat. My hide was a brown poncho-like affair with a hood and drawstring at the neck; by crouching with only my camouflaged camera exposed, I made a remarkably good impression of a rock: Honey Buzzards would often come too close for my camera to focus. On 14 May, I saw what was surely a Crested Honey Buzzard through my Nikon's viewfinder: the mad scramble that ensued will be forever etched in my memory. Having taken a single shot, I began edging toward my binoculars and telescope. This was not as easy as it may sound, as I was wearing an outfit which severely restricted my ease of movement—and I did not want to take my eye off the bird. Suddenly it changed course and glided towards me: I had no time to lose. Back in my original position, I rapidly managed to take eight photographs before it vanished in a flock of 500 Honey Buzzards.

**Distinguishing characters (description based partially on photographs):** relatively easy to distinguish from the Honey Buzzards with which it was associating, due to its larger and generally heavier looking body, broader based wings and shorter, slightly broader tail (which was shorter than the 'arm'-base; in Honey Buzzard, the tail and 'arm'-base are of approximately equal length). The trailing edges to the wings were virtually straight and the carpal joints unpronounced, making the wings almost parallel-edged. The head and neck were dark and sufficiently well defined to give the bird a distinctly hooded appearance, an impression heightened by the blackish necklace. The wingtips were much more rounded than in Honey, with a protruding sixth primary. From below, the virtual lack of dark carpal patches, the reduced black on the primary tips and the three rather evenly spaced broad bars on the remiges identified it as an adult male. The underparts were pale sandy buff (whiter between the bars on the remiges and slightly browner on the body); the undertail pattern was extremely distinctive: a broad white band separated blackish basal and terminal bands.

**Identification tips:** several of the criteria for separating Crested Honey Buzzard and Honey Buzzard—especially the extent and distribution of remige barring—are age-related (see

Forsman (1994) and Forsman & Shirihai (1997)).

**Commentary:** this record provides a classic example of the need for familiarity with common confusion species when faced with a potential vagrant. My in-depth knowledge of Honey Buzzard immediately alerted me to this different bird. Moreover, just two months earlier, I had been alerted to the possibility—however unlikely it may have seemed at the time—of Crested Honey Buzzard vagrancy. The recent spate of Middle Eastern record was seemingly stimulated by the Eilat occurrence and the publication of Forsman (1994), which threw much-needed light on the identification and migration of the two honey buzzard species. As inferred in Shirihai (1994a), the Eilat bird was probably following major northbound flyway of Honey Buzzard, having migrated south into East Africa with the latter species the previous autumn. It is interesting to speculate that the records from Mount Yoash, Eilat, in 1994 and Kibbutz Lotan, Arava Valley, in 1995 relate to the same lost individual, as the latter was seen almost a year to the day after the (identically plumaged) Eilat bird.

**TAWNY EAGLE** *Aquila rapax*

Africa and southern Asia

**First Israeli record:** subadult *belisarius* on 1–2 November 1992, Urim, north-west Negev. Found with A. Harris and B. Williams; photographed (Shirihai 1994b).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** two other records of *belisarius* from same locality: one on 22 November 1996 (F. Aldersons) and one on 21 December 1997 (*Birding World* 11: 24).

**Other regional records:** *belisarius* breeds in south-west Arabia and North Africa, occurring as vagrant north of known breeding grounds e.g. Oman and in Sardinia and Spain (Porter *et al.* 1996, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** while working on Shirihai *et al.* (1996a), Alan Harris and I made several trips to the western Negev to study large falcons, ring-tailed harriers and Imperial Eagles *Aquila heliaca*. On one such trip, with Barry Williams, we found a perched eagle whose identity was baffling. We drove closer and obtained excellent views of the bird for at least an hour; finally we identified it as Israel's first Tawny Eagle.

**Distinguishing characters:** the following combination of characters enabled separation from young Imperial Eagle and immature Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* of the pale form: much of the plumage, including the coverts, was unstreaked pale tawny (with contrasting blackish remiges and rectrices); the creamy white uppertail-coverts extended well onto the back; there was a contrasting sandy wedge on the inner primaries, visible mainly from below; and the gape line was very short, barely reaching level with the eye. It also appeared smaller, even 'puny' compared to Imperial and Steppe Eagle.

**Identification tips:** Tawny Eagle is one of the most variable of eagles, although birds of the only race found in the region, *belisarius* are predominantly tawny buffish, or rarely pale foxy rufous. Age-related plumage variation in Tawny Eagle is discussed at length in Shirihai *et al.* (1996a).

**Commentary:** as this species breeds further north in Arabia than in Africa, it seems probable that vagrants to Israel originate from the former region; the same is probably true of Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* and Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* (see Shirihai 1996).

**LESSER SAND PLOVER** *Charadrius mongolus*

eastern Asia

**First Israeli record:** one on 23 April 1983, Eilat. Also seen by O. Horin and others; photographed by M. Meir.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one from 14–16 April 1998, Eilat (J. P. Smith and B. Granit).

**Other regional records:** regular in winter and on passage coastal Arabia, southern Red Sea and East Africa (Cramp & Simmons 1983), but vagrant rest of Middle East (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** daily counts of waders on Eilat's salt pans were conducted in spring 1983. In mid-morning on 23 April, I found a sand plover showing the features diagnostic of Lesser. The bird stayed all day, allowing several birders to see it.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**Distinguishing characters:** the bird was in mainly winter plumage, with some fresh breeding feathers on the head and body—as would be expected in Lesser (see Identification tips). Conclusive identification was made through an examination of its structure: smaller and more delicately built than Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*, being nearer Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula* in size. In particular, the head was smaller and more rounded than in Greater, with a somewhat higher forehead, and the bill was clearly shorter (about equal to, or slightly shorter than, the distance between the bill-base and the rear edge of the eye). The bill appeared blunter tipped, partly due to the short, poorly developed nail and gonys. The bird's generally rounded body contributed to a most 'unbalanced' appearance, with the impression of more body weight in front of the legs than behind; the legs (especially the tibia) were also markedly shorter than in Greater. From a distance, the legs appeared black, but close views revealed them to be slate-grey. In flight, the legs did not project beyond the tail-tip (unlike in Greater) and there was a white wingbar, which was relatively long and narrow compared to Greater, extending nearer to the body on the secondaries.

**Identification tips:** the state of moult can play an important part in sand plover identification: unlike in Lesser, most populations of Greater attain breeding plumage by February–March. The identification of this complex is discussed at length in a forthcoming paper (Hirschfeld *et al.* in press).

**Commentary:** there are only two accepted records of Lesser Sand Plover in Israel, a reflection of this species' rarity in the Levant. The many other records claimed from the region are probably misidentified Greater Sand Plovers of the smaller billed race *columbinus* (see Shirihai 1996).

**LONG-TOED STINT** *Calidris subminuta*

eastern Siberia

**First Israeli record:** one on 25–26 August 1991, Eilat. Ringed with D. Yekutieli; photographed in the hand.

**Other regional records:** few other Western Palearctic records (Snow & Perrins 1998); very small numbers recently discovered overwintering UAE, Oman and East Africa (van Perlo 1995, Porter *et al.* 1996, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** in autumn 1991, much time and effort was devoted to a thorough survey of wader passage at Eilat. On 25 August, David Yekutieli was checking the traps while I counted the waders, when we met at a trap containing a strange-looking stint. I suggested that we empty the trap immediately: it didn't take us long to identify the mystery stint as Israel's first Long-toed. The bird was ringed, measured and photographed.

**Distinguishing features:** relatively easy to identify, principally because it was a juvenile and examined in the hand. Both in the hand and in the field, its shape was clearly unlike Little Stint *Calidris minuta*; the proportionately long legs and neck, elongated body and smallish

head gave the impression of a miniature Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. The legs were light yellowish green, with an elongated middle toe, and projected beyond the tail in flight. The bill was slightly decurved, with a distinct pale base. Primary projection was barely noticeable. Compared to other *Calidris* species, the bird had a strikingly dark rusty crown, bordered by a whitish split supercilium. Black feather-centres reaching the feather-tips admixed with buffy rufous fringes (most obvious on the scapulars and inner median-coverts), gave the upperparts a striped pattern; other conspicuous plumage features included long, whitish V-shaped markings on the mantle and rufous-tinged tertials. The centre of the breast was almost unmarked.

**Commentary:** the identification of small calidrids has been well treated in the recent literature (e.g. Jonsson & Grant 1984, Alström & Olsson 1989, Chandler 1989, Doherty 1991, Shirihai *et al.* 1996a). Nevertheless, the difficulty of finding vagrant Asiatic stints among the vast numbers of Little Stints that pass through Israel presumably explains the lack of subsequent records in the country. Additionally, there are relatively few observers in Israel in the hot months of May, August and September, when the stint passage peaks.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos*

northern North America and Siberia

**First Israeli record:** one from 15–26 May 1983, Eilat. Seen by many other birders, including E. Dovrat, O. Horin and R. Mizrachi; photographed.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one on 29–30 April 1994, Eilat (P. Alström, U. Olsson, HS, L. Svensson *et al.*; figure e, plate 10, Shirihai 1996). Two autumn records: one at Eilat on 30 August 1984 (HS) and one at Beer Sheva on 13 September 1986 (E. Ben-Zohar and E. Shohat).

**Other regional records:** small numbers annual western Europe (Alström *et al.* 1991), but remains very rare or vagrant Middle East e.g. Israel and Egypt (Porter *et al.* 1996). Regular winter visitor East Africa in very small numbers (van Perlo 1995, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** whilst counting some Broad-billed Sandpipers on Eilat's salt pans at c. 12.00 hrs on 15 May 1983, I discovered a Pectoral Sandpiper in their midst. I finished counting the Broad-billeds and then returned to watch Israel's first Pectoral Sandpiper—it was as if I couldn't believe the evidence of my eyes and had to do something else before my brain came to terms with finding a North American wader at Eilat. We know better now, of course; the bird was clearly on its way to its Siberian breeding grounds and not a transatlantic vagrant. Incidentally, this bird still holds the record of being the rarity most twitched by Israeli birders (over 40 came to see it).

**Distinguishing characters:** although clearly a medium-sized *Calidris* species, the bird was in some ways reminiscent of both Wood Sandpiper and Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, but with a rather longer attenuated body and relatively short legs. It had a prominent breast band, consisting of a buffish tinge to the chest overlaid by neat buff-brown streaks and some mottling, which was sharply demarcated from the pure white belly. There was an untidy scalloped pattern to the upperparts, created by the admixture of fresh and worn feathers, and faint whitish V-shaped markings on the mantle. The legs were pale yellowish brown as was the base of the slightly decurved bill.

**Commentary:** spring-plumaged Pectoral Sandpipers, like the first Eilat bird, are less familiar to European birders than juveniles, which occur regularly in western Europe. Israel's second record involved a bird less advanced in its moult i.e. showing more winter plumage feathers (see Shirihai 1996).

**PINTAIL SNIPE** *Gallinago stenura*

Northern Asia

**First Israeli record:** one at Eilat on 1–10 November 1984 (not 1–7 November 1984, Shirihai 1996). Ringed (E. Dovrat, R. Mizrachi, R. Juliusburger and others); photographed in the hand.

**Subsequent Israeli record:** one (ringed) on 19–26 November 1998 at Kefar Ropin, Bet Shean Valley (B. Granit and Y. Perelman).

**Other regional records:** breeds west as far as north-east Russia; Eilat record is only other Western Palearctic occurrence (Snow & Perrins 1998). Recent records eastern Middle East, e.g.

Bahrain and UAE, probably involve passage migrants or winterers; may occur elsewhere Arabian/Persian Gulf region (Porter *et al.* 1996). Near-annual East Africa (van Perlo 1995).

**Background:** I flushed an unfamiliar-looking snipe while checking mist-nets early on 1 November 1984, one of the most productive days that season. It struck me as being relatively small, dark and round-winged, with an unfamiliar wing pattern. I watched it for several minutes at ranges of c. 100 metres, before it flew again. There seemed a distinct possibility it was Pintail, so I returned next day at dawn to try and trap it. As luck would have it, within the space of an hour, I caught three Asiatic species: Pintail Snipe, Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* and Small Skylark.

**Distinguishing characters:** clearly smaller and dumper than Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, with a shorter tail and somewhat browner plumage less saturated with rufous. The upperwing had a pale panel (formed by exposed broad grey tips and dark subterminal bands on the median-coverts) and a very narrow—almost invisible—pale trailing edge. The pale fringes to the scapulars were of equal width or narrower than in Common, resulting in a more scalloped pattern. The underwing-coverts were uniformly barred and dark, while the underparts were more heavily and extensively marked than Common; overall this bird was clearly darker than is typical of that species. The tail had 12 rectrices on each side, of which the outermost seven were very narrow and pointed. In flight, the feet projected well beyond the tail-tip, and it appeared to fly lower and slower than Common Snipe.

**Identification tips:** characters not mentioned above, but which may be detectable in the field, include Pintail's swollen supercilium compared to Common (giving a rather bare-faced impression), the virtual lack of contrast between the supercilium and pale cheek bar, and relatively short, blunt bill. In addition, Pintail's eye-stripe narrows and sharpens in front of the eye. Pintail Snipe is most easily confused with Swinhoe's Snipe; their upper- and underwings are nearly identical. Swinhoe's is larger, bulkier and duskier, with wingtips contained by the tail and feet barely projecting beyond the tail-tip in flight; it is also harder to flush. Essential references on the identification of Palearctic snipe include Shirihai (1988) and Carey & Olsson (1995).

**Commentary:** prior information on vagrants is vital if they are to be successfully identified. In this instance, I was fortunate in that I had just been reading the only paper on Pintail Snipe identification then available (Madge 1977), which gave me an essential grounding in the species' diagnostic characters.

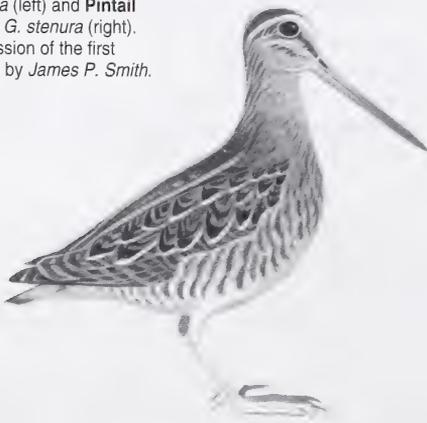
**SWINHOE'S SNIPE** *Gallinago megala*

central and eastern Asia

**First Israeli record:** one from 28 February–4 March 1998, Hula Valley. Also seen by D. Alon.

**Other regional records:** old record from Caucasus now considered doubtful (Snow & Perrins 1998); Hula bird therefore sole accepted Western Palearctic record.

**Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala* (left) and **Pintail Snipe** *G. stenura* (right). Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.



**Background:** in recent years, I have organised winter raptor censuses in the lowlands of central and northern Israel. My main partners in the field are Dan Alon, Ehud Dovrat and Barak Granit. Of course, I get to spend long hours in the field in what is perhaps the most bird-rich part of Israel at that time of year. Heavy rains in winter 1997–1998 flooded a number of grassy fields in the Hula Valley, creating marshy habitat attractive to wildfowl, waders and raptors. I regularly checked the eagle traps placed in these fields as part of a radio-tagging study, and discovered that one boggy area in particular held significant numbers of Common Snipe. On the afternoon of 28 February, I became intrigued by one snipe's unusual appearance, and approached to within 15 metres of it in my jeep. During 15.30–17.20 hrs, I enjoyed outstanding views and identified it as Swinhoe's Snipe. It stayed until at least 4 March, when Dan Alon saw it very well at close range, but due to a technical problem with my camera, no photographs were taken.

**Distinguishing characters (co-authored by D. Alon):** first impressions were of a snipe obviously larger, bulkier, larger-headed and darker than Common Snipe feeding nearby. Its jizz had overtones of Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. Appeared strikingly dark overall with less buffy and rufous coloration than in Common; breast dusky and heavily mottled/streaked, and body-sides thickly and extensively barred. The greater and lesser-coverts were solidly dark, but the centres and tips of the median-coverts were noticeably pale, creating a pale panel on the closed wing. The whitish lines on the mantle–scapulars were narrower than in Common, enhancing the generally dark appearance of the upperparts; the scapulars had relatively even, whitish fringes, forming a more scalloped pattern than in Common Snipe (but reminiscent of Pintail Snipe, which see). Large white corners to the tail were exposed when the bird was on the ground; primary-projection and tail–wingtip projection were both reasonably obvious. The head was rather 'square', with the crown peaking further behind the eye than is the case in Common; in addition, the eye itself appeared larger and set back. Its markings were also different: the lateral crown-stripes were solid blackish, very bold (especially behind the eye) and connected at the forehead, whilst the whitish median crown-stripe did not reach the base of the bill, and the whitish supercilium was clearly broadest between the bill and eye, tapering markedly towards the nape. The bill was shorter-looking and proportionately thicker and broader-based than in Common. In flight, the bird looked large, heavy bodied and deep-chested, and its feet projected just beyond the tail-tip. The upperparts and upperwing were concolorously dark and brown-tinged (the mantle–scapular lines were indistinct), with the exception of the pale wing panel; the pale trailing edge was reduced to a mere trace, invisible on almost all occasions the bird was flushed. The underwing appeared uniformly dark-barred.

