
SANDGROUSE

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ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST,
CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

OSME



ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

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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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 45 projects since the Conservation & Research Fund was set up in 1982.

MEBirdNet Email Discussion Group

This is an e-mail mailing list (moderated by OSME) that discusses birds and birdwatching in the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. Subjects include research, conservation, bird news, recent records, identification, requests for information and exchange of information. To join the mailing list, send an empty e-mail to: MEBirdNet-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

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EDITORIAL

With the support of OSME Council, I have revised the *Guidelines for Authors for Sandgrouse*. These are located inside the back cover and will apply from issue 28 (1) onwards. I feel the revision is worthwhile on two main grounds: firstly, the predominant use of e-mail between the editor, authors and referees should be reflected in the *Guidelines* and secondly, the previous general rules concerning abbreviations and how they are presented, though of established pedigree, had not kept in step with changing practice elsewhere (Indeed, many submitted papers accorded more with modern practice). My main aim was to reduce the complexity for authors, particularly for those whose first language is not English.

Mike Blair

Cover Photograph:

(Greater) Spotted Eagle
Aquila clanga taken by
Hadoram Shirihai at Hola,
Israel, October 2002.

NOSME News



CORRIGENDA

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On p. 147, the caption to Plate 1 erroneously stated that the Cape Gannet *Sula capensis* was photographed on 14 March 2003, when the correct date was 14 March 2004 (as stated in the text). On p. 150 it was stated that the specimen of Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, shot by Härms in March 1901, had not been located in the Berlin museum. In fact, a more thorough search for the specimen (amongst all *Calidris* species) in that institution, by F. Steinheimer (*in litt* October 2004), has subsequently failed to locate the bird. It is plausible that the specimen is held at one of several other museums, in Bonn, Moscow, St Petersburg or Tartu, all of which hold material from either Härms or his travelling companion, Zarudny. Thus far, it is has not been possible to check further for the *C. tenuirostris* specimen.

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The following reference, 'David, N. and Gosselin, M. (2002). The grammatical gender of avian genera. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 122: 257–282' inexplicably was incorrectly phrased as 'Normand, D. and Gosselin, M. (2002)...' not once but twice, both in the texts and in the reference lists on pages 73 and 82. The editor's apologies of course not only go to the authors of the papers, 'Ornithological observations from the Lebanon' and 'Phenology and behaviour of the Common Swift *Apus apus* in Israel, but also in abject form to Normand David for presuming to call him David Normand.

SUMMER MEETING 30 JULY 2005

Despite recent events in London, around 30 members, including the redoubtable Stan Howe, made the OSME Summer Meeting a great success. All the talks were excellent, Chris Bowden opening this session by updating us on about the tiny remnant population of Northern Bald Ibis near Palmyra in Syria. He explained that permission had now been given to fit some of the five remaining birds with radio transmitters in order to locate their wintering grounds, but so far the birds had managed to avoid being caught by the project team! Chris also showed a segment from a BBC World TV documentary about the Syrian birds and conservation in Syria. Richard Porter gave a short update on his work in training Iraqi conservation staff. The courses had taken place in Jordan and Syria with the backing of BirdLife International as part of a wider conservation initiative planned for when political stability returns to Iraq. Then Jose Tavares spoke eloquently about research in Turkey into the Caucasian Black Grouse, a data-deficient species, one of only two such in Europe. The sandwich lunch gave plenty of time for conversation and the chance to buy books and recordings from the WildSounds stand. After the Annual General Meeting, Mike Jennings gave an update on the forthcoming Arabian Breeding Bird Atlas. In particular he spoke about recent fieldwork that he had undertaken in Yemen. After this, Tim Loseby gave an excellent talk on an autumn visit to Jordan. Finally most people remained for a refreshing drink and more conversation.

2006 SUMMER MEETING DATE ANNOUNCED

The next OSME Summer Meeting will be held on Saturday 29 July 2006. Full details and Central London venue will be announced in the spring.

COUNCIL CHANGES

After ten years of service Tony Morris has stood down from Council. A familiar personality on our stand and at the Summer Meeting, Tony served as our Secretary from 1995–2001 and has since been an ordinary member of Council. We thank him for a decade of dedication!

NEW COUNTRY CONTACTS

We are pleased to welcome the following people who have agreed to act as country contacts where they live. They are happy to hear from visiting OSME members.

Georgia: Ramaz Gokhelashvili, Georgian Centre for the Conservation of Wildlife, Ambrolaury Street 4/2, 380060 Tblisi, Georgia. e-mail ramaz@gccw.org, website <http://www.gccw.org>

Kuwait: Brian Foster, The English School, Fahaheel, PO Box 7209, 64003 Fahaheel, Kuwait. e-mail Brian_Foster_uk@yahoo.co.uk

APPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT SUPPORT ARE INVITED

OSME welcomes applications for grants of up to UK£500 from its Conservation and Research Fund, to support research projects in the region. Projects should be directed to one or more of the following ornithological subject areas:

- i) Investigating the status of threatened or near-threatened species.
- ii) Attempting to further knowledge of existing Important Bird Areas by undertaking work such as breeding censuses and out-of-season visits for systematic counts.
- iii) Investigating potential new Important Bird Areas or little-known areas.
- iv) Conducting ecological studies of little-known species.
- v) Educational projects.

Priority will be given to projects involving nationals from the region. Applicants are required to write up the results of their project for possible publication in *Sandgrouse*. For further information contact Mrs Pat Bartley via the contact address at the bottom of the front inside cover or by e-mail using the following email address: grants@osme.org

Keith Betton

NEWS & INFORMATION

compiled by Dawn Balmer & Guy M. Kirwan

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 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.