**Commentary:** the distribution and migration of Swinhoe's Snipe are still poorly understood, but the Hula Valley record was perhaps most likely an overwintering bird. Knowledge gained through previous work with Common and Pintail Snipes was crucial to its discovery.

#### **SOUTH POLAR SKUA** *Catharacta maccormicki*

Southern Oceans

**First Israeli record:** pale morph from 3–6 June 1983, Eilat. Also seen by O. Horin and several European birders; description and sketches verified by P. Harrison.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one same location on 28 June 1992 (J. Morgan and HS).

**Other regional records:** Eilat 1983 record is apparently first confirmed in Western Palearctic; recorded off Egypt's Red Sea coast 1990 and 1991 (Snow & Perrins 1998). Probably frequent non-breeding summer visitor Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, perhaps also Red Sea (Harrison 1983, Porter *et al.* 1996, Shirihai 1996, Malling Olsen & Larsson 1997).

**Background:** see Wilson's Storm-petrel.

**Distinguishing characters:** similar size to Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*, but much heavier in build. It had the classic large skua shape of a bulky body combined with proportionately short, triangular-shaped wings (created by the very long, broad arm and short, abruptly tapering hand) and a full, short tail. A variety of additional features separated it from Pomarine and other smaller skuas: the rather thick, short and mainly dark bill; the largely mono-coloured, greyish buff-brown plumage; and the bold white patches on the bases of the primaries of both wing surfaces. Separated from other large skuas by its relatively small size,



**South Polar Skua** *Catharacta maccormicki*.  
 Impression of the first record  
 by James P. Smith.

slightly less chunky (although still powerful-looking) body, proportionately smaller head and stouter bill. The mid-toned greyish brown head had a dark eye patch, giving the impression of an ill-defined mask, and the nape and upper mantle a very prominent broad, greyish sand half-collar. The rest of the body was drab, cold buff, with narrow yellowish streaking and mottling (visible only periodically at close range); the tail was marginally darker and the rump perhaps paler. There was clear contrast between the solid black median- and lesser-underwing-coverts (of both the primary- and secondary-coverts) and the distinctly lighter, silvery grey-brown greater-underwing-coverts and remiges. The white under primary patches were crescent-shaped and well defined and sometimes seemed to extend inward along the greater-coverts. The upperwing's white patches were always larger and more diffuse. Compared to the smaller skuas, it flew slowly, albeit with considerable manoeuvrability and effortlessness, only quickening its wingbeat when harrying other seabirds. In taking off and gliding low over the water, its heavy flight action recalled a distant Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*.

**Identification tips:** South Polar is the only species of large skua likely to reach the Red Sea, leaving Pomarine as the only confusion species. Note that non-adult Pomarines lack tail-streamers and often have extensive white primary patches; some individuals can also be rather large (see also Malling Olsen & Larsson 1997).

**Commentary:** despite the interest in South Polar Skua identification in recent years, its occurrence in Western Palearctic waters of the Atlantic and Red Sea is poorly understood and it is probably still overlooked (Shirihai 1996, Malling Olsen & Larsson 1997).

**SOOTY GULL** *Larus hemprichii* seas around Arabia and north-east Africa

**First Israeli record:** three adults on 1 June 1983, Eilat. Found with O. Horin (Shirihai 1996).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** three records (all Eilat) in 1989–1992, but all pre-1983 records now rejected (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** breeds Red Sea north to mouth of Gulf of Suez; very rare southern Sinai.

**Background:** see Wilson's Storm-petrel.

**Distinguishing characters:** clearly larger, heavier, fuller-bodied and larger-headed than White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus*, with noticeably browner plumage. The upperparts and



**Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.

head were predominantly suffused brown, rather than greyish and black, as in White-eyed. The upper flanks and chest were dull brown and bordered above by a pale or whitish neck-ring; there was also a white eye-ring, virtually restricted to above the eye. The bill had a yellow base, black subterminal band and reddish tip, and appeared notably deeper than in White-eyed. Identification was straightforward, due to the excellent views and the birds' adult plumage.

**Identification tips:** recently, Killian Mullarney and I have studied the identification and ageing of Sooty and White-eyed Gulls in the two species' northern Red Sea breeding grounds. A character very useful for identifying Sooty in flight, especially in head-on views, is that, at all ages it lacks White-eyed's white leading edge to the wing. For full treatment of the separation of Sooty and White-eyed Gulls, see Shirihai *et al.* (1996a).

**Commentary:** Sooty Gull's rarity in the Gulf of Aqaba is surprising, as it breeds 250 km to the south at the south-west entrance to the Gulf of Suez. However, the species is considerably less numerous and more sedentary than White-eyed Gull, which breeds in the same area (Goodman & Meininger 1989, HS pers. obs.).

**SABINE'S GULL** *Larus sabini*

north-east Palearctic and north Nearctic

**First Israeli record:** first-summer from 3 July–2 August 1989, Eilat. Also seen by Y. Perelman and others; photographed.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one same location on 17 June 1992 (HS; Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** recorded UAE (Porter *et al.* 1996); claims from Egypt have been rejected (Goodman & Meininger 1989). Vagrant Mediterranean (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** in early July 1989, the Gulf of Aqaba was alive with seabirds, including Arctic, Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas, Lesser Crested and Arctic Terns *Sterna paradisaea*, and Red-necked Phalarope. Most were found as a result of the discovery of the Sabine's Gull on 3 July. I discussed with Ehud Dovrat the most likely scenario for the appearance of a Sabine's Gull in the Gulf of Aqaba. Instead of migrating north through the Atlantic to its north Holarctic breeding grounds, it appeared the bird had moved east into the western Indian Ocean and Red Sea. Its relatively late appearance at Eilat could be explained by the fact it was a first-summer: non-breeding birds frequently remain at more southerly latitudes during the summer (see Commentary). Ehud asked if I knew the date of the first Sabine's Gull record in Israel, I replied "January 1939", referring to a skin preserved in Tel Aviv university museum. He then said nonchalantly, "Go to the museum and expect a surprise." I caught his drift:

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* is a rare but regular winter visitor to Israel. I immediately telephoned the museum's curator and fired a series of questions at her while she checked the specimen, before telling her that the label should read "Kittiwake". A few days later I went to Tel Aviv to confirm the reidentification.

**Distinguishing characters:** plumage worn and bleached, but with a striking three-part pattern to the upperwing: the outer two-thirds of the primaries and their coverts were blackish brown, the remaining coverts were greyish sand, and the inner primaries and secondaries were white. The mantle and back were drab grey-sand with a few ash-grey (i.e. adult) feathers. A prominent dark or blackish area covered the nape and rear crown; the rest of the plumage was white. The tail was noticeably forked, with a dark, narrow subterminal band. The bare parts appeared mainly dark or black.

**Identification tips:** I have not located any colour photographs of first-summer Sabine's Gull taken in June–July, or found comparable skins—despite searching the collections of several national museums. The species' first-summer plumage is often described as having *pure* grey (i.e. adult-like) upperparts and upperwing-coverts, but this was not the case in either of the Eilat individuals. It is possible that second-summer birds have been mistakenly aged as first-summer; alternatively, the moult of Sabine's Gull may be more variable than is thought.

**Commentary:** as both records involved first-summer individuals, they may provide evidence that non-breeding birds disperse into the western Indian Ocean in summer.



**Sabine's Gull** *Larus sabini*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.

**BROWN-HEADED GULL** *Larus brunicephalus*

southern and central Asia

**First Israeli record:** first-summer on 12 May 1985, Eilat. Also observed by A. Jönsson and N. Sebba.

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic records (Snow & Perrins 1998). Vagrant Iran, Oman and (probably) Arabian Gulf and Arabian Sea (Bourne & Bundy 1990, Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*.

Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**Background:** while searching the gulls on Eilat's salt pans, I found a Brown-headed Gull among Black-headed *Larus ridibundus* and Slender-billed Gulls *L. genei*. Excellent views were obtained at rest and in flight, and I spent 40 minutes taking notes before leaving to spread the word. Few other birders were present, but I found Anders Jönsson and Nina Sebba, with whom I returned to view the gull for the rest of the day.

**Distinguishing characters (based on Shirihai et al. (1987), with substantial additions from original field notes; see Commentary):** slightly bulkier, but notably larger, than Black-headed Gull. In jizz, closer to Slender-billed, but with a heavier and less elongated body making it appear proportionately shorter-legged than that species. Bill intermediate in length between Black-headed and Slender-billed and deeper than in either, with a more prominent gonys-contributing to the birds' generally stouter-built impression. The bird was a first-summer, in a clearly worn and bleached state. The head was white with a dusky patch on the rear ear-coverts and some dark marking around the eye; the area between the eye and the ear-coverts patch was faintly marked with grey, producing the vague effect of a down-curving mask. The underparts were white. The upperparts and upperwing-coverts were mostly pale (bleached) grey, similar in tone to the nearby Slender-billed Gulls and apparently slightly paler than the upperparts tone of the accompanying Black-headed. However, (as noted in the field description but not in Shirihai et al. 1987) several fresh feathers on the scapulars, tertials and innerwing-coverts were clearly darker, being mid-grey. The worn upperwing-coverts possessed a faint brownish carpal bar extending onto the lower lesser- and median-coverts. Almost all the upperwing remiges were solid blackish brown (with no paler inner primaries), providing a marked contrast to the whitish, oval-shaped patch on the carpals; the carpal patch covered most of the primary-coverts, as well as the bases of the inner and central primaries. The underwing also had a contrasting pattern, as the secondaries were dark grey and the primaries even darker; but the two-toned effect was less pronounced, due to the paler remiges and whitish grey coverts. The tail had a thin blackish terminal bar. The bill was orange-red basally, with a blackish tip extending c. one third of its total length. The legs were brownish red, with darker 'knees'. The eye, iris and orbital ring looked dark at long range, but the iris appeared paler close to and in the sun—but never as pale as in Slender-billed (this fact was omitted from Shirihai et al. 1987).

**Identification tips:** field experience in Asia and Africa has taught me that the immature and non-breeding plumages of Brown-headed and Grey-headed Gulls *Larus cirrocephalus* can be very similar. Although the two species are widely separated geographically, confusion is clearly possible in areas of potential vagrancy. The best identification feature is the underwing: distinctly bi-coloured in Brown-headed (with paler, whitish coverts) but uniformly dusky grey in Grey-headed. Other characters, such as Grey-headed's darker grey upperparts, thinner bill, narrower tail-bar and more restricted white carpal patch, are more variable than previously considered.

**Commentary:** a short note on this occurrence was published (Shirihai et al. 1987), based on a translation of my detailed field description (in Hebrew). This process led to some very important details being omitted, and was exacerbated by the accompanying illustration, which conveyed a misleading impression of the bird's head and bill shape, and prompted a serious

questioning of the identification by Hoogendoorn (1991). Had the paper been a more accurate representation of my field notes, I don't think Hoogendoorn would have had so much reason to question the identification. His analysis of the Eilat bird's identification raises some interesting points but does not—in my view—undermine the record, especially when the eye colour and exact tone of the grey upperparts (not previously published) are considered. The Eilat bird's overall paleness was due to relatively heavy wear and bleaching, and the fact that its pre-nuptial moult was not very advanced; recent observations have demonstrated that the first-summer plumage of Brown-headed Gull is frequently developed to only a limited degree (Malling Olsen *in litt.* and pers. obs.; see van den Berg *et al.* (1991) on variability in pre-nuptial moult). The narrowness of the black tail bar was within the recorded range for the species, and probably at least partly due to extensive wear to the tail-tip. Apparently, the least-advanced state of the Eilat bird's moult could also explain why it had a relatively dark (pale brown) iris; iris colour (although variable) in many gull species develops in accordance with moult sequence. It should be stressed, however, that the iris appeared dark only at a distance; its true colour was probably equivalent to that of a pale-eyed Armenian Gull *L. armenicus* (of which some individuals have a dirty-looking, whitish brown iris). Hoogendoorn's comments provided a welcome opportunity to re-assess the record. A further benefit is that there are now four references dealing with first-year Brown-headed Gulls and their variation. Reassessment of the record and recent field experience of both Brown-headed and Grey-headed Gulls, leaves me wholly confident that the Eilat bird was a Brown-headed Gull.

#### GREY-HEADED GULL *Larus cirrocephalus*

sub-Saharan and southern Africa

**First Israeli record:** second-summer from 15 March–10 April 1989, Eilat. Found with the late P. Grant and K. Mullarney, and seen by many birders; photographed.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** two same location in 1989: first-summer from 28 April–15 May and second-winter from 4 August–19 September; both photographed (Shirihai 1992).

**Other regional records:** first Israeli record also seen in Aqaba, Jordan, on 30 March 1989 (Andrews 1995); no other Middle East records (Porter *et al.* 1996). Tiny breeding population north Mauritania; vagrant North Africa and Spain (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** few of the birders visiting Eilat in mid-March–mid-April 1989 can have missed the long-staying Grey-headed Gull, one of two seen that spring. Remarkably, a third appeared that summer. On 15 March, the late Peter Grant, Killian Mullarney and I took a tour group seawatching at the beach. I spotted an interesting gull while scanning the bay and tracked the bird briefly before identifying it as Grey-headed; I had studied the species in The Gambia just four months previously.

**Distinguishing characters:** the ash-grey hood, trimmed at the rear with an ill defined dark ring, is diagnostic of Grey-headed Gull. Its bare parts—except the white iris—were deep red. The upperparts and upperwing-coverts were darkish grey, the underwing slightly darker; the black on the wingtips was extensive and rounded; and a bold white panel covered the outer primaries and primary-coverts. The prominent white mirrors in the outer primaries were smaller than in a full adult, and the bird showed other traces of immaturity, in the form of dark markings on some secondaries and tertiaries; it was otherwise largely pure white.

**Identification tips:** the surest way to pick out a first-winter, first-summer or non-breeding adult Grey-headed from among a resting flock of Black-headed is probably to look for duskier grey upperparts. However, the species is more easily confused with Brown-headed Gull. For a discussion of age-related plumage variation in Grey-headed Gull and full descriptions of all three Eilat birds, see Shirihai (1992).

**Commentary:** the appearance of three Grey-headed Gulls at Eilat in the same spring-summer may indicate fluctuations in the species' abundance and distribution, perhaps as a result of local or even global environmental changes. It would be fascinating to understand how environmental change in East Africa's Rift Valley can cause the northward displacement of this and other species.

**ROSEATE TERN** *Sterna dougallii*

West Africa and western Europe

**First Israeli record:** first-winter from 4–20 November 1982, Eilat (HS in Ben Dov & Golan (1983)). Also seen by O. Horin, R. Mizrahi and others.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** adult on 10 September 1987, Ma'agan Mikhael (G. Keijl *et al.*) and first-summer on 26 August 1989, Shifdan (E. Dovrat *et al.*); see Shirihai (1996).

**Other regional records:** breeds Oman; vagrant Arabian coasts and Mediterranean (Porter *et al.* 1996, Shirihai 1996, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** only two terns were at North Beach on the morning of 4 November 1982, yet both proved to be exceptional: one was the first winter record of White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* at Eilat and the other was Israel's first Roseate Tern, which was seen almost daily until 20 November.

**Distinguishing characters:** highly distinctive: larger, longer-legged, longer-billed and more whitish-looking than Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, approaching Sandwich Tern in jizz, both in flight and at rest. The very pale, whitish grey upperparts were almost concolorous, although the rump and uppertail appeared marginally whiter and a whiter panel was evident on the mid-wing. Compared to Common, the upper 'hand' had a fainter and restricted black area, confined to the outermost primaries (another Sandwich-like character), but the 'hand's relative darkness could be enhanced by the mid-wing panel. The pale mid-wing drew attention to a faint brownish bar along its leading edge, and there was a suggestion of a darker secondary bar (much less developed than in Common). The underwing was even more uniform, with darker outer primaries the only feature. At rest, the wingtips and tail-tip appeared to meet. The long pointed bill gave the impression of being slightly decurved, due entirely to the shape of the upper mandible—the lower mandible appeared straight. Both bill and legs were black. In flight, it resembled Sandwich Tern, particularly the rapid, stiff wingbeats of that species. It dived directly and from a height, moving some distance diving again (Sandwich Tern forages similarly).

**Commentary:** Etchécopar & Hüe (1967) and other authors state that the species breeds and is regular in the Red Sea. In fact, as noted by Goodman & Meininger (1989), it is a vagrant only.

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*.

Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

north Holarctic

**First Israeli record:** first-summer on 2 July 1982, Eilat (HS in Ben Dov & Golan (1983)).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** all Eilat, e.g. 21 from 1983–1990, and chiefly May–late August; some photographed (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** two first-summers photographed in mid-July 1996, Tawila Island (Red Sea), Egypt (K. Mullarney and HS); vagrant to Cyprus, Turkey and Oman (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** despite strongly suspecting an Arctic Tern to be present at Eilat in summer 1981, I didn't make a definite sighting until July 1982, when a first-summer—arguably the species' least known plumage—permitted prolonged study.

**Distinguishing characters:** when perched among Common Terns, it appeared to have distinctly short, blackish legs and a more rounded head. Its white forehead patch extended by flecking to the mid-crown; the rest of the crown was black, but not as well defined as in nearby Commons. The black bill was relatively short and pointed. The upperparts and upperwing looked neat and silvery whitish grey, with fine white tips to the feathers, but the leading edge of the secondaries was an indistinct dark grey-brown. The remiges were strikingly translucent and bordered by the dark-edged outer primary and thin black primary-tips; at rest, the dark-bordered primaries enhanced the white mid-wing area.

**Identification tips:** the first- and second-summer plumages of Arctic Tern are poorly described in the literature. An Arctic Tern photographed at Eilat in 1983 (Plate 9) appears intermediate between first- and second-summer, but is most probably the latter: note the still-black bill, dark legs, white underparts and reduced white on the forehead. The plumage is generally worn, and its wing pattern is more adult-like, especially the weakness of the bars on the leading edge of the wing and secondaries.

**Commentary:** summer records from the Gulf of Aqaba and the recent July record in Egypt suggest that young non-breeding Arctic Terns are very rare summer visitors to the northern Red Sea.

**BRIDLED TERN** *Sterna anaethetus*

mid-latitude oceans

**First Israeli record:** two (apparently first-summer) on 25 July 1980, Eilat (Shirihai 1982, HS in Ben Dov & Golan (1983)).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** scarce summer visitor Gulf of Aqaba (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** breeds Red Sea north to mouth Gulf of Suez, where strictly summer visitor (Goodman & Meininger 1989); regular off southern Sinai (Shirihai 1996).

**Background:** in the old days, nobody considered birdwatching at Eilat in the height of summer, so, when I was 18 years old, I persuaded my parents, Ehud Dovrat and SPNI to sponsor a survey from 24 July-late November. I found two Bridled Terns on the second day and a Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* on the fourth. Soon, three Sooty Terns were present, one of which may have been the original bird. Of course, I telephoned Ehud with news of each exciting discovery. He drove to Eilat, saw the birds and greatly encouraged me.

**Distinguishing characters:** although Common Tern-sized, they appeared larger at times, due to their longer wings, elongated bodies and even more purposeful, elegant flight. In particular, they were proportionately longer at the rear than Common and distinctly dark above and white below. The dorsal area appeared almost black at distance but was greyish earth-brown (especially on the mantle) at close range; the black crown contrasted little with the upperparts but appeared almost separate due to white extensions to the neck-sides. A triangle of white on the forehead reached just above and behind the eye; the black of the crown passed through the eye as a straight loreal stripe to the bill, making the white forehead seem like an angular supercilium when seen side-on. The underwing was striking: white coverts and blackish grey remiges, the latter exhibiting a paler/greyer basal and lateral primary area when close, i.e. the dark remiges appeared less solid and extensive at times.

**Identification tips:** some first-summer Bridled Terns I have seen at Eilat appeared remarkably like winter-plumaged birds, as their head pattern was ill-defined with an enlarged and/or blotchy white forehead, a character only detectable given good views. A distant Bridled Tern can look like a Long-tailed Skua at first; distant first-summer White-cheeked Tern can have a superficially similar impression of a dark dorsal area and dark-and-light underwing.

**Commentary:** but for the dearth of observers at Eilat in mid-summer, Bridled Tern would have been added to the Israeli List long before 1980 (Shirihai 1982). A clearer understanding of the species' status in the northern Red Sea has now emerged (see above). Most records are in July-August, when small flocks are not uncommon; all are non-breeders and (apparently) first-summer (Shirihai 1996). They usually appear along the Jordanian coastline, before heading west from Aqaba to Eilat.

**Sooty Tern** *Sterna fuscata* (right two)  
and **Bridled Tern** *S. anaethetus* (left).  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**SOOTY TERN** *Sterna fuscata*

tropics and subtropics

**First Israeli record:** adult on 27 July 1980, Eilat (Shirihai 1982, HS in Ben Dov & Golan (1983)).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** all Eilat: three adults from 31 July–2 August 1980 (E. Dovrat and HS), three on 29 July 1981 (A. Balaban and R. Juliusburger) and 12 on 12 July 1988 (Y. Perelman, HS *et al.*); see Shirihai (1996).

**Other regional records:** vagrant or very rare much of Red Sea and northern Persian Gulf; probably scarce visitor south-west Arabia and southern Red Sea (Porter *et al.* 1996, Shirihai 1996).

**Background:** at c. 07.00 hrs, I saw a black-and-white tern off North Beach and realised it was a Sooty Tern. This and other discoveries made the midsummer heat almost bearable.

**Distinguishing characters:** very similar to Bridled Tern, but a series of characters clinched its identification. Slightly larger, but notably heavier, than Bridled (in build closer to Lesser Crested or Sandwich Terns). Its flight was more powerful, with deep, almost skua-like beats of longer, broader-based wings. The upperparts were uniform jet black, lacking any detectable brown hue, nor was there any contrast between the head/outerwing and the rest of the upperparts (which in good views are clearly black and slaty-brown in Bridled; this would not have been diagnostic if the bird had been more distant, as Bridled looks concolorously dark at long range and in certain lights). It had a black crown and white forehead: the latter was squared-off and barely projected beyond the eye, and thus lacked the supercilium effect typical of Bridled. Also unlike Bridled, the black loreal line was broadest at the eye and tapered sharply to the bill-base. The underparts were white, except dark remiges more solid and extensive than in Bridled, thus the pale underpart coloration did not appear to reach the base of the primaries.

**Identification tips:** tropical seas tend to be highly saline and green-blue in colour, making the upperparts of Bridled Tern seem darker than in reality. It is therefore best to concentrate on invariable field characters—size, structure, flight, the shape of the loreal line, and the pattern on the under primaries—when separating Bridled and Sooty Terns; see Malling Olsen & Larsson (1995) and Shirihai *et al.* (1996a).

**Commentary:** my original sketches of the first Eilat bird depict the loreal character diagnostic of Sooty Tern, a character which only came to light in the mid-1990s.

**SAUNDERS'S TERN** *Sterna saundersi*

north-west Indian Ocean and seas around Arabia

**First Israeli record:** adult (probably third-summer or older) from 12–25 June 1988, Eilat.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** adult (probably second-summer or older) at same location on 25 June 1989; also seen by B. Laird and other European birders.

**Other regional records:** breeds Arabia; vagrant or very rare northern Red Sea (Goodman & Meininger 1989, Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** June–July 1988 was truly remarkable for terns at Eilat, with several Lesser Crested and Caspian *Sterna caspia*, single Crested *S. bergii* and Arctic, dozens of Bridled, and 100s of Common and Little *S. albifrons* present daily. Variable numbers of White-cheeked and all three *Chlidonias* were also seen. The shallow salt pans harboured roosting terns at night and in the hottest part of the day. I checked the flocks every few days and, on 12 June, found an adult Saunders's Tern among a mixed group of Little and White-cheeked Terns. It proved quite obliging, even displaying its wing pattern by stretching its wings before taking off. Although it left the salt pans after an hour or so, it stayed at Eilat another 13 days.

**Distinguishing characters:** the upperparts were almost concolorously grey, appearing paler and duller than the silvery upperparts of the nearby Little Terns. The even-toned upperwing, mantle/scapulars, rump/uppertail-coverts and tail gave a smooth impression akin to White-cheeked, although the streamers were clearly whiter than the rest of the tail. The white forehead patch was squarer and neater than in Little: its upper border was near-straight and higher up the head, meeting the black crown at eye-level. There was no supercilium, and the black lores were broader than on Little (effectively reducing the white). When folded, the wings showed a relatively broad black area on the outerwing, principally formed by three solid black outer primaries; beyond the tertials almost seven primaries were fully exposed (four grey inner primaries and three black outer primaries). In flight, this combination formed a triangular-shaped black outerwing contrasting strongly with the rest of the wing. The white underparts appeared dirtier than in Little, due to a pale greyish wash. A side-by-side comparison demonstrated that its pale green-brown legs were darker and extremely short. The bill was orangy yellow with an ill-defined dark tip—Little Terns have paler, purer yellow bills. The lack of any vestiges of immaturity in the plumage, including the flight feathers, suggest it was a third-summer or older (see below).

**Identification tips:** Malling Olsen & Larsson (1995) describe intermediate-looking birds within Saunders's breeding range and my own studies of second-summer Little Terns overwintering at Eilat demonstrates that they can appear immature to a varying degree. Least-advanced second-summer Littles often have three dark outer primaries (instead of the



Saunders' Tern  
*Sterna saundersi*  
(left two) and Little  
Tern *S. albifrons*  
(right two).  
Impression of the  
first record by  
James P. Smith.



Plates 16 & 17. First-winter Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*, Eilat, November 1985. (Hadoram Shirihi).



two typical of adults) and can retain a whiter forehead and white-mottled forecrown, creating a less contrasting black-and-white head pattern; their bare parts can also be little-advanced, e.g. the legs may still be brownish. Some second-summer Little have a grey tinge to the centre of the rump/uppertail-coverts, although this and the uppertail are still whiter than the rest of the upperparts. Some second-summer Little can possess a range of Saunders's-like characters complicating the separation of the two species to the extent that most field characters are age-related. Only full adults (i.e. mainly third-summers or older) displaying a typical combination of diagnostic characters can be assigned to Saunders's with any certainty. First-summers may be indistinguishable: I see 100s of such birds at Eilat each summer—most of which must be Little—all of which are show some grey on the centre of the rump/uppertail-coverts.

**Commentary:** the need for further study of Saunders's Tern is more pressing than for any other species of tern found in the region.

**AFRICAN COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia roseogrisea*

Africa and southern Middle East

**First Israeli record:** one on 29 December 1979, Eilat.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** at least five at Eilat in 1981–1989, all in winter, including 2–3 in 1981–1982 and 1984–1985, and one in 1988–1989 seen by B. Laird and other European birders; photographed. Most recent record is one on 19 October 1997, Eilat (HS).

**Other regional records:** breeds west and south Arabia, where expanding range; vagrant north to Bahrain (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** I have seen this species at Eilat on several occasions since finding the first, coincidentally on the same day that I watched the country's first Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*. The record went unconfirmed for nine years, due to a lack of suitable comparative reference material. Bill Laird and I finally resolved the issue in 1988, through study of an identical-looking bird at Eilat and comparison of photographs with skins at the Natural History Museum, Tring.

**Distinguishing characters:** closely resembled Collared Dove *Streptopelia decacoto* but, at the same time, quite different in certain respects, being marginally smaller, more slender and with a strikingly shorter tail. Close scrutiny revealed the plumage to be subtly different to that of Collared. Its uniform head was paler, tinged pinker, and markedly different from the upperparts and upperwing-coverts, which were sandy-brown and rather warm; the upperwing-coverts were scaly-looking, with paler fringes. Collared's upperparts appeared relatively cold and uniform by comparison. A pinkish grey wash to the chest and flanks contrasted with the paler, whitish grey tone of the rear-body and vent; such contrast is almost lacking in Collared. When at rest, the black-and-white neck-ring appeared broader than in Collared and of varying width, broadening on the neck-sides (Collared's neck-ring is of equal width throughout). The spread tail in flight presented a more contrasting pattern than is usual in Collared: the feather-centres were darker, or blackish, and the fringes whiter. The legs were reddish pink. Compared to Collared, the whitish eye-ring was more prominent and its deep red iris brighter.

**African Collared Dove** *Streptopelia roseogrisea* (left) and **Collared Dove** *S. decacoto* (right). Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.



**Identification tips:** African Collared Dove's short tail is a result of the following: the distance between the tail-tip and wingtips is equal to, or shorter than, the primary projection (the reverse is true in Collared). It has also become apparent that African Collared Dove's head is more uniform than Collared's, and lacks the paler forehead of that species. Some African Collared Doves have a small dusky patch immediately in front of the eye. Confusion is also possible with the so-called Barbary Dove, which is a frequent escape in the region. The illustration of African Collared Dove in Snow & Perrins (1998) is very accurate.

**Commentary:** the delay involved in the confirmation of the first Eilat record demonstrates that African Collared Dove identification urgently requires further research, in common with other *Streptopelia* species in East Africa.

**Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**RUFIOUS TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia orientalis*

central and southern Asia

**First Israeli record:** juvenile *meena* on 4 September 1984, Eilat. Trapped and photographed in the hand; also seen by several European birders.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one *meena* on 3 November 1996, Hula Valley (D. Alon); one at Kefar Ropin on 19 November 1998 (J. P. Smith, S. Lerman).

**Other regional records:** very scarce passage migrant eastern Middle East, e.g. Iran and Oman; probably overlooked rest of Persian Gulf and Arabia; one record Egypt (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** whilst checking the ringing station's mist-nets, a turtle dove which had been feeding unobtrusively on the ground was flushed into a net. Even before I extracted it from the net, the bird struck me as interesting, being apparently as dumpy as a pigeon and darker than even the darkest Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* we had ringed. I was already entertaining the possibility that I had caught a Rufous Turtle Dove.

**Distinguishing characters:** clearly larger and fuller-bodied than Turtle Dove, with an unmistakably pigeon-like jizz. Generally duskier than Turtle on the upperparts and chest, with a mixture of juvenile and fresh first-winter (i.e. adult-like) feathers; the wing-coverts, scapulars and tertials possessed the large, rounded and well-defined dark (juvenile) and solid black (adult) feather-centres diagnostic of Rufous Turtle Dove, with contrasting rufous and buff fringes. The grey panel on the outerwing was much-reduced compared to Turtle. It had a prominent slate-grey rump and uppertail-coverts, and was brownish from the mantle to the nape. Unlike Turtle Doves of a similar age, its primaries and primary-coverts had pure black centres; the primaries had sharply demarcated narrow rufous fringes and the primary-coverts virtually no pale tips. The bare orbital ring was narrow and poorly developed, making the eye appear smaller than in Turtle. Finally, its measurements included a wing-length of 204 mm and a tail-length of 140 mm.



Plate 18. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, Eilat, 19 September 1985. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shiriha).



Plate 19. Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*, Eilat, May 1993. (Hadoram Shiriha).



Plate 20. Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* (probably *rama*), Eilat, September 1984. (Hadoram Shirihai).



Plate 21. First-winter Green Warbler *Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus*, Eilat, 27 October 1987. The first Israel record. (Hadoram Shirihai).

**Identification tips:** the commonest race of Turtle Dove in Israel—*arenicola*—is also the closest in plumage to *meena* Rufous Turtle Dove (Roselaar in Cramp 1985, Shirihai 1996). Fortunately, the identification of Rufous Turtle Dove has now been covered very well by Hirschfeld (1992) and Jännes (1995); additional information is presented in Shirihai *et al.* (1996a).

**Commentary:** Rufous Turtle Dove is one of the Asiatic species most likely to reach Israel. It is almost certainly overlooked there and other Middle East countries.

**ORIENTAL CUCKOO** *Cuculus saturatus*

Asia

**First Israeli record:** juvenile on 17 August 1985, Eilat. Trapped with M. Gellert and A. Rothschild; photographed in the hand.

**Other regional records:** breeding range reaches western Russia, but the Eilat bird is the only other Western Palearctic occurrence (Snow & Perrins 1998). No other Middle East records (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** shortly after the autumn 1985 ringing season had started in earnest, I found a small cuckoo in the Kibbutz Eilat fields. Intrigued, Avner Rothschild, Merav Gellert and I strategically erected our mist-nets in an area of *Suaeda* bushes in the corner of an alfalfa field, which the bird was frequenting. It was caught within 30 minutes.