ARABIA

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia

The ABBA project is nearing completion but information on the distribution and breeding birds throughout the Arabian Peninsula is still sought. Information on breeding birds is especially sought for the more remote corners of Arabia and for little known species but data on even the most common birds is still

welcome. Notes on habitat, food taken in Arabia are also much needed. The atlas will also have an historical context so old records not yet reported are especially welcome. Those visiting the Arabian Peninsula or are resident there are asked to submit details of their observations to the project. The most interesting reports of the year will be mentioned in the next issue of the project newsletter the Phoenix (ISSN 0268-487X), due out in January 2006 and new breeding species for Arabia will be written up in detail. Information on what details are required and how to submit records, including the relevant forms, can be obtained from the ABBA website (<http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/arabian.birds/>). Records can be sent in at any time but preferably by the end of summer, when most species will have completed breeding. After publication of the atlas it is intended that the ABBA database and the Phoenix will continue indefinitely, providing a

resource to anyone needing information on Arabian birds and their habitats. (Source: Mike Jennings)

AZERBAIJAN

Fieldguide to birds of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan Ornithological Society (AOS), BirdLife International affiliate in Azerbaijan, has recently published the first colour fieldguide for birds in Azerbaijan "*Birds of Azerbaijan*". This book includes more than 150 colour illustrations including some 120 commoner species and the 23 rare and endemic species. Birds are grouped by habitat. This 'easy-to-read field guide gives a short descriptive text for each species, as well as information on the country's Important Bird Areas (IBAs), the BirdLife International programme in Azerbaijan (with a small map and brief description of 52 national IBAs), and a description of the most important habitats in the country. The text is written in Azeri, with bird names also given in Russian alongside their scientific name. Publication of this 76 page (A6 sized) book was made with the generous support of the RSPB (UK), Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, Directorate for Nature Management through the PIN/MATRA Funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA, UK), NABU (Germany), BirdLife Switzerland and sponsored by European Division of BirdLife International. AOS is distributing the book free to local birdwatchers, biologist, students and relevant organizations in Azerbaijan. (Source: Nigar Agayeva)

BAHRAIN

Website change

The Bahrain Bird Report has now moved to <http://www.hawar-islands.com/>. The Bird Report has been integrated into a larger site covering the Islands of Hawar.

CYPRUS

Cyprus Breeding Bird Atlas

Birdwatchers visiting Cyprus next spring can help with Atlas fieldwork. BirdLife Cyprus members, Judy Dawes and David Whaley, have been collecting breeding bird data for many years and recently published an atlas, complete for the Paphos District and some

other areas, but by no means complete for the whole island. The Committee and the Recorder urges birdwatchers to submit breeding records to the Society. For most species the breeding season is taken to be from March to June but there are exceptions such as early and late breeding raptors, and adult birds seen feeding juveniles late in the year. Ideally, birdwatchers are asked to survey one or more 5km squares two or three times during the breeding season recording all the species breeding within it, noting the breeding evidence code (see below). But if this is not possible, all casual breeding records are useful, if the locations and breeding criteria are accurately given. It is a record of the species breeding in each square, not the total populations, that is being sought at present. Breeding records or more details of the survey can be obtained from Colin Richardson (Richar@cytanet.com.cy) or David Whaley (email: whaleydawes@spidernet.com.cy).

IRAQ

Lesser White-fronted Goose moves from Russia to Iraq for winter.

Birdlife International has recently published interesting news of a tagged Lesser White-fronted Goose, which has returned to its breeding grounds in the Polar Urals in Russia after wintering near Baghdad, Iraq. For further details visit the website: <http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2005/06/lwfg.html> (Source: World Birdwatch June 2005).

JORDAN

Khaled Irani, CEO of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in Jordan has just been made Minister of State for the Environment. Khaled has been CEO of RSCN for some 8 years and is the Middle East member on BirdLife's World Council. He helped to establish BirdLife's Middle East conservation programme and office in Jordan. (Source: Richard Porter).

OMAN

Qatbit Resthouse improvements

Qatbit resthouse in southern Oman has long been known as a useful stopover site on the desert road south to Salalah. Over the years the lush gardens have attracted birds and birdwatchers alike in an otherwise treeless area of desert. The management at the

resthouse have been keen to make the area as attractive to birds as possible. A glance of the recent check list for Oman (No. 6) illustrates how this is truly an oasis for birds with second sightings for the country of White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* and Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* and third records of Dusky Thrush *Turdus naumanni* and Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* among the highlights in recent years.

The latest development has been the provision of a small pool close at the back of the motel that is proving to be very attractive to visiting birds. Recent sightings have included Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*, Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*, Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*, Ortolan Bunting *E. hortulana*, White-breasted White-eye *Zosterops abyssinica* and Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis*, many seen using the new pond. There are plans to provide a larger pool in due course and perhaps a screened site for close up views of drinking and bathing birds. It is not necessary to book rooms except in July and August; otherwise you can drop in any time and stay for a night to fully appreciate this haven for birds in the middle of the vast desert of southern Oman. The manager, Islam, welcomes birders and it helps with his work if birders can show appreciation for what is being done there. Qatbit Resthouse is on the Salalah-Muscat Highway Tel: (00) 986 99085686 (Source: Andrew Grieve.)

SYRIA

Iraqi biologists trained in Syria

In January 2005, BirdLife's Middle East office organised a one-week training course in Syria for ten Iraqi wetland biologists. The focus of the training was on wetland survey methods, with special emphasis on the identification and censusing of waterbirds. Two major wetlands were visited during the week: Bahrat Homs, a large freshwater lake near the city of Homs; and Sabkhat Al-Jabbul, a Ramsar site near Aleppo. Overall almost 87,000 waterbirds of 52 species were recorded: 67,000 birds of 29 species at Bahrat Homs, 18,000 birds of 45 species at Sabkhat Al-Jabbul, and 1,000 birds of 17 species at three other sites. A total of 725 White-headed Ducks *Oxyura leucocephala* were found at Sabkhat Al-Jabbul; such numbers were previously unknown at this site.

Eight of the Iraqi biologists are now carrying out surveys of wetlands in the south of Iraq, particularly in the area of Basra marshes. The course was part of an Environmental Training Programme provided by the University of Waterloo (Ontario) and Environment Canada under the Canada-Iraq Marshlands Initiative. (Source: World Birdwatch June 2005).

TURKEY

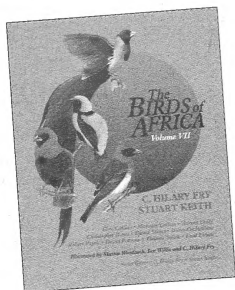
KuşBank: An Internet Based Citizen Science Project for Bird Conservation

KuşBank is an internet based databank where the bird watchers can store their bird observation data. KuşBank Project is executed by Doğa Derneği and Erciyes University with the support of RSPB (The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). KuşBank is a part of the Kagu – World Birds Project which is carried on by BirdLife and RSPB. Previously it was a very difficult and time consuming process to enter data that was in notebooks and to share it with other observers and it was almost impossible to collect data in a usable format and to share them with others. With KuşBank, records can be instantly stored and shared with all other users.

Birds are one of the important indicator species, which show the changes in the environment and their habitats. KuşBank will allow negative trends or improvements in the number and distribution of the bird species in Turkey to be monitored. KuşBank is a national bird data bank that is based on the internet. Entering data into KuşBank is done through a series of screens: observation time, observation date, names and surnames of the bird watchers, the number of bird watchers, place of observation, species which are seen (number of species and their reproduction behaviour), habitat and notes.

The first product of this Project will be the report 'Turkey Birds 2004', which will be prepared based on the data entered into KuşBank in 2004. The data from the 'Turkish Breeding Bird Atlas' will be gathered and entered into the KuşBank database as well. To find out more visit the website www.kusbank.org. (Source: Esra Per).

Dawn Balmer



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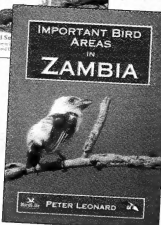
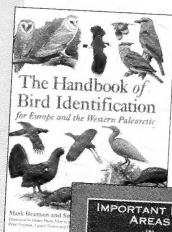
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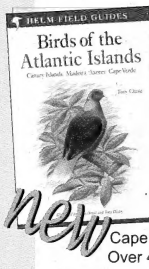
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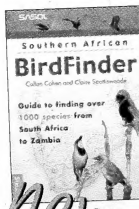
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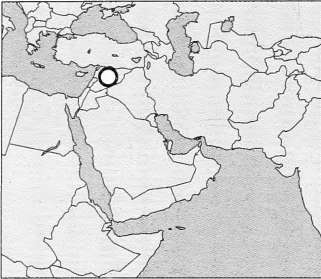
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A long-term bird survey in the central Syrian desert (2000–2004): Part 2 - a provisional annotated checklist

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AHMED KANANI⁴ AND ABDUL KHALEK ASSAED⁵



A thorough bird survey of the central Syrian desert (CSD) was conducted during 2000–2003 within the framework of a UN Italy-supported biodiversity conservation project - additional data were collected, more opportunistically, until June 2004. This central area (known as al Badia) has had even less bird survey work done than anywhere else in Syria. Not unexpectedly, our new records (in preparation) for the area outnumber our new records for the rest of the country by three times, and included the rediscovery of three bird species after 50–70 years (Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*, Red-billed Cough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax* and Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*). The results of our survey show that the surveyed area is transitional zoogeographically and is probably a crossroad for poorly-known migratory flyways for Russian and Eastern European breeders. The conservation relevance of the area was critically

assessed in Part 1 of this paper in *Sandgrouse* 27 (1)*, revealing at least 5 restricted-range bird species, 9 globally threatened species (two 'critically endangered' and 7 'vulnerable'), 2 globally near-threatened species, and some 15 regionally and locally threatened or declining species. A total of 260 species has been reliably identified during the survey, out of >4300 records (extracted from a database containing >6000 records), while 8 are hypothetical identifications and 6 are classified as 'anecdotal' (those reported by reliable intensively-trained local observers and subsequently stringently assessed). The following claimed records from this survey are in preparation for separate publication, and subject to scrutiny, comprise 14 first records for Syria, 50 relative to just the CSD, two first breeding records for Syria and 9 relative to the CSD; there are also 5 first wintering records for Syria and one for the CSD. * Serra *et al* (2005)

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ALTHOUGH THE AVIFAUNA of Syria is predominantly Western Palearctic, its location on the southeastern border of this somewhat arbitrary zoogeographic area makes it an interesting transitional zone (Martins & Hirschfeld 1998), as is the entire Arabian Peninsula. Regional political history since the 1950s and a scarcity of local ornithological expertise have made the Syrian avifauna one of the least-known in the Middle East, especially in the central Syrian desert (Baumgart 1995). As access to Syria became easier from the 1990s, participation in Syrian birdwatching began to flourish (eg Fierant & Hofland 1994, Wester 1998, Vandemeutter & Soors 2001, Murdoch 2002, Le Croisette & Wheeler 2002, Showler & Farrow 2002, Murdoch 2003, Persson *in litt*, Murdoch *et al* 2004, Hannes Uhlig pers comm), being recently accelerated by the discovery of a relict colony of critically endangered Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* breeding in the central Syrian desert (Serra 2003, Serra *et al* 2003).

At present, Baumgart (1995) provides the only available comprehensive review of Syrian ornithology - now also available as an OSME English translation. The present study aimed to integrate and reinforce Baumgart's work, by filling gaps in knowledge of bird distribution and status in the area of the Syrian central desert. For the purposes of this study, we define 'Central Syrian Desert' (CSD) as that part of the Syrian desert (known to them as 'al Badia' in Arabic) centred on Palmyra oasis (34°33.196'N, 38°17.15'E), and extending radially for 100–130km (limits determined by geography). For details of the survey area and the methods employed and for discussion of the work, see Serra *et al* (2005), Part 1 of this paper.



Plate 1. Bedu tent in typical pastures of the central Syrian desert 2003. © Gianluca Serra



Plate 2. Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* foraging 2002. © Mahmud Abdallah



Plate 3. Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*. 2002. © Gianluca Serra



Plate 4. Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*. 2002. © Mahmud Abdallah

FORMAT

The annotated bird checklist of the CSD provides for each species identified: information on evidence of breeding, the actual or most likely habitat of occurrence, the monthly occurrence noted throughout the year, the total number of sightings or Random Detections over the 2000–2003 period (**Ran Det 2000–3**), and a brief comment on the zoogeographic and conservation significance of each sighting. Random detections were defined as those made during project survey work (2000–03) and include a few validated reports from hunters. Species actively searched for, such as Northern Bald Ibis, or those trapped by hunters, by definition are not random detections. The checklist also provides an estimate of the Relative Likelihood of Detection (**RLD**) for each species (RLD = number of random detections for each species divided by the number of total detections obtained [n= 4337]). **Frequency of Occurrence** throughout the year is shown thus: ■ = high, ☒ = medium, □ = low. R = Resident. CSD = Central Syrian Desert. ¶ = First records (These are being prepared separately for scrutiny before submission, and are identified in the Checklist by ¶). In the month columns, 1, 2 etc refer to the number of sightings in that month. **Appendix 1** summarises the hypothetical and anecdotal records.