**Distinguishing characters:** although the biometrics of Oriental Cuckoo suggest that the species is not much smaller than *Cuculus canorus*, I had little difficulty detecting the size difference in the field. I also noted the short tail, which resulted in a shorter wing/tail-tip projection than normally found in *canorus*. In the hand, its wing-length was 189 mm and tail-length 150 mm, excluding all populations of *canorus* (Cramp 1985). Its shorter wing relative to *canorus* corresponded to the shorter distance between its innermost primary and wingtip (p8); the difference in length between the longest primary and the remaining, shorter primaries (Table 1) matched *saturatus* perfectly and had the effect of producing a more rounded wing. It was a juvenile and the upperparts were in active moult; the new grey feathers were distinctly darker than a normal *canorus*. Examination in the hand revealed the following characters, some or all of which may prove to be diagnostic of Oriental Cuckoo: tail more weakly patterned than in typical *canorus* of the same age, with narrower, neater and deeper V-shaped dark bars and purer, lighter rufous interstices; black bars on the underparts were proportionately broader than in *canorus* and shorter, broader, bolder and denser on the breast, appearing as mottling in the pectoral region; pale interstices tinged light cream-yellow; undertail-coverts richer ochre and almost plain, with sparse 'dot'-like dark marks; fore and



**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.

**Table 1.** Oriental Cuckoo at Eilat, 17 August 1985: distance between longest primary (p8) and remaining primaries (compared to *saturatus* and *cuculus*; from Roselaar in Cramp, 1985). All measurements in mm.

	inner							longest	outer	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9
<b>Eilat bird</b>	84	75	64	50	40	23	6	-	13	60
<i>saturatus</i>	85–99				36–43	19–28	7–11	-	5–12	50–68
<i>cuculus</i>	92–106				38–52	23–32	8–12	-	4–10	53–69

outer (i.e. part of the lesser-, the outer median- and much of the primary-) underwing-coverts very indistinctly barred or vermiculated dark and the greater primary-coverts were almost plain grey, the strong, dark underwing barring being virtually confined to the axillaries and inner coverts; fore underwing-coverts plain and tinged greyer than in *canorus*, providing a more noticeable contrast with the broad white mid-wing bar (created by the well-exposed white bases to the secondaries/primaries and the whiter greater-coverts); from below, the relatively short outermost primary-tip was equal to the third (white) distal bar on the inner web of p9 (apparently equal to the distal-most bar in most *canorus*); and the white on the primary tips was much narrower than in *canorus*.

**Commentary:** Oriental Cuckoo was more difficult to identify on plumage alone than almost any other species I have encountered. The Eilat bird could not have been assigned to *saturatus* without being trapped.



**Chestnut-headed Finch Lark** *Eremopterix signata* (left) and **Black-crowned Finch Lark** *E. nigriceps* (typical plumage in centre and atypical on right). Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.

**CHESTNUT-HEADED FINCH LARK** *Eremopterix signata*

East Africa

**First Israeli record:** adult male on 1 May 1983, Eilat (HS sole observer).

**Other regional records:** no other records (Shirihai 1996, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** In the early 1980s the north fields were outstanding for migrants and a main focal point for the handful of ringers working in Eilat. On 1 May 1983, while scanning a particularly productive stubble field, a male *Eremopterix* lark landed no more than 10 metres away. It took me wholly unawares being incredibly tame and obviously not belonging to one of the various forms of Black-crowned Finch Lark *E. nigriceps*, yet I had no idea what else it could be. The identification process took almost three years, despite the fact it was a highly distinctive adult male. In January 1986, following a visit to the Natural History Museum, Tring and through assembling relevant photographs taken in East Africa, I finally confirmed it as a Chestnut-headed Finch Lark. Subsequently, I reviewed the record for *The birds of Israel* (Shirihai 1996), by which time I had gained field experience of the species in Africa, as well as of aberrant Black-crowned Finch Lark.

**Distinguishing characters:** pure white patches on the cheek, mid-crown, nape and body-sides, enclosed by rich chestnut-brown, gave the bird a rather startling, even piebald appearance. The chestnut reached from the underparts to the throat and chin, passing through the eye and the rear of the ear-coverts to the crown. The upperparts were richly patterned browner (not uniform greyish sand, as in Black-crowned), with dark brown centres and sandy brown fringes to the mantle feathers and many scapulars; the upperwing feathers had darker, more solid centres and well-defined cream fringes, creating pale wing bars and an obvious tertial fringe.



Plate 22. Adult Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* (right) and worn first-spring Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus*, Eilat, January 1990. (Hadoram Shiriha).



Plate 23. First-winter male Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*, Eilat, September 1984. (Hadoram Shiriha).

**Identification tips:** the black-and-white head pattern of Black-crowned Finch Lark is rather variable; e.g., the black areas are often brown-tinged (based on personal observations of *E. n. melanauchen* in the Arava Valley (see Photograph C, Plate 11, Shirihai 1996) and on research undertaken in Ethiopia and at the Natural History Museum, Tring; see also Morgan & Palfery 1986). Black-crowned Finch Lark varies both individually and according to age; variation is most evident in the first adult-like plumage (i.e. after the complete post-juvenile moult), but some retain an atypical plumage during their first breeding season and may have a head pattern superficially similar to Chestnut-headed, although they still have diagnostically uniform upperparts.

**Commentary:** the Chestnut-headed Finch Lark seen at Eilat is apparently the sole record of the species north of its African range: southern Sudan south to Somalia, Ethiopia and north and east Kenya (Snow & Perrins 1998). The same appears to be true of the only other sub-Saharan passerine recorded in Israel, Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopicus* (Shirihai 1996, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**HUME'S SHORT-TOED LARK** *Calandrella acutirostris* southern Asia east of Afghanistan

**First Israeli record:** one from 4–14 February 1986, Eilat. Observed by many Israeli and European birders; photographed and tape-recorded; trapped and photographed in the hand on 14 February; retained as specimen (ref. no. X3853) at University Museum of Tel Aviv (Shirihai & Alström 1990).

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic records (Snow & Perrins 1998); vagrant eastern Iran (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** in late morning of 4 February, following several days of low pressure and strong easterly winds, I located a strange-looking *Calandrella* lark among up to ten Short-toed Lark *C. brachydactyla*. Subtle differences in its plumage, bill-colour and vocalisations, were sufficiently pronounced to eliminate the possibility of an aberrant Short-toed. I immediately informed the ringing station of the discovery. Although for the most part sceptical that the bird was anything other than a Short-toed Lark, the volunteers helped erect mist-nets on 5 February in the small field the bird was favouring. We failed to catch it, but gradually erected more nets each day the lark eluded us. Finally, on 14 February, when c. 30 mist-nets and a single clap net were in place, a dog flushed the larks into a net. Having caught the bird, I realised that the effort had not been in vain, as it displayed several plumage characters and a wing formula clearly different to those of any of the Short-toed Larks I had caught in the previous few days. Arkia Airlines agreed to fly the bird to the University of Tel Aviv, which maintained a cage containing other lark species, to permit further in-depth study, but the bird died a few days after its arrival. Photographs and tape-recordings of the unidentified lark were circulated to several experts on African and Eurasian larks, but no identification was reached. In 1987, I took the skin to the Natural History Museum, Tring, where, together with Peter Colston, I identified it as Hume's Short-toed Lark.

**Distinguishing characters:** the most important feature was the near-patternless head, an effect created by the virtually unstreaked crown and plain ear-coverts, and the almost complete absence of the dark eye-stripe behind the eye typical of Short-toed Lark. However, it had a more prominent dark loreal patch than Short-toed, with a bolder white supercilium above and behind the eye and very ill-defined in front of it (in Short-toed, the supercilium is equally clear along its length); the eye-ring was pale and indistinct/incomplete (in Short-toed, the almost invariably white eye-ring is both broad and complete). The bill was proportionately slightly longer than in Short-toed Lark, more slender and more obviously bi-coloured, with a pale yellowish orange base and a blackish culmen and tip (Short-toed's bill is horn-pink basally, becoming gradually darker on the culmen and tip). The rest of the upperparts were less heavily streaked than in Short-toed, with a stronger greyish tinge than most migrant Short-toed. It also lacked dark breast-side patches and had a virtually unstreaked breast (the reverse is normal in Short-toed). Its wing structure included a distinctly long sixth primary which projected almost to the wing-tip, giving a blunter shape to the wing (the sixth primary is much shorter in Short-toed). Finally, the bird's flight-call was a diagnostic sharp *trree*.

**Identification tips:** in addition to the characters already described, Hume's Short-toed Lark is markedly off-white below, with an often prominent buffish grey breast band; these two features combine to create a more white-throated impression than in Short-toed Lark. The two species may also be separated by their tail pattern when examined in the hand. For a full treatment of their identification, see Shirihai & Alström (1990).

**Commentary:** an Eastern Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* was also found at Eilat on 4 February 1986. This species has a similar range to Hume's Short-toed Lark, in the south-central Asian mountains, and it seems likely that the occurrence of both species was related to the strong east winds prevailing in the days prior to their discovery. Further work on Hume's Short-toed Lark, including a study of its ecological requirements vis-a-vis Short-toed Lark, is required.

**SMALL SKYLARK** *Alauda gulgula*

Asia east of Caspian Sea and eastern Middle East

**First Israeli record:** one on 28 September 1984, Eilat (Shirihai 1986a).

**Subsequent Israeli records:** ten trapped and at least five others seen autumn–winter 1984, Eilat (Shirihai 1986a); also photographed and tape-recorded (Shirihai 1986b). Now known to be scarce winter visitor east and south Israel, chiefly October–March (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** no recent Western Palearctic records outside Israel, Sinai and Kuwait (Snow & Perrins 1998). Breeds east Iran; rare winter visitor Arabia (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** shortly after dawn, while mist-netting in the Kibbutz Eilat fields, I noticed a pair of diminutive larks giving an unfamiliar monosyllabic call in flight. I saw the birds on several occasions over the next 14 days, becoming more curious with each sighting. When one landed near a mist-net on 14 October, I wasted no time in catching it. Its measurements eliminated Skylark *Alauda arvensis* and suggested Small Skylark. We kept the lark for 24 hours to confirm the identification and allow other ornithologists to see it. To general surprise, we trapped another six Small Skylarks in late October–11 November, and three more in January–March; in all, at least 16 birds were seen at Eilat that winter. With hindsight, I consider that my first encounter with Small Skylark was at Eilat in October 1980. My notebook mentions an aberrant, smaller sandier skylark, with a distinctive but unfamiliar flight-call. None of my field guides described any plumage or species like it, and it was quickly forgotten about.

**Distinguishing characters:** the small, compact and short-winged appearance was always striking and the hand examination revealed its wing-length to be just 91 mm. The primary projection was sufficiently short to be practically invisible. The wing also looked noticeably rounded, because the wing-tip was formed by the four longest, outermost primaries (rather than three, as in Skylark). In flight, the wing had a plain trailing edge (broad white in Skylark). Overall, the upperparts were paler and suffused buffish sand, except for a rather obvious rufous wing panel; the underparts were tinged pale buff (white in Skylark), with finer, well spaced streaking on the breast (quite unlike the relatively blotchy, densely marked breast of Skylark). The outertail feathers were sand-tinged, rather than pure white. The principal calls were a monosyllabic *prrrt* and *baz*, or *biz*, delivered with the staccato forcefulness of Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*; the buzzing call was usually given 1–3 times, with an interval of 1–2 seconds between each. For a more detailed description, see Shirihai (1986a).

**Commentary:** Small Skylark is a regular winter visitor to the eastern Israeli valleys, particularly the Arava; it probably also winters in the northern Negev (Shirihai 1996). The lack of comparative reference material explains the lack of records from Eilat before the mid-1980s. The species is a short-distance migrant, so its annual occurrence in Israel may be evidence that it breeds further west than Iran. It is interesting to speculate that such breeding grounds, if they exist, may belong to an undescribed subspecies; birds ringed at Eilat demonstrate subtle differences to the type-series (see Shirihai 1996).

**BROWN-THROATED SAND MARTIN** *Riparia paludicola*

southern Asia and Africa

**First Israeli record:** one *chinensis* on 6 May 1986, Eilat. Trapped with A. Ganz, M. Gellert, R. Mizrachi and A. Rothschild; photographed in the hand.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one (race unspecified) on 8 April 1989, Yotvata, south Arava Valley (R. Coles *et al.*).

**Other regional records:** apparently vagrant Middle East, e.g. Egypt and Oman (Porter *et al.* 1996, Shirihai 1996); elsewhere in Western Palearctic, breeds Morocco (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** c. 12,000 birds were ringed at Eilat in spring 1985, with ten volunteers manning the ringing station on most days. The number of European ringers dwindled as temperatures rose, leaving a hard core of Israelis, including Adi Ganz, Rami Mizrachi, Avner Rothschild and Merav Gellert. On 6 May, we were almost swamped by a large influx of Sand Martins *Riparia riparia*. The nets hadn't been open long when one of the volunteers reported an unusually small, dark bird. I knew it was Brown-throated Sand Martin upon removing it from the bag. That afternoon, we discovered that our description matched *chinensis*, an eastern race unrecorded in the Western Palearctic.

**Distinguishing characters:** tiny, with a wing-length of 91 mm. It lacked Sand Martin's breast band, having a dark throat; the combination of relatively short wings and paler grey-brown upperparts and throat assigned it to *chinensis*. On release, it joined a group of feeding Sand Martin and was lost to sight in less than 30 seconds.

**Identification tips:** the diagnostic characters of Brown-throated Sand Martin are probably invisible among large flocks containing both species of sand martin. Brown-throated Sand Martin is also likely to be confused with a recently described race of Sand Martin, *R. r. eilata* (Shirihai & Colston 1992), common in Israel on migration: *eilata* is small and often arrives in fresh plumage, when it possesses a blotchy brown chin and throat.

**Commentary:** experience of hirundines in Israel and Ethiopia leads me to conclude that it is impossible to accurately identify many individuals in large flocks, especially when two or more confusion species are involved and the birds are in rapid migration flight—as is normal at Eilat.

**BLYTH'S PIPIT** *Anthus godlewskii*

central and eastern Asia

**First Israeli record:** adult (or almost fully moulted first-winter) from 7–16 November 1987, Eilat. Also seen by B. Laird, the late D. Parr and others.

**Subsequent Israeli record:** one on 24 September 1998, at Kefar Ruppim, Bet Shean Valley (B. Granit); two wintering mid-January–21 February 1999 at least, at Ma'agan Mikhael (K. Mullarney, B. Granit, J. P. Smith *et al.*).

**Other regional records:** few other Middle Eastern records, most in UAE (Porter *et al.* 1996). Vagrant north-west Europe (Alström *et al.* 1991, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii*.

Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**Background:** the Kibbutz Eilat fields were full of pipits and wagtails on 7 November 1987. Crossing a field, I flushed a pipit that was neither Richard's nor Tawny *Anthus campestris* yet similar to both. My suspicions were aroused when it failed to call on taking off; I then watched it for 15 minutes, before leaving to tell Don Parr, Bill Laird and others that I had found a Blyth's Pipit. We did not relocate it until 16 November, but studied it in great detail for several hours on that date, allowing Bill to make a feather-by-feather colour sketch.

**Distinguishing characters:** appeared Tawny-sized when it landed after being flushed on the first occasion, but its jizz was more like Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* and its plumage was richer/bolder than Tawny and colder/greyer than Richard's. I knew these species well and checked for their diagnostic characters. I was surprised to see that the bird had distinctive characters of its own, and these played an important part in the identification. I eliminated Tawny on the basis of its Richard's-like pale, barely marked loreal area; narrow and short malar stripe with bolder malar patch; browner upperparts and warmer breast heavily streaked; narrower fringes to the tertials; and the underparts, especially the flanks, were warmer buff. Richard's was discounted as follows: relatively unmarked head, with a supercilium that appeared faded in front of the eye and both shorter and narrower behind it; relatively short bill, pointed and narrow-based; cooler greyish brown upperparts with fainter streaking; underparts more uniformly tinged light buff; compact-looking body; and short legs with a much shorter hind claw. The posture and flight-call—a short and slightly hard *chep*—sounded closer to Tawny than Richard's. Overall, the bird was a large pipit with a small pipit 'feel'. Having heard Per Alström's lecture at the International Identification Meeting at Eilat in November 1986, I was aware of the median-coverts character. I located one fully exposed adult-like covert showing the diagnostic well-defined, square-cut centre (the centre was not diffuse or triangular-shaped at the tip).

**Commentary:** this record is a classic example of how developments in identification can trigger an increase in the frequency with which species are recorded.