ANNOTATED BIRD CHECKLIST

ANNOTATED BIRD CHECKLIST OF THE CENTRAL SYRIAN DESERT (n= 260, Checklist date: June 2004)

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Proven	Reservoirs	-	-	1	1	1	-	■	☒	☒	☒	☒	-	15	0.003	Probable 1st breeding record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04), ¶	
Black-necked Grebe <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Possible	Reservoirs	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	2	-	7	0.002	Probable 1st record for CSD (12.09.2001), ¶; probable 1st spring-summer record for Syria (15.05-7.06.2003) by Glenn Tyler (RSPB)	
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		Reservoirs	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	4	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (07.11.2001), ¶	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
White Pelican <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>		Flying over open desert	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	0	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (early autumn 1992) by Adeeb Assaad, ¶	
Blittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>		Ponds	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (19.05.2001), ¶	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
Little Blittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>		Ponds	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (28.08.2000), ¶	
Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		Reservoirs	-	1	■	1	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0.003		
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>		Ponds and reservoirs	-	-	-	■	■	-	☒	■	-	-	-	-	16	0.004	Probable 2nd record for CSD (22.04.2000), ¶; declining in Syria (Baumgart 1995)	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		Ponds and reservoirs	-	-	-	■	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13	0.003	Probable 2nd record for CSD photographed by Mahmud Sheisch Abdallah (spring 1999), ¶	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>		Ponds and reservoirs	-	1	■	■	■	-	■	■	■	■	■	-	22	0.005		
Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>		Reservoirs	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	7	0.002		
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>		Ponds and reservoirs	1	☒	-	-	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	41	0.009	Probable 1st record for CSD (25.02.2001), ¶	
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>		Ponds and reservoirs	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001		
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i>		Reservoirs, in flight or foraging in open desert	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	■	■	■	■	1	12	0.003		
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		Reservoirs, in flight anywhere	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1	26	0.006		

See account in Serra *et al* (2005) - Part 1

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		Ponds and reservoirs	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	0.002	Probable 2nd record for CSD (02.05.2001), ¶	1st record 1948–50 (Peters 1956)
Northern Bald Ibis <i>Geronticus eremita</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, cliffs	-	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	-	-	-	-	0	0.000	Baumgart (1995) believed it extinct 1934; rediscovered 18.03.2002; globally 'Critically endangered' (IUCN 2004)	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005) – Part 1
Greater Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	■	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	■	■	■	34	0.008		Flocks of 50–100 birds winter in <i>Sabkha Al Mohif</i> in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		Reservoirs	■	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (18.12.2001), ¶	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Lesser White-fronted Goose <i>Anser erythropus</i>		?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.000	Individual shot in spring 1994 stuffed (see account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)); probable 1st record for CSD & probable 2nd certain record for Syria, ¶; persecuted; "Vulnerable" globally (IUCN 2004)	1st Syria record 1945 (Goodbody 1945); for other sightings of <i>Anser</i> spp See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Common Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	■	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	0.007		Not "sporadic and in small numbers" (Baumgart 1995)
Eurasian Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	0.009	Probable 1st record for CSD (22.11.2000), ¶	
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (17.10.2001), ¶	
Common Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	□	□	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	0.012	Probable 2nd record for CSD (13.11.2000), ¶	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	0.008	Probable 1st record for CSD (12.11.2000), ¶	
Northern Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	0.006	Probable 2nd record for CSD (11.01.2001), ¶	1st record 1975 (Macfarlane 1978)
Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i>	Proven	Reservoirs and sabkhat	-	-	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	-	37	0.009	Probable 1st record for CSD (31.03.2001), ¶; 1st breeding record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (16.06.04)	
Northern Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	56	0.013	Probable 1st record for CSD (12.11.2000), ¶	
Common Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	0.002	Probable 1st record for CSD (19.01.2003), ¶	

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	Proven	Reservoir	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (24.02.2004), †: 1st breeding record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	
Tufted Duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>		Reservoir	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (24.02.2004), †	
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>		In flight, especially over Palmyra oasis	-	□	■	■	■	-	-	□	□	□	□	1	77	0.018	Significant numbers in Apr-May pass over Palmyra oasis; persecuted	Two <i>M. m. lineatus</i> (or Red Kite <i>M. milvius</i> ?), Seen on 31.05.03
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, cliffs	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	103	0.024	Persecuted; declining Baumgart (1995)	
Griffon Vulture <i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, cliffs	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	R		Heavy decline, persecuted	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Lappet-faced Vulture <i>Torgos tracheliotes</i>		Especially <i>Hamad</i> desert	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	0.000	Heavy decline; "vulnerable" globally (IUCN 2004); persecuted	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Black Vulture <i>Aegypius monachus</i>		Rocky outcrops, cliffs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	0.000	Persecuted	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Western Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight, but especially near reservoirs	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	-	60	0.014	Probable 1st record for CSD (14.09.2000), †: persecuted	
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	20	0.005	Persecuted	
Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	3	75	0.017	"Lower-risk, near-threatened" globally (IUCN 2004); persecuted; significant numbers during migration	
Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1	43	0.010	Persecuted	
Northern Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		Oases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	4	0.001	Persecuted	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight, especially at Palmyra oasis	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	35	0.008	Persecuted	
Levant Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter brevipes</i>		Mostly soaring over Palmyra oasis	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	■	-	1	-	9	0.002	Significant numbers in Sept pass over Palmyra oasis; persecuted	Always seen in large flocks
Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	1	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1	57	0.013	Persecuted	Sometimes with Long-legged Buzzards (and Rough-legged Buzzards <i>B. lagopus</i> ?) in large mixed flocks

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
Steppe Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight, especially soaring over Palmyra oasis	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	53	0.012	Significant numbers in Mar–Apr and Sept–Nov pass over Palmyra oasis; persecuted	Seen with Long-legged Buzzard
Long-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo rulinus</i>	Proven	Ubiquitous, in flight	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	R		Persecuted	Sometimes migrating together with Common Buzzards (and Rough-legged buzzards?). In large mixed flocks; also seen with Steppe buzzard
Lesser Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila pomarina</i>		In flight	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.001	Persecuted	Several unidentified <i>Aquila</i> spp. seen during study period; see account in Serra <i>et al.</i> (2005)
(Greater) Spotted Eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i>		In flight	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	6	0.001	"Vulnerable" globally (IUCN 2004); persecuted	See above entry
Steppe Eagle <i>Aquila nipalensis</i>		In flight	-	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	14	0.003	Probable 2nd record Syria (05.03.2001), †; persecuted	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978); several unidentified <i>Aquila</i> spp. seen during study period; see account in Serra <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Imperial Eagle <i>Aquila heliaca</i>		In flight	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	0.000	"Vulnerable" globally (IUCN 2004); persecuted; one individual recovered after hitting powerlines autumn 2000	Several unidentified <i>Aquila</i> spp. Seen during study period; see account in Serra <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, cliffs	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	R		Persecuted	
Booted Eagle <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	1	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	17	0.004	Persecuted	
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Hieraetus fasciatus</i>			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 2nd record for Syria, and probable 1st record for CSD (23.09.2001), †; persecuted	One captured by hunters mid-Sep 2001 in the desert near Palmyra; 1st record for Syria 1943 by Pymon (Macfarlane 1978)
Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>		Mostly soaring over Palmyra oasis	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	29	0.007	Probable 2nd record for CSD (19.05.2000), †; persecuted	1st record 1975 (Macfarlane 1978)
Short-toed Eagle <i>Circus gallicus</i>	Probable	Ubiquitous, in flight	-	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	42	0.010	Persecuted	
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	9	0.002	Persecuted	

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>	Proven, in small numbers	Flying anywhere, especially soaring over Palmyra oasis	-	-	-	-	-	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	47	0.011	2nd probable (certain) breeding record for central Syrian desert (March 2002); listed as "vulnerable" globally (IUCN 2004); persecuted	1st breeding record 1948-50 (Peters 1956); see account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)-Part 1
Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Proven	Ubiquitous, in flight, especially near cliffs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R		Persecuted	Unidentified Hobby/Red-footed falcons: 1 ind. Feb, 1 ind. Apr and 1 ind. Nov.
Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco vesperinus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	-	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	11	0.003	Persecuted	Unidentified Red-footed falcon, Hobby or Merlin: 1 ind. Sept, 3 ind. Oct, 3 ind. Nov, 3 ind. Dec, 3 ind. Jan
Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>		In flight, especially near trees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	9	0.002		See above entry
Eurasian Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	-	■	-	-	-	-	☐	☐	☐	☐	12	0.003	Persecuted	See above entry
Eleonora's Falcon <i>Falco eleonorae</i>		In flight	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (15.10.2002), ♀, trapped for falconry trade	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Lanner Falcon <i>Falco biarmicus erlangeri</i>		In flight	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0.000	Trapped for falconry trade	Hunter captures: 1 juv Sept-Nov 2002; 1 juv. 18 Oct 2003; 1 juv. Male <i>erlangeri</i> 26 Nov 2003; see account in Serra <i>et al</i> . (2005) - part 1.
Saker Falcon <i>Falco cherrug</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	☐	☐	☐	☐	0	0.000	Trapped for falconry trade; may be upgraded "Least Concern" to "Vulnerable"	Hunter captures: 1 ind. Mid-Oct 2000, 3 juv. Sept-Oct 2002, 2 ind. Sept-Nov 2003; see account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	☐	☐	☐	☐	2	0.000	Trapped for falconry trade	Hunter captures: 2 ind. May 2001, 21 ind. Sept-Nov 2001, 15 ind. Sept-Nov 2002, 2 ind. Jul 2003, 11 ind. Sept-Nov 2003; see account in Serra <i>et al</i> . (2005)
Chukar <i>Alectoris chukar</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, cliffs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	R			
Common Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	Probably in wet years	Open habitats	☐	1	2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	24	0.006		

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
Spotted Crane <i>Porzana porzana</i>		Ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		
Little Crane <i>Porzana parva</i>		Ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (07.03.2001), ¶	
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Proven	Ponds, other wetlands	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	9	0.002	Probable 1st breeding record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (16.06.04)	
Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	Proven	Reservoirs	■	■	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	72	0.017	Probable 1st record for CSD (12.11.2000), ¶; probable 1st breeding record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	
Common Crane <i>Grus grus</i>		Sabkhat, open habitats, in flight	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	55	0.013	East Russian sub-population "Vulnerable" globally (IUCN 2004)	Not the "rare passage migrant" of Baumgart (1995); see account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)-Part 1
Houbara Bustard <i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>	Perhaps in wet years	Open habitats	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	1	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (15.09.2000), ¶; "Lower risk near-threatened" globally (IUCN 2004); risk of regional extinction Baumgart (1995) due to over-hunting	1st record 1943 by Pymon (Macfarlane 1978); see account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Proven, if only in wet years	Reservoirs and sabkhat	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	48	0.011	Probable 1st breeding record for CSD (May 2002), ¶	
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		Sabkhat and reservoirs	■	■	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	13	0.003	Probable 1st winter record for CSD (18.11.2000), ¶	
European Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	Proven	Rocky plateau, open habitats, wadis	-	-	2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	20	0.005		
Cream-coloured Courser <i>Cursorius cursor</i>	Proven	Open habitats	-	2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	96	0.022		Not rare as in Baumgart (1995)
Collared Pratincole <i>Glaucala pratincola</i>		Ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (28.04.2001), ¶	
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>		Sabkhat, reservoirs, ponds	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	16	0.004	Probable 2nd record for CSD (28.03.2001), ¶	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		Sabkhat, reservoirs, ponds	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	16	0.004	Probable 1st record for CSD (25.04.2001), ¶	
Kittitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>		Ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	5	0.001	Probable 1st record for Syria (05.07.2001), ¶	

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Proven	Sabkhat	■	■	□	1	-	1	1	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	41	0.009	Probable 2nd breeding record for CSD (11.01.2001), ¶	Breeds as early as January
Greater Sandplover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, open habitats, sabkhat	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	-	-	-	-	-	80	0.018		
Caspian Plover <i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>		Open habitats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (22.03.2001) (¶) since 1933 (Baumgart 1995)	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Eurasian Dotterel <i>Charadrius morinellus</i>		Open habitats of Hamad desert	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		Consistent with Baumgart (1995) of a sighting of 200 in Nov 1974 near Palmyra
European Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		Open habitats, reservoirs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (08.03.2003), ¶	1 killed from a small flock March 2003
Spur-winged Plover <i>Hoplopterus spinosus</i>		Reservoirs, ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001		
Sociable Plover <i>Chettusia gregaria</i>		Open habitats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (14.02.2001), ¶; 'Critically endangered' globally (IUCN 2004)	See account in Serra <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Northern Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		Reservoirs and sabkhat	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	☒	■		
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	■	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	51	0.012		
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	□	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	-	13	0.003		
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	0.002		
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	■	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	17	0.004	Probable 2nd (wintering) record for CSD (11.01.2001), ¶	
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001		
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	☒	2	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	56	0.013		
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (28.03.2001), ¶	
Eurasian Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (23.09.2003), ¶	
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		Reservoirs, sabkhat, ponds	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	53	0.012		