#### **BUFF-BELLIED PIPIT** *Anthus rubescens*

eastern Siberia and North America

**First Israeli record:** at least one (probably several) non-breeding *japonicus* on 4 November 1981, Eilat.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** small flocks *japonicus* winter 1981–1985, Eilat; other observers (from autumn 1984) include P. Alström and K. Mild. Now known as a rare to scarce winter visitor Arava, Hula and Bet Shean Valleys, chiefly November–March (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** Eilat occurrences apparently first confirmed Western Palearctic records: *japonicus* vagrant rest of Middle East, e.g. UAE (Porter *et al.* 1996); nominate *rubescens* vagrant western Europe (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** with no reference material to assist me when I found a peculiar, dark-looking pipit at Eilat on 4 November 1981, I assumed it was an eastern race of Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*. The bird certainly looked close to Water Pipit's Turkish and Caucasian subspecies, *coutellii*, which winters in northern Israel, but it was darker, daintier and its legs were paler. Several more dark 'Water Pipits' appeared that winter and in subsequent winters, but I got no closer to identifying them. In November 1984, I ringed c. 30 of the mystery pipits, establishing that they were consistently smaller and shorter-winged than *A. s. coutellii*, with darker-streaked underparts and paler legs. I again identified them as unusual Water Pipits, assuming they were of a small eastern subspecies. In September 1985, Per Alström examined my photographs and realised that they were the Asiatic race *japonicus* of Buff-bellied Pipit *A. rubescens*. Any remaining doubts were dispelled in November the same year, when Per and I ringed more of these birds at Eilat. At the same time, Krister Mild informed us that he had also seen and identified several *japonicus* pipits in Israel in December 1984. Subsequently, in winter 1986, Peter Colston and I examined relevant material at the Natural History Museum, Tring, confirming the identification (Shirihai & Colston 1987).

**Distinguishing characters (the following consists of knowledge gained through study of identically plumaged birds at Eilat in 1981–1985):** the identification process advanced on two complementary fronts—assessment in the field and examination in the hand. First impressions

were that the birds appeared slimmer and smaller than Water Pipit, recalling Olive-backed Pipit in their near-uniform but darker and browner upperparts, heavier-streaked chest, relatively prone posture (slightly more upright in Water) and reddish brown legs (black in Water). Separation from Water Pipit was based on: malar stripe and patch very prominent, well-developed and dark; white eye-ring conspicuous and complete, due to the almost unmarked loreal area (Water has a black loreal stripe that breaks the eye-ring); upperparts uniformly dark greyish olive-brown and virtually unstreaked; wingbars whiter and bolder than in Water; and breast extensively spotted and streaked with dark, creating more blotchy appearance than is typical of Water. The wings were markedly shorter than in Water: 34 birds ringed in autumns 1984 and 1985 had wing-lengths of 80.5–89 mm (Shirihai & Colston 1987). The flight-call was also diagnostic: a brief, high-pitched *zweep* or *tsitt*, lacking the shrillness of Water, but higher-pitched and sharper than in Meadow.

**Commentary:** until recently, it was thought that *A. r. japonicus* bred only in eastern Siberia, north and east of Lake Baikal, and wintered in Japan, China and parts of south Asia (Shirihai & Colston 1987). However, varying numbers have wintered in Israel annually since 1981, suggesting it also breeds in central Asia and elsewhere in Siberia (Shirihai 1996).



Eastern Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe picata* (left two) and Mourning Wheatear *O. lugens* of the dark morph in the Basalt desert of Jordan (right two). Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.

**EASTERN PIED WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe picata*

southern Asia

**First Israeli record:** *opistholeuca* morph (probably adult male) on 4 February 1986, Eilat. Observed with M. Gellert and H. Heldbjerg.

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic records (Snow & Perrins 1998): *picata* morph breeds Iran and winters east Arabia; *opistholeuca* may occur east Iran (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** a volunteer ringer—Henning Heldbjerg—asked me at midday about a ‘black wheatear’ he had seen near the salt pans. My mind was still concerned with the strange *Calandrella* lark that I had found earlier (see Hume’s Short-toed Lark), and I was tempted to dismiss the bird as a young White-crowned Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*. We went to find the bird anyway—which proved fortunate! The salt pans are not typical White-crowned Black Wheatear habitat but we found a young bird in the area Henning had been watching. While trying to establish if this was the same bird, we found a dark morph Eastern Pied Wheatear, a very rare opportunity to compare the two species side-by-side.

**Distinguishing characters:** clearly smaller than White-crowned Black and I estimated it to be marginally larger and heavier than Mourning Wheatear *O. lugens*. Its smaller size, broad T-shaped tail band and more extensively black belly (reaching just beyond the thighs) eliminated immature White-crowned Black. The possibility of it being a vagrant Black Wheatear *O. leucura* was eliminated by its small size and relatively slender bill, and by a number of minor plumage differences. The main problem was separating it from the dark morph of Mourning, resident in the Basalt Desert, east Jordan (Andrews 1994, Tye 1994), but

three differences were apparent: the remiges appeared completely dark in flight, save for a grey basal tinge on the underwing (Basalt Wheatear is extensively whitish or greyish on nearly all the remiges of both wing surfaces); the bird was in fresh plumage and probably an adult, yet there was no trace of the white-tipped upper primary-coverts normally visible on adult Basalt Wheatear at this time of year; and the black on the belly was clearly demarcated from the white rear belly (in Basalt Wheatear, the black usually extends further beyond the legs and gradually merges into the white vent, although this character varies individually and according to posture). The bird was appreciably stockier than Mourning and its habits were reminiscent of Finsch's Wheatear *O. finschii*: on landing, it bobbed up and down—bowing low and then standing quite upright—while frequently cocking and flicking its tail.

**Commentary:** further work is urgently required on the black-plumaged wheatear group, i.e. Black, immature White-crowned Black and the dark morphs of Mourning and Eastern Pied. For further information on the identification and occurrence of the two first-named species, see Clement (1987).

**PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella certhiola* eastern Asia and southern Siberia

**First Israeli record:** one on 25 February 1983, Eilat. Also seen by Y. Baser, A. Ben Dov, A. Ber, O. Horin and others.

**Other regional records:** no other Middle East records (Porter *et al.* 1996). Vagrant north-west Europe (Alström *et al.* 1991, Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** I found the bird in a lush alfalfa field. It was remarkably confiding for a *Locustella* warbler, sometimes walking fully exposed across the ground. Having been treated to excellent views, I fetched the other ringers and birders, including Oz Horin, Yaron Baser, Alon Ber and Amir Ben Dov, none of whom was disappointed. Trapping the bird was a very different matter: it flew into our hastily erected mist-nets twice, but freed itself each time due to the strong winds.

**Distinguishing characters:** the prominent whitish supercilium and warm reddish or orange-buff upperparts recalled Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. The crown and upper ear-coverts were dark—the latter effectively forming an eye-stripe—and emphasised the whitish supercilium; the dark-light-dark facial pattern even approached Moustached Warbler. There was a faint suggestion of a malar stripe, and the extensively pale base to the lower mandible



Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*. Impression of the first record by James P. Smith.

was pinkish orange. Solid black feather centres created bold streaks on the crown (narrow) and mantle/scapulars (broad); the rust-coloured back/rump/fore uppertail-coverts were unstreaked. The tertials were clearly fringed buff-brown, with small but highly distinctive white spots on the tips of the inner web; pale fringes to the median- and greater-coverts appeared as two narrow wingbars. The tail was tinged orange-brown and was dark, with densely packed crossbars merging toward tip, giving the impression of a broad, dark (at the third distal) subterminal band. All but the central tail feathers had whitish cream tips, resulting in obvious white tail corners; the dusker tone to the undertail made this even more noticeable from below. The juxtaposition of the paler (plain) back/rump area with the darker, streaked head, mantle/scapulars and tail produced a marked contrast lacking in Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*. The underparts were quite unlike Grasshopper: its breast and flanks were washed warm buffish olive and there was faint streaking on the breast-sides; the undertail-coverts had an indistinct scaly pattern. I suspect the bird belonged to the race *sparisimstriata*, from west and central-south Siberia, but it is impossible to be certain.

**Commentary:** vagrant Siberian and Asiatic passerines recorded in winter or early spring in Israel, e.g. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis*, are typically autumn birds (reverse migrants) in north-west Europe. Perhaps these species occur in Israel after overshooting their usual wintering destination (see also Green and Hume's Yellow-browed Warblers).

**BLYTH'S REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* north-east Europe, central Asia and northern Middle East  
**First Israeli record:** first-winter on 19 September 1985, Eilat. Trapped with P Alström, M. Gellert and others; photographed in the hand.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** singles trapped at Eilat on 6 October 1985 and 13 and 14 May 1986 (Shirihai 1996); both photographed in the hand.

**Other regional records:** apparently vagrant rest of Levant. Breeds north-east Iran; rare or scarce passage migrant eastern Middle East, e.g. Iran and UAE (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** to catch the first autumn migrants, e.g. Marsh *Acrocephalus palustris* and Olive-tree Warblers *Hippolais olivetorum*, the ringing station has to be operative in late July. Limited resources prevented this until 1985. Per Alström and Merav Gellert worked alongside me much of that autumn, which I look upon as one of the best. On 19 October, an *Acrocephalus* that immediately appeared different to the tens of Reed *A. scirpaceus* and Marsh Warblers was processed. After more than 30 measurements, it was confirmed as Blyth's Reed Warbler.

**Distinguishing characters:** a full examination established the bird to be a typical Blyth's Reed Warbler. Key measurements were: wing-length: 63.5 mm; tail-length: 55 mm; bill to skull: 16.8 mm; tip of wing =  $p7 > p9$  (=  $p4$ ) 5.8 mm; emargination on  $p8$  and  $p7$ ; notch  $p9 <$  secondaries 6 mm; notch  $p8$  (length = 11 mm) =  $p1$ . The primary projection was relatively short, with the primaries bunched at the tip. The upperparts were relatively warm and rufous-washed compared to typical adult Blyth's Reed (which is duller greyish brown), revealing it to be a first-winter. However, it was not as bright and rich rufous as first-winter Marsh or Reed, and it lacked the rusty rump possessed to a varying degree by both of the latter species. In addition, the entire upperparts were more uniform than in either of those species; the tertials and alula feathers had no contrasting pale fringes or conspicuous dark centres. The underparts were pale and relatively uniform, with a dirty buff wash on the body-sides. The head pattern was closer to Olivaceous *Hippolais pallida* than other *Acrocephalus*, with a short supercilium and more prominent eye-ring; the tip of the lower mandible had only a trace of a dark smudge. The legs were greyish flesh, tinged purplish, and the short claws (hind claw = 6 mm) approached Marsh in shape and colour.

**Commentary:** once the ringing station was established at Eilat, it was only going to be a matter of time before this species was recorded in Israel.

**BASRA REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus griseldis* Mesopotamia

**First Israeli record:** one on 20 May 1984, Eilat. Trapped; photographed in the hand.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** six 1984–1993: one at Sede Boqer, three at Eilat and two in Bet

Shean Valley; some photographed (see Shirihai 1996). Four recent spring records: three trapped Bet Shean and one at Eilat.

**Other regional records:** breeds Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia; vagrant Cyprus; no other Western Palearctic records (Snow & Perrins 1998). Passage migrant east and south Arabia; very rare rest of Middle East (Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** an exceptional array of eastern migrants was recorded at Eilat in spring 1984, including significant numbers of River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*, the eastern race *zarudnyi* of Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* and White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*. Much of southern Israel experienced a heatwave on 20 May, producing a remarkable landfall of migrants. I caught several *zarudnyi* Great Reeds, and another bird which I identified as *A. a. griseldis* using Williamson (1967). I found it difficult to believe that this smaller, greyer and narrower-billed bird, with whiter underparts and slaty legs, could be subspecific—indeed *griseldis* has been treated as specifically distinct since the late 1980s.

**Distinguishing characters:** compared to other large *Acrocephalus* species and subspecies I was familiar with, the bird was considerably smaller, with a wing-length of 81 mm and tail-length of 59 mm. It also had the diagnostic combination of long primary projection and a longish, slender slightly decurved bill (bill-length = 22.5 mm; bill-depth at front of nostrils = 3.8 mm). The upperparts, which were much colder and greyer than Great Reed, were rather uniformly pale olivaceous-brown, with the remiges and (especially) the rectrices contrastingly darker; the underparts were clean white-looking, with a cream-buff wash on the flanks. The supercilium was quite prominent, extending well behind the eye, and accentuated by a dusky eye-stripe; a prominent darkish loreal patch emphasised the distinctive eye-ring. The lower mandible was horn-pink, particularly at the base, and the legs were largely grey.

**Identification tips:** the species is described well in Pearson & Backhurst (1988), Svensson (1992) and Shirihai *et al.* (1995, 1996a).

**Commentary:** most of the 11 Israeli records of Basra Reed Warbler are in May, with the rest in mid-March–mid-June and one in September, a pattern of occurrence similar to that in east and south Arabia (Shirihai 1996). The high proportion of recent records; six since spring 1993, may be due to more than increased observer coverage: destruction of the southern Iraq marshes is apparently forcing the species to seek new breeding grounds. One present at Eilat for several weeks in spring 1998 is the only twitchable individual recorded in the Western Palearctic.

**EASTERN REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus orientalis*

east and south-east Asia

**First Israeli record:** one from 28 February–13 April 1988, Eilat. Found with B. Laird; seen and photographed by several other birders.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** one trapped on 2 May 1990, Eilat (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** no other Western Palearctic or Middle East records (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** the bird was feeding in the open in the reed-fringed canal that runs toward North Beach. Its shape appeared intermediate between Great Reed and Clamorous Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, and it had breast-streaking and white tail-corners. Later Bill Laird and I relocated the bird, and tentatively identified it as the eastern race 'orientalis' of Great Reed. It stayed until 9 March, when a tractor began digging an adjacent part of the canal, but re-appeared in the same place on 2 April. A few months later, I was able to confirm the identification at the Natural History Museum, Tring. This taxon has since been accorded species status (see *Dutch Birding* 19: 294–300).

**Distinguishing characters:** clearly smaller and daintier than Great Reed Warbler, with a noticeably shorter primary projection formed by c. seven closely bunched primary-tips. It had structural characters reminiscent of both Great Reed and Clamorous Reed Warblers. For example, the bill/tail seemed more slender than in Great Reed and thicker/squarer than in Clamorous. The upperparts were predominantly greyish brown-olive, with light olive-buff feather edges (mainly on the upperwing); the underparts were essentially clean white, although the upper flanks were washed buffish. The plumage was reminiscent of the greyish

Eastern Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



eastern race (*zarudnyi*) of Great Reed Warbler, the paler Arabian/south-central Asian race (*brunnescens*) of Clamorous Reed Warbler, and Basra Reed Warbler. Unlike these forms, however, the Eilat bird had shaft-like (i.e. fine) dark streaks on the lower throat and upper breast, and fairly obvious (albeit slightly worn) pale tips to the tail feathers. It was also separated from *zarudnyi* by its small size, slimmer build, shorter primary projection, longer more graduated tail, narrower (therefore longer-looking) bill, and grey legs; from *brunnescens* by its bolder, longer white supercilium, paler upperparts, longer wing, shorter tail, and shorter less pointed bill; and from *griseldis* by its much shorter primary projection, longer, deeper-graduated tail, and broader bill. In late February, it appeared to have slightly worn plumage—indicating that it had completed its moult in early autumn. In April, it looked even more worn. The plumage of Great Reed and Basra Reed would have looked fresher, because they complete their moult later.

**Commentary:** Shirihai *et al.* (1995, 1996a) shed light on the identification of large *Acrocephalus* warblers, while Svensson (1992) deals with identification in the hand. Nevertheless, the identification of this group remains complex and problematic for the unwary or inexperienced observer. Hybridisation is an additional factor to consider: I have trapped four birds at Eilat showing characters intermediate between *A. orientalis* and *A. a. zarudnyi*. These birds may have originated from a zone where the two forms overlap and interbreed (Shirihai 1996); such a zone may also be the source of the two typical *A. orientalis* recorded at Eilat. This (theoretical) phenomenon seems to apply to other east Palearctic vagrants, e.g. Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* and Chiffchaff *P. collybita tristis*. The case of Crested Honey Buzzard offers an alternative, simpler explanation. Very small numbers of birds belonging to species that winter in southern Asia appear to migrate west in autumn, i.e. through the Middle East to East Africa. The westernmost populations of some east Palearctic species may adopt the migration strategies of equivalent west Palearctic species.

**BOOTED WARBLER** *Hippolais caligata*

western Russia, central Asia and eastern Middle East

**First Israeli record:** first-winter (probably nominate *caligata*) on 14 August 1982, Umm Safa wood, central Shamaria Mountains. Found with Y. Baser and D. Zafir.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** seven birds 1983–1994, all Eilat: nominate *caligata* trapped in April and May 1985; *rama* trapped in May 1983, September 1984 and October 1988; *rama* overwintering December 1993–April 1994; one (race unspecified) March–April 1986; all trapped birds photographed in the hand (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** nominate *caligata* vagrant to north and west Europe and (probably) rest of Near East; in Middle East, *rama* breeds Iran and north Oman and winters south Arabia (scarce), but vagrant elsewhere, e.g. in Levant (Alström *et al.* 1991, Shirihai 1996).

**Background:** Yaron Baser, Dror Zafrir and I embarked on a ringing scheme in autumn 1982. One of our research sites was a wadi near Umm Safa wood, a natural Mediterranean pine forest. My interest was in several little-known plumages of Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*. As the day advanced, we moved our ringing site to the shade of the trees, and our aim on 14 August was to count the 100s of Great Tit *Parus major* using a nearby spring. The trees were full of feeding Olivaceous and Bonelli's Warblers *Phylloscopus bonelli*. At midday, I found a tiny *Hippolais* with a prominent supercilium. We watched it for some time, confident it was a Booted Warbler, but were unable to confirm the identification until the following May, when Yaron, Alon Ber and I trapped another Booted Warbler at Eilat, enabling Yaron and I to be certain that the Umm Safa bird was the same species.

**Distinguishing characters:** tiny—little larger than Bonelli's Warbler—and its overall impression was *Phylloscopus*-like. It was extremely active, making occasional flycatching sallies and sometimes hovering like a *Phylloscopus*. The most distinctive features were the rounded head, very short wings and long, whitish supercilium. It also gave harsh *chet* calls. The facial markings were striking compared to the numerous nearby Olivaceous Warblers. A whitish, buff-tinged supercilium ran from the bill-base to well behind the eye, ending abruptly and accentuated by a vague, shorter and darker, lateral crown-stripe. The lores were clearly pale, although a very faint, darkish eye-stripe ran from just in front of the eye and parallel with the supercilium before petering out. This emphasised the supercilium and the whitish eye-ring. The bill was very short and slender, and gave little indication of the classic *Hippolais*-like broad base. The plumage was relatively fresh, ageing the bird as a first-winter. The soft-toned upperparts were pale brown with a limited greyish cream suffusion, but also had a sandy-buff tinge (most noticeable on the rump). The tertials were less plain than in Olivaceous, having relatively well-defined pale fringes. The tail was square-ended and the outermost feathers were distinctly tipped and edged white. Below, the bird was white, with a subtle buff-cream suffusion on the breast/flanks emphasising the white throat and belly; the darkish alula produced a moderately strong dark-and-light contrast. The pale areas on the legs and bill were greyish horn, tinged buff-pink. It seems most likely to have been nominate *caligata*.

**Identification tips:** *rama* Booted Warbler is easily confused with *elaiea* Olivaceous Warbler and with several of that species' other, small Middle Eastern and North African races (see Shirihai *et al.* 1996b). I have ringed nine birds intermediate between *rama* and Olivaceous at Eilat (Shirihai 1996).

**Commentary:** several authorities now consider *rama* and *caligata* as separate species, but I prefer to follow Svensson (1992) and Snow & Perrins (1998), pending further study of the ecology, biology, vocalisations and DNA of the two forms.

**GREEN WARBLER** *Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus*

Caucasus and central Asia

**First Israeli record:** first-winter on 27 October 1987, Eilat. Trapped with E. Hansson, B. Laird, M. Leivo and M. Gellert; photographed in the hand.

**Other regional records:** breeds north Turkey and north Iran, but apparently vagrant rest of Middle East, e.g. eastern Arabia; vagrant north-west Europe (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** the ringing station's nets had been closed for the day when Mauri Leivo reported a wing-barred *Phylloscopus*. We went to relocate the bird, accompanied by Merav Gellert, Erik Hansson and Bill Laird. I immediately identified it as Green Warbler—a species I was familiar with in north-east Turkey—and set a net to catch it.

**Distinguishing characters:** instantly singled out as different by its extensive bright lemon-yellow coloration, including the supercilium, head-sides, eye-ring, throat, remige-fringes and wingbars. The plumage was fresh and rich in yellow pigmentation, indicating it was a first-winter. The upperparts were greenish olive, tinged grey, particularly on the crown and

especially noticeable in relation to the yellow face. Equally striking was the contrast between the olive-green suffused breast and the near-silky white belly, which recalled Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*; there was also a faint yellowish wash on the upper flanks and vent-sides. The bold wingbar on the greater-coverts appeared broader and more distinct than typical Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides*, and there was a suggestion of a median-covert bar. The head pattern differed from Greenish in its yellow supercilium (not whitish cream), prominent behind/above the eye but narrow and ill-defined in front, reached the bill-base (rather than the nostrils), and its eye-stripe was dusky (with no darker loreal stripe). The pale lower mandible—almost entirely pinkish yellow—drew attention to the broad bill-base. The greyish brown legs were paler than typical Greenish. Most calls heard, especially one resembling White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*, were Greenish-like.

**Commentary:** Svensson (1992), Snow & Perrins (1998) and other authorities—but not Porter *et al.* (1996)—treat *nitidus* as a subspecies of *trochiloides*. Following Jonsson (1992), I prefer to treat the form as *P. (t) nitidus* until further research suggests otherwise, especially as *nitidus* and *trochiloides* are comparatively easy to separate in the field. In common with the rest of the Levant, Israel does not experience reverse migration, by which many eastern species reach north and west Europe. It follows that species such as Green Warbler are vagrants to the Levant despite breeding a relatively short distance away. However, records of Asian vagrants peak in October–November in both the Levant and Europe (see Shirihai 1996).

#### CAUCASIAN CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus lorenzii* Caucasus

**First Israeli record:** one on 5 March 1983, Eilat. Observed with N. Nhary (HS in Ben Dov & Golan 1983).

**Subsequent Israeli record:** one on 31 October 1998 at Lotan, Arara Valley (J. P. Smith).

**Other regional records:** breeds Caucasus, north-east Turkey and northern Iran; apparently passage and winter visitor Iran and Iraq; probably no other records rest of Middle East (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** there was a huge fall of *abietinus* Chiffchaffs in the Kibbutz Eilat alfalfa fields on 5 March. Fortunately, I was with an extremely enthusiastic birder—Noam Nhary—who helped count the 100s of birds. I noticed a confiding darker chocolate-tinged bird, which permitted identification as *lorenzii*. Returning an hour or so later with Oz Horin, the bird appeared to have gone.

**Distinguishing characters:** clearly a Chiffchaff, but its plumage was strikingly different to that of the 100s of *abietinus* nearby, being very dusky and brown (see Commentary). The upperparts were slaty-brown—including the rump which lacked all trace of the greenish tinge

Caucasian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus lorenzii*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



found to a greater or lesser degree in most forms of Chiffchaff and its allies. The breast, flanks and vent-sides were a lighter and duller shade of fulvous, creating the impression of a white throat and belly patch. The flight and tail feathers never showed any olive-green coloration, but had dark blackish brown bases and very thin pale buffish fringes. The wings (including the tertials) looked concolorously dark, without the obvious pale fringes typical of some forms and plumages of Chiffchaff. The supercilium was long, prominent and exaggerated by the contrasting dark eye-stripe, and became wider and whiter from above the eye forwards but slightly buff behind it, whereas the opposite is true of most Chiffchaff forms. There was a conspicuous white eye-ring. The ear-coverts appeared relatively dark and brownish, mottled buff. It had a short-winged appearance compared to Chiffchaff, and apparently a shorter primary projection, while the tail looked proportionately longer and narrower. Both the legs and very thin bill were blacker than in Chiffchaff, but with an obvious yellow base to the lower mandible.

**Commentary:** there is still much to learn concerning the taxonomy and identification of the Chiffchaff complex but, through extensive study of *lorenzii* in north-east Turkey, I am inclined to regard *P. sindianus* (Mountain Chiffchaff) and *P. lorenzii* (Caucasian Chiffchaff) as specifically distinct, following Helbig *et al.* (1996).

**HUME'S YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus humei* southern Siberia and central Asia

**First Israeli record:** one on 12–13 October 1981, Wadi Haymann, near Mashabbe Sade, north-central Negev. HS sole observer.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** eight birds 1983–1993, mainly Eilat and southern Arava Valley in winter and early spring, of which four (one Jerusalem, three Eilat) ringed and photographed in the hand (Shirihai 1996). Most recent records: overwintering singles at Eilat and Yotvata, January–March 1998 (L. Evans, B. Horn, K. Mullarney, HS *et al.*).

**Other regional records:** probably (confirmed in Turkey and Arabia) rare passage migrant and winter visitor rest of Middle East; vagrant Europe (Alström *et al.* 1991, Porter *et al.* 1996).

**Background:** despite undertaking National Service in 1981, I continued birding, always carrying binoculars and, when a rifle was not required (most of the time), telescope. In October 1981, we were camped in a lush wadi in the Negev. Unlike almost everyone else, I considered myself fortunate to be there. Whenever time permitted, I took a short trail and in this way found a Yellow-browed Warbler on 12 October. I saw it on several occasions over two days and it always appeared very dull grey. As I had no field guides with me, I had to wait until my next leave before I could compare my sketches with the little comparative information I could find on the eastern and western forms of the species.

**Distinguishing characters:** my first impressions were of a tiny, generally dull *Phylloscopus* with an obvious supercilium and greater-coverts bar. The call was highly distinctive: a short, sparrow-like *tsuee-eeep*. Its plumage was much less yellow-green than Yellow-browed Warbler, a species with which I was familiar: the supercilium, cheeks, wingbars and underparts were whiter-cream, and only the remige-fringes were tinged greenish yellow. Due to their relatively pale bases and fringes, the greater-coverts bar was less obvious than in Yellow-browed; the rather faded median-coverts bar was formed by unconnected pale feather-tips. The supercilium appeared narrower and ill-defined in front of the eye, and the legs darker-looking than in Yellow-browed.

**Identification tips:** care must be exercised when separating *humei* and *inornatus* in winter and spring, as worn first-spring *inornatus* can appear surprisingly dull and bleached yellow. Although such birds are bleached much whiter/greyer, the only sure way to correctly identify these species at this season is to precisely describe the state of the plumage and check all other characters, especially vocalisation. Plate xx depicts a worn first-spring *inornatus* and a fresh adult *humei*. Note that differences in age and plumage make the former look dull and superficially similar in colour to the latter. For further information on separation of *humei* and *inornatus*, see Alström *et al.* (1991), Svensson (1992), Shirihai & Madge (1993) and Shirihai *et al.* (1996a).

**Commentary:** Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler is perhaps the only Siberian vagrant to be recorded in comparable numbers in Israel and European countries, but the ratio between *humei* and *inornatus* is far smaller in Israel. The former is an accidental or extremely rare overwinterer in Israel, whereas the latter is a very rare autumn migrant.

**AMETHYST STARLING** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* sub-Saharan Africa and south-west Arabia

**First Israeli record:** adult male from 5 July–14 August 1983 (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** breeds south-west Arabia. No other Western Palearctic records.

**Background:** the date palms at Eilat are normally devoid of migrant passerines in July, but surprises still occur. My reason for visiting on this particular day was to look for an Eagle Owl which was roosting in the area. Whilst scanning the topmost branches, I flushed an unmistakable adult male Amethyst Starling. The bird lingered until mid-August, but caused little interest, as I assumed it was an escape. My greater understanding of the occurrence of vagrants at Eilat now leads me to believe otherwise (see Commentary).

**Distinguishing characters:** its upperparts and head-to-breast area were an eye-catching iridescent purple-violet (or bluish magenta) and sharply demarcated from the white belly; the remiges were contrastingly black. The head was darker—especially on the ear-coverts and throat, the iris yellow and the short black bill had a yellow gape spot. It was c. 10% smaller than Starling *Sturna vulgaris*, and its flight was fast.

**Identification tips:** based on my experience of the species in Africa, the non-male plumages of Amethyst Starling are distinctive. The iris and bill are as in the adult male, but the head is buff-brown, with a finely dark-streaked nape. There are prominent pale tawny fringes to the upperpart feathers, and the white belly and buffish throat/breast are liberally streaked dark brown.

**Commentary:** a bird as colourful as adult male Amethyst Starling is certain to be a popular and widely kept cagebird, and the Eilat record was classed as probably an escape in Shirihai (1996). However, as the species is migratory and its Arabian breeding range almost reaches the northern half of the Red Sea (Porter *et al.* 1996), it is clearly a potential vagrant to Israel's Rift Valley: many Israeli records of African vagrants, e.g. Yellow-billed Stork, Pink-backed Pelican and Cape Teal, are also from the summer. Therefore, I now propose that this record be accepted as a genuine vagrant.



**Amethyst Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.



**Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius pallidirostris*.  
Impression of the first record  
by James P. Smith.

**STEPPE GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius pallidirostris*

Asian steppes

**First Israeli record:** first-winter on 20 November 1987, Eilat. Trapped with M. Gellert and others; photographed in the hand.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** 2–3, all November 1997: Yotvata on 1st (K. Mullarney) and (same bird?) 27th, and Km33, north of Eilat, on 22nd; four records late October–late November 1998, Rift Valley (J. P. Smith, B. Granit *et al.*).

**Other regional records:** passage migrant and winter visitor Arabia, chiefly in east and south but probably overlooked in Levant (Porter *et al.* 1996, Shirihai 1996) where just one record in Jordan, in 1994. Vagrant north and west Europe (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** I found the shrike four days after Israel's only Blyth's Pipit was last seen. It was perching on the metal poles holding our nets and had already killed one bird, so I scared it away. Fortunately, it didn't fly far, because I then realised it was different to our local Great Grey Shrikes *Lanius excubitor aucheri* (now known as Southern Grey Shrikes *L. meridionalis aucheri*). I felt sure that this pallid, long-winged bird belonged to a different form, and the other ringers helped me to coax it into a net. A full set of measurements is always recorded for any uncommon taxon, regardless of whether it is classified as a subspecies or a species, so we duly calculated the wing formulae and took a detailed description. The bird was confirmed as *L. e. pallidirostris*, the first in Israel. In line with current taxonomic developments (see Commentary), it is presented here as Israel's first Steppe Grey Shrike *L. pallidirostris*.

**Distinguishing characters:** appeared strikingly long-winged, compact and washed-out compared to *meridionalis*. The in-hand examination proved it to have an admixture of structural and plumage elements from both Southern Grey and Lesser Grey Shrikes *L. minor*, combined with a number of diagnostic characters of its own. The head was rounded and the bill proportionately slim (usually more stubby in Lesser Grey). The wings were long, with a long primary projection approaching Lesser Grey: nearly six primaries were fully exposed beyond the tertials. The wing-tip was formed by p7 and p8, and p9 was equal to p6, producing a more pointed wing than in Southern Grey. The tail was longer than in Lesser Grey. It was very pale above and below, to the extent that its upperparts appeared almost whitish grey. It had very extensive white in the wing and pure white patches on the scapulars (not found in Lesser Grey). A subtle sandy overtone was detectable on the upperparts, and the off white underparts had a pinkish buff tinge, strongest on the breast and flanks. The bird had a distinctive bare-faced expression, generated by the pale lores (which restricted the noticeably dusky mask to behind the eye) and the pale horn colour of the slightly dark-tipped bill. It had a faint supercilium (probably never shown by Lesser Grey) and completely lacked mottling or scaly markings on the head, mantle/scapulars and breast.

**Commentary:** I cautiously treated *pallidirostris* as a race of *excubitor* in Shirihai (1996), but Great Grey Shrike taxonomy has received much attention since and I now opt to treat it as a species, following the Dutch committee on avian systematics (CSNA) and others, e.g. Clement

(1995), Sangster *et al.* (1997), Wassink (1997) and Tenovuo & Varrelle (1998). My observations of *pallidirostris* wintering in Ethiopia and *meridionalis* (of races *aucheri* and *elegans*) in Israel also lead me to believe that the first-named form is specifically distinct. It appears that *pallidirostris* and *meridionalis* are as distinctive and well separated as *meridionalis* is from *excubitor*; a widely accepted taxonomic revision (e.g. Lefranc & Worfolk 1997).

**YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING** *Emberiza aureola*

northern Palearctic

**First Israeli record:** female-type on 13 September 1979, Eilat (Shirihai & Dovrat 1979). HS sole observer.

**Subsequent Israeli records:** first-winter on 18–19 September 1979, Eilat (HS & Ehud Dovrat); six first-winters 1980–1994: four (three Eilat, one Tel Aviv) in September and two (both Eilat) in October–November; adult male on 25 May 1982, Eilat (Shirihai 1996).

**Other regional records:** breeds Finland and Russia, vagrant north-west Europe, Egypt and Arabia (Snow & Perrins 1998).

**Background:** of all the species new to Israel in whose discovery I have played a part, Yellow-breasted Bunting is the last systematically but first chronologically. I was 17 years old and its discovery is still one of my fondest birding memories. In September 1979, Ehud Dovrat and I made a long trip to Eilat and Sinai. On the 13th we briefly parted company so that Ehud could take another look at a Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* (then regarded as extremely rare in Israel). I left him in the palm groves behind North Beach, and found the bunting in an alfalfa field north of there. Unfortunately, it was too late in the day for Ehud to connect with the bird. Five days later, I found another and this time Ehud managed to see it the next day. Our expedition had another lasting consequence: so impressed by the number and variety of birds I had seen, I moved to Eilat the following year.

**Distinguishing characters:** unmistakable due to its yellowish underparts, striking head pattern and small size. The heavily dark-streaked crown-sides appeared as broad lateral stripes, bordering a pale median crown-stripe above and a prominent cream supercilium below. There was an obvious dark spot on the rear of the ear-coverts, the lores were pale and the throat almost white; a very indistinct malar stripe was also noted. The predominantly yellow underparts were streaked dark brown on the breast (sparse and faint) and breast-sides/flanks (bolder), but the belly-centre and undertail-coverts were plain white. Dark brown streaks on the buffish cream mantle/scapulars gave the impression of bold lines, and the rump/uppertail-coverts were rufous and finely streaked dark. The outertail feathers were broadly edged pale. The median-coverts formed a prominent whitish wingbar, and a much thinner pale bar ran along the edges of the greater-coverts. The bill was pale, with an ill-defined darker ridge. The bird gave a *tzip* flight-call.

**Commentary:** Yellow-breasted Bunting's pattern of occurrence in Israel is not dissimilar to that in west and north Europe, in timing and numbers recorded (see Alström *et al.* 1991).

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# REVIEWS & Recent Literature

**Urban, E. K., Fry, C. H. & Keith, S. (1997)** *The Birds of Africa* Volume 5. Academic Press, London.

Another impressive and thorough tome in the continuing series which appears to get better and better, and is replacing the pioneering Mackworth-Praed & Grant as the continent's definitive ornithological reference. The easy to use layout and style are now well known and as good as any of the major handbooks. The maps are of particularly high resolution and the use of red for breeding ranges in this volume has made them clearer and easier to understand at a glance. The plates by Martin Woodcock maintain the high standards set in previous volumes, and the line drawings of birds, nests, displays and behaviours scattered through the text are particularly helpful. The inclusion, at the front of the volume, of a list and maps showing selected localities mentioned in the text is also useful.

This work does, however, highlight how little is known about some species and how much ornithological exploration and study is still needed. The time interval between this and the last volume was five years, hopefully we will not have to wait so long for volume six.

Rob Williams

## RECENT LITERATURE

Compiled by Guy M. Kirwan & Effie Warr

This review, which is produced annually, principally covers papers published in the West European literature considered to be most relevant to birders resident in the region. All were published in 1998 unless otherwise stated. Papers dealing with aspects of the following are usually included: status and distribution, breeding biology, taxonomy and identification. Papers co-written by more than two authors are referenced to the lead author's name alone. The compilers would welcome the submission of material for potential inclusion, preferably by sending a reprint,

alternatively the citation and a summary of the contents. These should be sent via: OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, U. K.

## Regional

**Clark, W. S. & Clarke, R.** Differences in tarsal length between adult female Montagu's and Pallid Harriers: an easy method to separate specimens. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 118: 52–54.

**Clark, W. S. & Schmitt, N. J.** Ageing Egyptian Vultures. *Alula* 4: 122–127.

**Clement, P. & Helbig, A. J.** Taxonomy and identification of chiffchaffs in the Western Palearctic. *Brit. Birds* 91: 361–376.

**Corso, A. & Clark, W. S.** Identification of Amur Falcon. *Birding World* 11: 261–268.

**Corso, A. & Gildi, R.** Hybrids of Black Kite and Common Buzzard in Italy in 1996. *Dutch Birding* 20: 226–233.

**Covas, R. & Blondel, J.** Biogeography and history of the Mediterranean bird fauna. *Ibis* 140: 395–407.

**Forsman, D.** Identification of Levant Sparrowhawk. *Alula* 4: 18–21.

**Jonsson, L.** Yellow-legged Gulls and yellow-legged Herring Gulls in the Baltic. *Alula* 4: 74–100.

**Kapanen, M.** Finland next? Spectacled Warbler. *Alula* 4: 14–15.

**Klein, R. & Buchheim, A. (1997)** Die westliche Schwarzmeerküste als Kontaktgebiet zweier Grossmöwenformen der *Larus cachinnans*-Gruppe. *Vogelwelt* 118: 61–70.

**Kossenko, S. M. & Fry, C. H.** Competition and coexistence of the European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* and the Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* in Asia. *Ibis* 140: 2–13.

**Leshem, Y. & Yom-Tov, Y.** Routes of migrating soaring birds. *Ibis* 140: 41–52.

**Morgan, J.** Wing moult in a passage Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. *Ringing & Migration* 19: 56.

**Morgan, J.** Wing formula of Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* from Israel—a cautionary note. *Ringing & Migration* 19: 57–58.

**Olsen, K. M.** Pale-headed great skuas. *Dutch Birding* 20: 238.

**Olsen, K. M.** Common Tern variation and pale bill-tips: a comment. *Dutch Birding* 20: 239–240.

**Preddy, S.** Identification features of Eastern and Western Bonelli's Warblers. *Dutch Birding* 20: 75–76.

**Sangster, G.** Trends in systematics. Purple

Swamp-hen is a complex of species. *Dutch Birding* 118: 13–22.

**Shirihai, H. et al.** Field identification of large falcons in the West Palearctic. *Brit. Birds* 91: 12–35.

**Tenovuo, J. & Varrela, J.** Identification of the Great Grey Shrike complex in Europe. *Alula* 4: 2–11.

**Valle, R. & Scarton, F.** Status and distribution of Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* breeding along Mediterranean coasts. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 86: 26–30.

**Votier, S.** Lookalike shrikes. *Birdwatch* 77: 31–36.

## Afghanistan

**Galushin, V. M. & Polozov, S. A.** Population status and breeding ecology of the Long-tailed Shrike (*Lanius schach*) in Kabul, Afghanistan. *Proc. 2nd International Shrike Symp.*: 45–48.

## Cyprus

**Godfrey, M.** (ed.) Cyprus Supplement. *J. Royal Air Force Orn. Soc.* 27.

## Egypt

**Ali, D. & Khalil, R.** Breeding behaviour of Kittlitz's Plover. *Dutch Birding* 20: 115–118.

**Provençal, P. & Sørensen, U. G.** Mediaeval record of the Siberian White Crane *Grus leucogeranus* in Egypt. *Ibis* 140: 333–335.

## Israel

**Clark, W. S. & Yosef, R.** Migrant Levant Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter brevipes*) at Elat, Israel: measurements and timing. *J. Raptor Res.* 31: 317–320.

**Court, L. et al.** (1997) Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* nest surveillance project at the Gamla Nature Reserve, Golan Heights, Israel: 1996 conservation report. *Vulture News* 37: 10–20.

**Powell, R.** Israel: kibbutz birding. *Birding World* 11: 397–398.

**Self, A.** Promised land. *Birdwatch* 77: 51–52.

**Wright, J.** Helping-at-the-nest and group size in the Arabian Babbler *Turdoides squamiceps*. *J. Avian Biol.* 29: 105–112.

**Yosef, R.** Migration of Red-backed (*Lanius collurio*), Masked (*L. nubicus*) and Woodchat Shrikes (*L. senator*) at Eilat, Israel. *Proc. 2nd International Shrike Symp.*: 5–8.

**Yosef, R. & Hatzofe, O.** (1997) Conservation aspects and former nest-site selection of the Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos negevensis* in Israel. *Vulture News* 37: 2–9.

## Jordan

**Khoury, F.** Habitat associations and communities of breeding birds in the highlands of south-west Jordan. *Zool. Middle East* 16: 35–48.

**Rifai, L. B. et al.** On the diet of the Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*, in northern Jordan. *Zool. Middle East* 16: 31–34.

## Oman

**Schaumburg, E.** Oman—det ny fuglemekka. *Dansk. Orn. Fore.* 92: 4–7.

## Saudi Arabia

**Seddon, P. J.** (1997) Resident houbara bustard populations in Saudi Arabia: do summer ambient temperatures limit distribution? *J. Arid Environments* 37: 551–556.

## Turkey

**Arihan, O.** Recent information on the occurrence of the Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* in Turkey. *Turna* 1: 10–15.

**Boyla, K. et al.** The status and distribution of Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* in Turkey. *Turna* 1: 24–27.

**Crozier, J.** East meets west. *Birdwatching* 100: 100–104 [account of birding in Turkey].

**Kirwan, G. M.** Ornithological observations on Karadağ, Konya province, Turkey. *Tr. J. Zool.* 22: 237–239.

**Kurt, B. & Arik, B.** First record of a fully albino Coot *Fulica atra* in Turkey. *Turna* 1: 31.

**Magnin, G.** Common Raven *Corvus corax* migration over Istanbul. *Turna* 1: 31.

**Székely, T.** The significance of Tuzla Gölü, Çukurova Delta for shorebirds: a concise progress report. *Turna* 1: 28–30.

**Welch, G. & Welch, H.** Results of a survey of wintering waterbirds along the Turkish Black Sea coast—16 January to 7 February 1997. *Turna* 1: 16–23.

## United Arab Emirates

**Hellyer, P.** Cattle Egrets using roads for navigation. *Brit. Birds* 91: 290–291 [observation in UAE].

**Hirschfeld, E. & Stawarczyk, T.** White Stork with Blue-cheeked Bee-eater in bill. *Brit. Birds* 91: 281 [observation in UAE].

**Richardson, C.** Birding in the Emirates. *Alula* 4: 136–141.

**Sheldon, R. & Launay, F.** Monitoring Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata macqueenii* distribution, populations and time of occurrence within the Abu Dhabi Emirate using a network of local rangers. *Bird Conserv. International* 8: 1–9.

## Yemen

**Clouet, M. et al.** Contribution à l'étude ornithologique de l'île de Socotra. *Alauda* 66: 235–246.

**Kirwan, G. M.** Additions to the avifauna of Socotra and Abd Al-Kuri, with notes on the occurrence of some resident and migrant species. *Bull. ABC* 5: 17–21.

# Around the Region

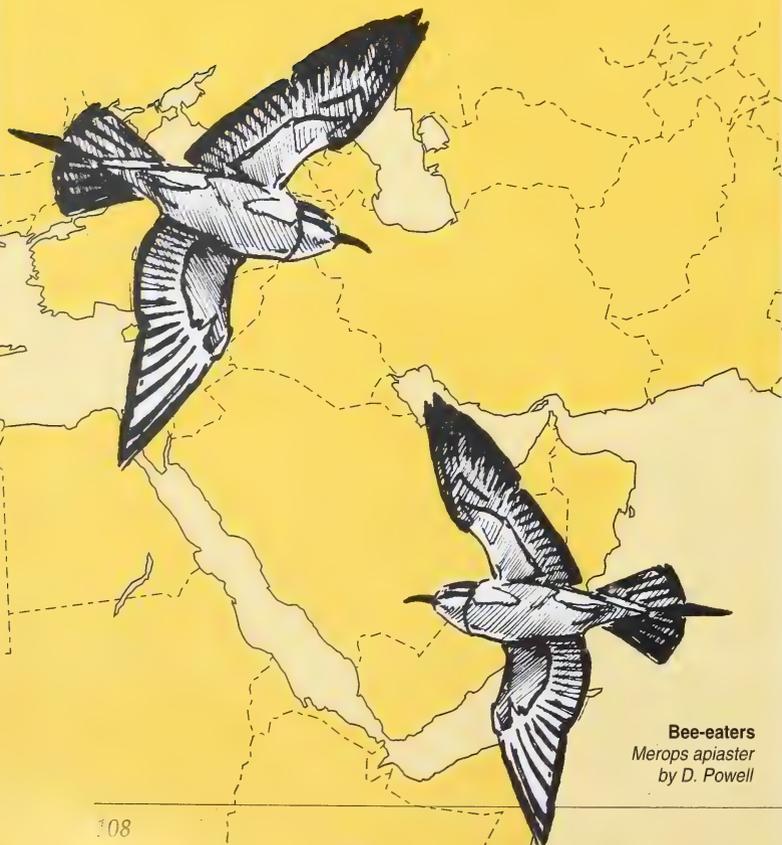
compiled by  
Guy M. Kirwan

Records in *Around the Region* are published for interest only; their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. Some records have been authenticated, including most from Cyprus and Oman, and these are usually indicated. All records refer to 1998 unless otherwise stated.

Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse 21 (2)* should be sent, by July 15, to *Around the Region*, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, U.K.

Seawatching in Oman in late 1997 produced the first to third country records of **Swinhoe's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* off Mirbat (at least 100 birds from 8–10 November and four on 3 December), and a single off Raysut on 2 December. Another, reported off Ras al Khabba on 2 November 1998, awaits ratification. A single **Jouanin's Petrel** *Bulweria fallax* was seen by light at Ras Shu'ab, Socotra on 20 November 1997 (Clouet *et al.* 1998), the first evidence that this species may breed in the archipelago, as has long been postulated. A pelagic out of Mukalla, Yemen on 31 October produced c. 70 Jouanin's Petrel, 12 **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* and two **Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*. Off Cyprus, 314 **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea* moved west off Girne on 6 October and an exceptional 2900 were counted off nine sites centred on Kyrenia on 25 October; large counts for the eastern Mediterranean. In Egypt, a **Leach's Storm-petrel** *O. leucorhoa* at Zaranik on 12 March was the fourth country record, and three **Gannet** *Sula bassana* were seen there on the same day. In south Turkey, there was an immature Gannet off Tuzla beach, Ceyhan on 12 April. A survey of the northern Red Sea islands of Egypt, which covered 45 of the c. 66 islands and islets between Hurghada and the southern Gulf of Suez, during 4–8 July, found recently used **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* nests and distinctive juvenile feathers at five sites on two islands.

A **Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* at Abu Kamal on the Syria–Iraq border on 7 May was unusually late. An **Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* remained near Sohar, Oman from 19 December 1997–12 March, whilst at least four **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*, a species only recently added to the Middle East list, were near Salalah on 29–30 April and presumed to be breeding. In Turkey, what was apparently the first dark phase **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* for the country was photographed at Mogan Gölü on 3 May 1997 (Boyla & Eken 1998). A further influx of **Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* into Yemen appears to have occurred recently: three were at Taizz sewage lagoons on 27 October and eight juveniles were at nearby Taizz dam marsh on 28 October, whilst two adults were at the now traditional site of Aden the next day. Further Yemen records of **Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* involved



Bee-eaters  
*Merops apiaster*  
by D. Powell



Plate 1. Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* Red Sea, Egypt, July 1998. (Andrew Grieve).

two adults at Hodeidah sewage lagoons on 31 March, one there on 1 October (*The Lammergeier* 21: 12) and up to two adults at Aden marsh on 4–5 April and a single there on 29 October. Up to four adult **African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* were also at Aden on the same dates, with one still present on 29 October. Only nine pairs of **Spoonbill** *P. leucorodia* were found nesting, compared to c. 20 pairs in 1983/84, during the Egyptian Red Sea islands survey. In UAE, the fifth record of **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* was of one at Dhaya on 21–26 November. A **Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis* was shot at Terkos Gölü, near Istanbul on 1 January 1997, one of three Turkish records in early 1997. A significant immigration of swans occurred at the same time with impressive totals of 1000 **Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*, 1200 **Whooper** *C. cygnus* and 50 **Bewick's Swans** *C. columbianus* at the Meriç delta on 25 January 1997, and elsewhere in the country there were 35 **Marbled Teal** *Marmaronetta angustirostris* at Cukurova delta on 9 February 1997 and a single at the Gökso delta on 8 February 1997. Winter records of this species are now rare, but were overshadowed by 121 birds counted

at Sultan marshes on 22 September 1997, one of the highest ever counts away from the south coast (Boyla & Eken 1998). In south Iraq, surveys for **Marbled Teal** in June–July 1997 found a total of 699 birds at seven sites and 56 nests at four of these (Al-Robbæ 1998). Up to three **Marbled Teal** at Sabkha al Fasl on 28 August–4 September was only the second record in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Three **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* at Khor Salalah, Oman on 30 April were unusually late. The maximum count of **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* at Burdur Gölü in 1997 was just 846 birds, on 16 November. More encouragingly, a nearby lake—Soğanlı Gölü—was found to hold both **Ferruginous Aythya** *Aythya nyroca* and **White-headed Ducks** during the breeding season (TWSG News 11: 10).