Species	Breeding														Notes	
Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	☐	-	☒	-	-	1	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	10	0.002	Probable 1st record for CSD (28.07.2001), ¶	
Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	■	■	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	☒	☒	26	0.006	Probable 2nd record for CSD (08.12.2000), ¶	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	-	☒	☒	-	-	-	-	■	■	1	-	-	13	0.003		
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	1	-	☐	☐	1	-	2	■	■	1	-	-	24	0.006		
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	☐	☐	☒	☒	1	2	■	■	☒	☒	1	-	43	0.010		
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	-	-	☐	☒	☒	1	-	☒	☒	-	-	-	18	0.004		
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	-	☐	■	☒	☒	-	☒	■	■	☒	1	-	38	0.009		
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (25.09.2001), ¶; also seen and videotaped on 19.04.2004 by Hannes Uhlig	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	1	1	■	☒	-	-	-	-	-	-	☒	☐	18	0.004		
Slender-billed Gull <i>Larus genei</i>	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	6	0.001		
Yellow-legged (Caspian) or Armenian Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i> or <i>L. armenicus</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (27.12.2001), ¶	Species not separated
Gull-billed Tern <i>Sterna nilotica</i>	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (21.04.2000), ¶	
Common / Arctic Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> / <i>S. paradisaea</i>	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (17.06.2003), identified together with Chris Bowden and Glen Tyler (RSPB), ¶; seen again on 12.06.2004 together with Lubomir Peske	Species not separated
Little Tern <i>Sterna albibronns</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (15.06.2003), by Chris Bowden and Glen Tyler (RSPB)	
Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.000		See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
White-winged Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	-	-	☒	☒	1	2	■	■	☒	-	-	-	41	0.009		

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Black-bellied Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles orientalis</i>		Open habitats, reservoirs, ponds	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	4	0.001		{Winterer according to Adeeb Assaad}
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles alchata</i>	Proven in wet year	Open habitats, reservoirs, ponds	-	2	■	■	■	■	■	■	-	-	1	1	24	0.006		{Nomadic according to Adeeb Assaad}
Rock Dove <i>Columba livia</i>	Proven	Cliffs and ruins	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>		Oases, available trees	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	0.000		
Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight, especially at oases, on any trees	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	83	0.019		
Eurasian Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight, especially at oases, on any trees	-	-	-	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	2	41	0.009		
Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Proven	Palmyra oasis	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R		Probable 1st record as resident at Palmyra oasis (2000-2003), ¶	
Namaqua Dove <i>Oena capensis</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	0.001	Probable 1st record for Syria (19.05.2003), ¶	
Greater Spotted Cuckoo <i>Clamator glandarius</i>	Open habitats	Open habitats	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (23.09.2001), ¶	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Possible	Open habitats	-	-	-	■	-	1	■	■	-	-	-	10	0.002			
European Scops-Owl <i>Otus scops</i>		Pond	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000			Mostly <i>liiith</i> sub-species
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	Proven	Cliffs, ruins, rocky open habitats	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			Mostly <i>ascalaphus</i> sub-species (Pharaoh Eagle-Owl)
European Eagle-Owl <i>Bubo bubo</i>	Proven	Cliffs, rocky open habitats	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			
Tawny Owl <i>Strix aluco</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2		Probable 2nd record for CSD (16.06.04), by Lubomir Peske (¶), after Kinzelbach (1986)	Photo taken by Mahmud Scheisch Abdallah of killed ind. On 20.06.04 (possibly same ind seen by L. Peske.)
Long-eared Owl <i>Asio otus</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2		Probable 1st record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	Mahmud Scheisch Abdallah photographed one in <i>al Talilia</i> reserve, winter 1998-99, one of a loose group of 4-5 on the ground beneath shrubs
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>		Open habitats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.000			

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
European Nighthjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		Open habitats, oases	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	8	0.002		Only 2 clearly this species; some others possibly Egyptian Nighthjar <i>C. aegyptius</i>
Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	■	□	1	■	1	-	2	2	-	-	-	24	0.006		
Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i>	Proven	Cliffs, ruins	-	-	□	■	■	■	□	-	-	-	-	-	22	0.005		The Temple of Bel colony, adjacent to Palmyra oasis (Baumgart 1995) remains extant
Little Swift <i>Apus affinis</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	5	0.001		
Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>	Proven	Cliffs, but ubiquitous, in flight	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1	1	1	-	-	18	0.004		
Common Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>		Ponds, reservoirs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (25.09.2002), ¶	
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>		Pond	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (09.01.2002), ¶	
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater <i>Merops persicus</i>		Mostly over Palmyra oasis	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (25.04.2002), ¶	Amongst European Bee-eaters; 1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	Probable, a few pairs in wet years	Ubiquitous, in flight, mostly over Palmyra oasis	-	-	-	■	■	2	2	-	■	2	-	-	63	0.015		
European Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	■	■	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	32	0.007		
Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>		Ubiquitous, in flight	-	-	■	■	■	2	■	■	■	■	-	-	76	0.018		
Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>		Oases; buildings, gardens outskirts of Palmyra	-	■	□	■	1	-	□	-	-	-	-	-	10	0.002		
Dunn's Lark <i>Eremalauda dumni</i>	Probable, only wet years	Open habitats	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001	Probable 1st record for Syria (13.07.2000), ¶	See account in Serra et al (2005)
Bar-tailed Lark <i>Ammomanes cincturus</i>	Probable	Open habitats	-	1	■	■	-	■	■	■	■	-	-	-	13	0.003	Probable 1st record for CSD (05.07.2000), ¶	Occurrence through year probably not representative
Desert Lark <i>Ammomanes deserti</i>	Proven	Open habitats	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			
Hoopoe Lark <i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	Proven	Open habitats	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	R			