A **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* was at Khor Dubai in late November: the species appears to be becoming almost regular in UAE. Nearby, the ninth UAE record of **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* was at Ras al Khaimah on 18 November. An immature **Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* was at

Taiz sewage lagoons, Yemen on 7 October. Interesting raptor reports from Oman include the third records of **Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*, an immature at Muscat rubbish dump from 6 November 1997–12 March, and **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax*, at least three at the same place from 9–11 November 1997, and the sixth record of **Shikra** *Accipiter badius*, one at Ain Hamran on 6 November 1997 (with another at Wadi Hinna on 9 November awaiting ratification). The third **Goshawk** *A. gentilis* in Kuwait was found dead at Tulha on 19 October (*Birding World* 11: 420). In the UAE, the first **White-eyed Buzzard** *Butastur teesa* was reported at the Emirates golf course from mid-September until at least mid-October. Two **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina* were at Taizz sewage lagoons on 28 October; the species has only recently been recorded in Yemen. Two raptors have recently been added to the list of birds recorded on Socotra: a **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* was seen on Hadibu plain on 15 November 1997, and a total of seven **Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonorae* was seen on 14 and 16 November 1997 (Clouet et al. 1998). A juvenile **Sooty Falcon** *F.*

concolor was near Al Qutay, Yemen on 23 October.

In Yemen, up to 15 **Harlequin Quail** *Coturnix delegorguei* were heard calling in the Al Qutay and As Sukhna area on 24 October. In southern Yemen, two **Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* heard at Wadi Turbah on 6 April appear to be a minor range extension. A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* was at Khor Rouri, southern Oman on 29 April, a **Common Crane** *Grus grus* was at Mugsayl on 29 November 1997 and a single **Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo* was at Muscat sewage farm on 22 October 1997. The eighth record of White-breasted Waterhen in UAE was at the Emirates golf course on 21–23 November. The third **Houbara Bustard** *Chlamydotis undulata* for Cyprus, a first-year, was at Spiros Pool, Larnaca on 24 November (*Birding World* 11: 419).

The sixth and seventh records of **Great Stone Plover** *Esacus recurvirostris* were reported in Oman this autumn: singles at Daghmar on 2 November and north of Schnass on 5 November. A **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor* at Tuzla Gölü, Cukurova delta on 24 May 1997 was an unusual record for this well-watched Turkish site (Székely 1998). At Aden marsh, Yemen during 4–5 April, there were singles of **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* and **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* and up to 50 **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax* and 45 **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*. The fifth record of **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* in Yemen involved at least one near Al Qutay on 25 October, and there were five **White-tailed Plover** *Chettusia leucura* at Aden marsh on 29 October. Breeding of **Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* has not been recorded in Saudi Arabia, but one was seen injury-feigning at Fanateer Island, Jubail in early June. There was a record Omani count of 48 **Caspian Plover** *C. asiaticus* near Sohar on 4 September 1997 and the eighth record in Turkey was of one at Kulu Gölü on 29 July; the most recent record was of two at Bulanik in early 1991 (Kirwan & Martins 1994). Three or four **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* were at Kulu Gölü on 25 September 1997; virtually all Turkish records of this species are from the Central Plateau (Boyla & Eken 1998). The 5–7th records of **Spur-winged Plover**

*Hoplopterus spinosus* in Oman involved two at Sohar on 2 November 1997 and singles at Sohar on 19 December 1997–31 January and Barka on 8 February. **Red-wattled Plover** *H. indicus* continues to be seen at the species' only regular Western Palearctic site, Cizre in south-east Turkey. A **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* was at Hatta Lake, UAE on 6 November and an adult was near Al Qutay, Yemen on 25 October. In Israel, the first Israeli and second Middle Eastern record of **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*, a juvenile, was reported at Ma'agan Mikhael on 29 September, and, nearby a juvenile **Pectoral Sandpiper** *C. melanotos* was at Bet Shean Valley fishponds on 17 and 29 September, the fifth country record. A **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* was at Lake Qarun, Egypt on 8 March. The species is a scarce spring migrant through the country. Rarer was Israel's second **Pintail Snipe** *G. stenura*: one well-watched at Kfar Ruppim on 19–22 November, and ringed on the final date. A **Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* at Ain Razat on 1 December 1997 was the first record in Oman. Full dates for the third **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* in Oman and the Middle East were 7 November–19 December 1997 (see *Sandgrouse* 20: 78). Another, or the same, was (re) discovered at Sohar Sun Farms on 6 November 1998. More exciting was the first report in Arabia since 1986 of **Pectoral Sandpiper**: two at Hatta lake, UAE on 27–28 October. The first **Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis* in Oman, and possibly the Middle East (see Porter *et al.* 1996) was at Barr Al Hikman on 23 October 1997. The third **Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* in Oman was at East Khor, Salalah on 18 September 1997 and a **Grey Phalarope** *P. fulvicaria* was at Kfar Ruppim, Israel from early November to early December at least.

An **Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii* was at Zaranik on 12 March. There are few spring records in Egypt. The sixth record of **Little Gull** *L. minutus* in Jordan involved a juvenile in the Gulf of Aqaba on 24 October. Recent interesting gull records in Turkey include: single **Great Black-backed Gulls** *L. marinus* at Göksu delta on 11 February 1997 and Hirfanli Baraji on 14 May 1997, with four at Tuzla Gölü on 22 April 1997, and a **Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* in Izmir bay on 11 January 1997 (Boyla & Eken 1998).

Another Kittiwake was seen in Istanbul on 26 September. Additional results from the July survey of the Egyptian Red Sea islands included the discovery of 97 pairs of **Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii* on 13 islands, an increase on c. 50 pairs in 1983/84; 2,151 pairs of **White-eyed Gull** *L. leucophthalmus* on 12 islands and a total population estimate of c. 3000 pairs (50% increase on 1983/84 and representing c. 30% of the world population); 150 pairs of **Swift Tern** *Sterna bergii* with eggs, young or about to lay, at four colonies, the largest holding 125 pairs; and three pairs of **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons* nest scraping and displaying amongst a mixed tern colony on a small sandy islet, the first breeding evidence in this part of Egypt. The first reports of Little Tern were made in Yemen: one at Al Fazzah on 1 April with one at Qutay ponds and two at Hodeidah harbour on 1 October (*The Lammergeier* 21: 13). In the UAE, there was a **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* at Ramtha lagoons on 19 July, the fifth country record, and this was swiftly followed by the sixth record, one at Khor Kalba on 24 July.

In Yemen, a pair of **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles lichtensteinii* at Wadi Al Wagr on 2 April constitute a minor range extension. A flock of 130 **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *P. alchata* at Van on 30 July was the first record in east Anatolia and a range extension of c. 200 km, but one near Khor Dubai on 30 October was only the second record in UAE. A **Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus* at Abu Kamal, Syria on 7 May was a late migrant and the first May record in the country. Three **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis* were reported in Oman in late 1997: singles at Sohar on 4 November, Wadi Darbit on 6 November and Salalah on 9 November; and, in Israel, there was a report of an immature, of the race *meena*, at Kfar Ruppim on 19 November. A **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* at Paphos on 16 April has already been accepted as the first record in Cyprus (*Birding World* 11: 381) and a male at Aqaba sewage farm on 23 October was a rarity in Jordan, where there are very few autumn records. A total of eight **Jacobin Cuckoo** *Clamator jacobinus* was reported in Yemen this autumn: six calling near Mansuriah on 1 October and two near Bait al Faqih the next day (*The Lammergeier* 21: 13). The first record of **Alexandrine**

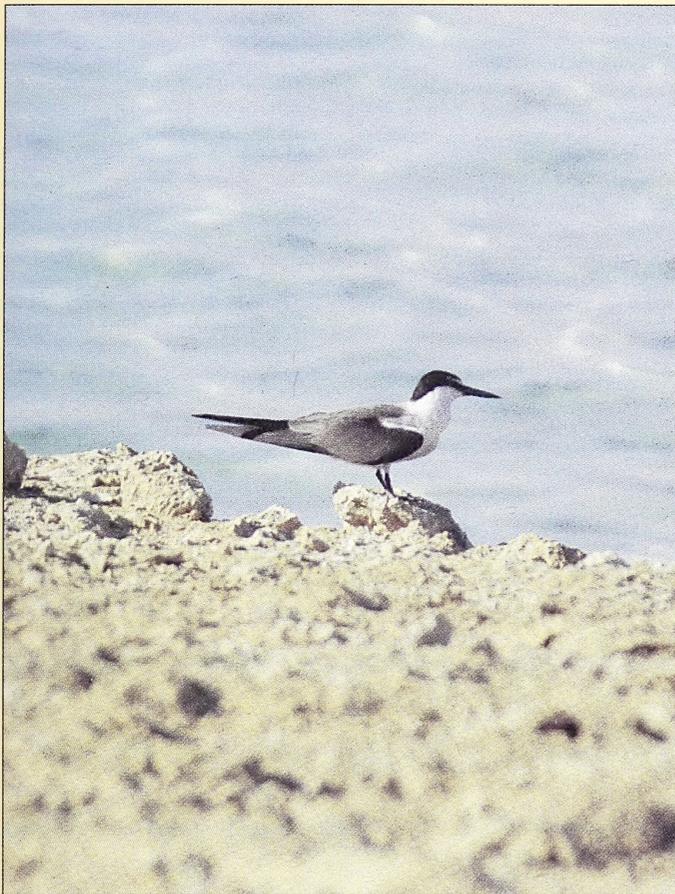


Plate 2. Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus* Red Sea, Egypt, July 1998. (Andrew Grieve).

**Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria* in Turkey—presumably an escape—was with eight **Ring-necked Parakeet** *P. krameri* at Ankara zoo on 20 February (Boyla *et al.* 1998). The seventh Omani record of **Nubian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus nubicus* involved one at Ain Hamran on 15 April, whilst the fourth and fifth records of **Egyptian Nightjar** *C. aegyptius* in Kuwait were of one north of Qaisat on 19 October and two dead at the same locality on 13 November (*Birding World* 11: 420). The 16th record of **Alpine Swift** *Apus melba* in UAE involved two birds north of Ras al Khaimah on 17 September, a **Little Swift** *A. affinis* was over Ramtha on 31 October, and the fifth country record of **White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* was at Ras al Khaimah on 22–23 October. A White-breasted Kingfisher at Qatif on 13 February was approximately the seventh record for the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. In Turkey, there was a report of a **Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* from Akseki on 5 August,

the first from this locality for a number of years and still one of the few records from the Taurus mountains.

Another record of **Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunnii* in Yemen was of two south of Al Abr and another at Gebelayn, both localities in the Empty Quarter, on 3 November. The flock of over 100 **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* was still present at Sohar, Oman until 24 April (see *Sandgrouse* 20: 79) and the third record in Yemen was of one near Al Abr on 3 November. The second **Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* in Oman was at Sohar on 1 January and may have involved one of the two birds involved in the first record, also at Sohar, on 31 October–1 November 1997 (*Sandgrouse* 20: 79), whilst at least three were reported in the same area on 5–7 November 1998. In Israel, there were 14 at Kfar Ruppim from mid-October into November, one in the Hula Valley on 18 November, and two north of Eilat on 22 October—mid-

November at least. Perhaps the most remarkable record of autumn 1997 in Oman was the first country and Middle East record of **Streak-throated Swallow** *Hirundo fluvicola*, an immature at Muscat sewage farm on 11 and 25 November. The species occurs from north-east Afghanistan to central India, and usually descends to lower elevations in the winter. Given the recent spate of reports from eastern Arabia, it is perhaps surprising that there has been only one previous record of **Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewski* in Israel; a second was reported near Kfar Ruppim on 24–25 September. Reports of **Olive-backed Pipit** *A. hodgsoni* in Arabia this autumn involved the fourth Kuwait record, at Jahra Farms on 29 October, and up to three in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 13–14 November.

An **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* was at the Emirates golf course, UAE, on 22–25 November. A **Cyprus Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* at Köycegiz Gölü on 16 April 1997 was probably the westernmost ever record in Turkey (Boyla & Eken 1998), whilst two **Pied Wheatear** *O. pleschanka* at Yesilce on 25 July may have been indicative of local breeding. The third **Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* in Arabia and second Omani record, at Dauka on 13 November, awaits ratification. From perhaps the same source were a single **Black-throated Thrush** *T. ruficollis* at Jahra Farms, Kuwait, on 20 November (*Birding World* 11: 420) and one, possibly two, in Safa Park, UAE, on 19–20 November. In the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia there were a number of interesting reports of **Acrocephalus** warblers, including **Moustached Warbler** *A. melanopogon*, discovered at three potential breeding sites (Jubail, Khafrah Marsh and Sabkha al Fasl), and **Clamorous Reed Warbler** *A. stentoreus* which was found nesting at Khafrah Marsh, only the second breeding population in Eastern Province. A male **Ménétries' Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea* at Paphos on 2 May has been accepted as the first record in Cyprus (*Birding World* 11: 381). A **Garden Warbler** *S. borin* was at Hodeidah on 1 October (*The Lammergeier* 21: 14). At Uludağ, one or two **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus* on 18 July are the westernmost record in Turkey and may indicate an expansion of its breeding range. **Yellow-browed Warblers** *P. inornatus* reported this autumn included one at Kibbutz Lotan, Israel, on 30 October

and one in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 13 November. A **Mountain Chiffchaff** *P. sindianus lorenzi*, the second Israel record, was at Quetura sewage farm on 31 October. Single **Red-breasted Flycatchers** *Ficedula parva* were at Petra on 15 October and Rahmeh on 25 October; the species is a rare migrant through Jordan.

A male **Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus* at Salwa pools, south of Doha on 16 March 1997 was the first record in Qatar. Two **Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor* of the race *pallidirostris* were reported in the Negev, Israel during 12–13 October, a first-winter was at Zohar Pools, Dead Sea on 23 October and others were reported at km 33 north of Eilat and Kfar Ruppim in late November. An individual of the same form was reported at Larnaca sewage works, Cyprus on 20–23 November, the first island record if confirmed (*Birding World* 11: 419). Following recent breeding records in Ankara, there was two, subsequently six **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* at Sirapinar, Istanbul from 22 June–1 July 1997 (Boyla & Eken 1998). A single **Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea*

at Al Baled Farm on 13 November was an unusual record for Palearctic Oman, and two at Al Wathba on 7 November was the second record in UAE. Up to 23 **Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer moabiticus* at Jahra Pool on 6 November was the second record in Kuwait (*Birding World* 11: 420). A flock of 60 **Pale Rock Sparrow** *Petronia brachydactyla* was in the desert near Al Urj on 24 October, the fourth record in Yemen. One of the most remarkable records of the period under review was the discovery of at least nine **Yemen Serin** *Serinus menachensis* at Tawi Atair, in south Oman. Birds were recorded on 30 October–11 November 1997 and photographed on 29–30 April when nests were found. Up to 12 were in the same area on 9 November. This constitutes the first record in Oman and an extraordinary range extension from extreme south-west Saudi Arabia and the former North Yemen. There are two pre-1950 records from the former South Yemen, both Meinertzhagen specimens (Martins *et al.* 1996), which must, therefore, be subject to doubt. In eastern Turkey, up to seven **Mongolian Trumpeter Finch**

*Bucanetes mongolicus* and two **Trumpeter Finch** *B. githaginezrs* were at Doğubayazit on 31 July. A major influx of **Hawfrnch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was reported in Israel: over 300 were present in Jerusalem in November with more than 40 ringed at Beer Sheva and small numbers reaching the Eilat area. Two first country records in Jordan were reported in autumn 1998: two **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* at Safawi Camp on 25 September (with a third bird on 27 September) and a male **Red-headed Bunting** *Emberiza bruniceps* at the same locality on 24 September. Three **Rock Bunting** *E. cia* were reported at Kyrenia harbour on 10 November, the seventh record (and first since 1974) for Cyprus if confirmed (*Birding World* 11: 419). A **Rustic Bunting** *E. rustica* was photographed at Eilat sewage pools on 8 November.

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