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Thick-billed Lark <i>Ramphocoris clobrey</i>		Open habitats	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.001	Probable 1st certain record for Syria (01.04.2001), ¶	One reported in Aharoni (1931), but location uncertain
Calandra Lark <i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	Proven	Open habitats	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	24	0.006	Probable 1st (breeding) record for CSD (07.03-2001), ¶	
Bimaculated Lark <i>Melanocorypha bimaculata</i>	Probable	Open habitats	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0.001	Probable 2nd record for Syria, ¶, probable 1st for CSD (01.06.2001), ¶	1st Syrian record 1976 (MacLartane 1978)
Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>		Open habitats	-	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	26	0.006		
Lesser Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	Proven in wet year	Open habitats	1	-	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒	☐	37	0.009		
Crested Lark <i>Galerida cristata</i>	Proven	Open habitats	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			
Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>		Open habitats	■	☒	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	0.015		
Temminck's Horned Lark <i>Eremophila bilopha</i>	Proven	Open habitats	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	R			
Sand Martin <i>Piparia riparia</i>		In flight	-	-	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	20	0.005		
African Rock or Crag Martin <i>Hirundo fuligula</i> or <i>H. rupestris</i>		Cliffs	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		Separation of the two species was not possible
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>		In flight	1	☐	■	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	-	145	0.033		
Red-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo daurica</i>		In flight	-	1	☒	■	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	0.002		
House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>		In flight	-	-	☐	☐	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	0.002		Breeding not confirmed (see Baumgart 1995)
Richard's or Blyth's Pipit <i>Anthus richardi</i> or <i>A. godlewskii</i>		Open habitat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 2nd record for Syria (24.09.2002) by Le Croissette & Wheeler (2002)	1st record 1993, as in Baumgart (1995)
Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>		Open habitats, near ponds	-	-	☐	■	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	0.004		
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>		Open habitats, near ponds	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	7	0.002	Probable 1st record for CSD (13.11.2000), ¶	

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J F M A M J J A S O N D												Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes	
			J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D					
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>		Open habitats, near ponds	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	0.001		
Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>		Open habitats, near ponds	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	8	0.002		
Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>		Open habitats, near ponds	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	23	0.005	Probable 2nd record for CSD (20.09.2000), ☒	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>		Near and around ponds	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	63	0.015		Mostly <i>feldlegg</i> subspecies
Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>		Near and around ponds	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (12.05.2001), ☒	
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		Near and around ponds	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001		
White Wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>		Near and around ponds	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	86	0.020		Mostly <i>alba</i> subspecies
Rufous Bush Robin <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	Proven	Oases, any trees	-	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	8	0.002	Probable 2nd record for CSD (17.05.2000), and probable 1st breeding record for CSD (May 2004), ☒	At least <i>syriacus</i> subspecies; 1st desert record 1994 Fierant & Hofland (1994)
European Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		Oases, any trees	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	☐	29	0.007		
Thrush Nightingale <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD and probable 2nd for Syria (08.04.2000), ☒	1st record 1948–50 (Peters 1956) see account in Serra <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Common Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>		Oasis	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		2 uncertain identifications not included: confusion with Thrush Nightingale
Bluethroat <i>Luscinia svecica</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	15	0.003		
White-throated Robin <i>Irania gutturalis</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	☐	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	9	0.002		
Black Redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		Oases, any trees, rocky habitats	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	71	0.016		Mostly <i>ochruros</i> , at least 7 <i>gibraltariensis</i>
Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>		Oases, any trees	-	1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	49	0.011		
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		Oases, any trees	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	6	0.001	Probable 1st winter record for Syria (Nov 2000–Feb 2001), ☒	

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Stonechat		Oases, any trees	☒											2	36	0.008		Quite common in Dec, <i>contra</i> Baumgart (1995)
<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>		Open habitats	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	R			
Isabelline Wheatear	Proven	Open habitats													59	0.014		
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>		Open habitats													15	0.003		See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Northern Wheatear	Possible	Rocky slopes	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	10	0.002		See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		Open habitats	1	☒											26	0.006		Mostly <i>hispanica</i> subspecies
Pied Wheatear		Open habitats												☒	1			
<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>		Open habitats													54	0.012	Probable 1st breeding record for CSD (05.06.2000), ☐	
Cyprus Pied Wheatear	Proven	Open habitats	2	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	98	0.023		
<i>Oenanthe cyriaca</i>		Open habitats	☐	☒	1	3	1	1	1						1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (30.09.2002) by Showler & Farrow (2002)	
Black-eared Wheatear		Open habitats													R			See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>		Open habitats													3	0.001	Probable 1st record for Syria (17.10.2001), ☐	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
Desert Wheatear		Open habitats													2	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (17.11.2001), ☐	See account in Serra <i>et al</i> (2005)
<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>		Open habitats													9	0.002	Passage extent contrasts with Baumgart (1995)	
Finch's Wheatear		Open habitats													4	0.001		
<i>Oenanthe finschii</i>		Open habitats													2	0.000		
Red-tailed Wheatear		Open habitats													2	0.000		
<i>Oenanthe xanthopyrma</i>		Open habitats													9	0.002		
Mourning Wheatear	Proven	Rocky slopes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	R			
<i>Oenanthe lugens</i>		Open habitats													3	0.001		
Hooded Wheatear		Open habitats													2	0.000		
<i>Oenanthe monacha</i>		Open habitats													9	0.002		
White-crowned Wheatear		Open habitats													6	0.001		
<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>		Open habitats													10	0.002		
Rock Thrush		Open habitats, oases, any trees																
<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	Possible	Open habitats	1	2											4	0.001		
Blue Rock Thrush		Open habitats, oases, any trees													2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD, probable 3rd for Syria (28.02.2001), ☐	
<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		Open habitats, oases, any trees	1												2	0.000		
Ring Ouzel		Open habitats, oases, any trees	1												9	0.002		
<i>Turdus torquatus</i>		Open habitats, oases, any trees	1												6	0.001		
European Blackbird		Open habitats, oases, any trees	2	1											3			
<i>Turdus merula</i>		Open habitats, oases, any trees													1			
Fieldfare		Open habitats, oases, any trees													2			
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		Open habitats, oases, any trees													1			
Song Thrush		Open habitats, oases, any trees													2			
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		Open habitats, oases, any trees													1			

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		Small oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed Warbler) <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (30.09.2000), ↑	
Graceful Prinia <i>Prinia gracilis</i>	Possible Proven?	Round vegetated reservoirs, ponds	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (31.05.2003), ↑; probable 1st breeding record for CSD by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	
Scrub Warbler <i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>	Proven	Rocky, shrubby slopes	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	R		Probable 2nd record for CSD (04.02.2001), ↑ 1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)	
Savi's Warbler <i>Locustella luscinoides</i>	Proven	Round vegetated reservoirs, ponds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1		Probable 1st record of occurrence and of breeding for CSD by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		Round vegetated reservoirs, ponds	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (08.03.2002) by Murdoch (2002)	
European Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>		Round vegetated reservoirs, ponds	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	6	0.001	Probable 2nd record for CSD (26.03.2002), ↑; probable 1st breeding record by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	1st record 1948–50 (Peters 1956);
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>		Round vegetated reservoirs, ponds	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (Mar–Apr 2001), by Vandemeutter & Soors (2001); probable 1st breeding record by Lubomir Peske (13.06.04)	
Olivaceous Warbler <i>Hippolais pallida</i>	Proven	Oases, any trees	-	-	-	■	■	□	-	1	-	-	-	-	15	0.003	Probable 1st certain breeding record for CSD (16.05.2001), ↑	
Upcher's Warbler <i>Hippolais languida</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (29.08.2001), ↑	
Spectacled Warbler <i>Sylvia conspiciolata</i>		Oases, any trees	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	0.001	Feb sighting Murdoch (2002)	
Ménétrics's Warbler <i>Sylvia mystacea</i>	Probable	Oases, any trees	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		
Sardinian Warbler <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	0.001	Probable 2nd record for CSD (10.12.2001), ↑	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978); 2 other uncertain identifications
Rüppell's Warbler <i>Sylvia rupehli</i>		Rocky and shrubby slope	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (20–21.03.2004), ↑	See account in Serra et al. (2005) - Part 1
Desert Warbler <i>Sylvia nana</i>		Oases, any trees	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001	Probable 1st record for Syria (13.01.2001), ↑	2 Feb sightings OSME expedition 2004

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Barred Warbler		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (02.05.2001), ¶	
<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	5	0.001		
Garden Warbler		Oases, any trees	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	0.002	Probable 2nd record for CSD, probable 1st winter record for Syria (08.12.2001), ¶	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
<i>Sylvia borin</i>		Oases, any trees	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	0.002	Probable 2nd record for CSD (17.09.2000), ¶; probable first winter record for Syria (Jan-Feb 2001), ¶	1st desert record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Lesser Whitethroat		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0.003		
<i>Sylvia curruca</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (25.09.2002) by Le Croisette & Wheeler (2002)	
Common Whitethroat		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (21-24.09.2002) by Le Croisette & Wheeler (2002)	
<i>Sylvia communis</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	0.012		
Blackcap		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	0.002	Probable 2nd record for CSD (11.09.2000), ¶	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (27.02.2001), ¶	
Greenish Warbler		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
Wood Warbler		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54	0.012		
Chiffchaff		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	0.002	Probable 2nd record for CSD (11.09.2000), ¶	
<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (27.02.2001), ¶	
Willow Warbler		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
Goldcrest or Firecrest		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37	0.009		
<i>Regulus regulus</i> or <i>R. ignicapillus</i>		Open habitat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (05.11.2003), ¶	See account in Serra et al (2005)
Spotted Flycatcher		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (04.04.2002), ¶	1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>		Open habitat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		
Red-breasted Flycatcher		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.000		
<i>Ficedula parva</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.001		
Collared Flycatcher		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (21.12.2001), ¶	Found dead
<i>Ficedula albicollis</i>		Rocky habitats	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.000		
Pied Flycatcher		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	0.007		
<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001	Probable 1st record for Syria (20.07.2000), ¶	
Wallcreeper		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		
<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		
Golden Oriole		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		
Isabelline Shrike		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		
<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0.001		

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000–3	RLD (0.000–1.0)	Significance	Notes
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	1	■	■	3	1	□	■	□	■	■	■	■	59	0.014		
Lesser Grey Shrike <i>Lanius minor</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	■	■	■	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21	0.005	Probable 2nd record for CSD (18.05.2000), ¶	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Great Grey Shrike <i>Lanius excubitor</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	11	0.003	Probable 1st record for CSD (14.09.2000), ¶	
Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	■	■	■	1	1	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	24	0.006	Probable 2nd record for CSD (18.05.2000), ¶	1st record 1976 (Macfarlane 1978)
Masked Shrike <i>Lanius nubicus</i>		Open shrubby habitats, oases, any trees	■	■	■	2	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4	0.001		No evidence of breeding in Palmyra, <i>contra</i> Baumgart (1995)
Red-billed Chough <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	Proven	Rocky outcrops, cliffs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R		Common and not extinct in 2nd half of 20th Century as stated in Baumgart (1995), rediscovered on 08.06.2000	
Hooded Crow <i>Corvus cornix</i>		In flight, open desert, outside Palmyra	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (Feb 2002), ¶	
Brown-necked Raven <i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	Proven	In flight, rocky outcrops, cliffs	■	■	■	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	R		Probable 1st breeding record for CSD (spring 2001), ¶	Difficult separating from <i>C. corax</i> , through-year occurrence probably not representative
Common Raven <i>Corvus corax</i>	Proven	In flight, rocky outcrops cliffs	■	■	■	1	2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			Overlooked
European Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		Oases, any trees	2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	11	0.003		
Rose-coloured Starling <i>Sturnus roseus</i>		Oases, any trees	■	■	■	3	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4	0.001	Probable 2nd record for CSD (10.05.2000), ¶	1st record 1948–50 (Peters 1956)
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Proven	Human settlements, oases, any trees	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	R			
Spanish Sparrow <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	Proven	Oases, any trees	■	■	■	2	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	11	0.003	Probable 1st breeding record for CSD (28.04.2001), ¶; probable 1st autumn record for Syria (Nov 2003), ¶	
Dead Sea Sparrow <i>Passer moabiticus</i>	Proven	Oases, any trees	■	■	■	1	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD, and 1st winter record for Syria (09.12.2001), ¶; probable 1st breeding record for CSD by Collin Richardson (2004)	
Pale Rock Sparrow <i>Petronia brachyactyla</i>		Near pond	■	■	■	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1	0.000	Seen by Vandemeutter & Soors (2001)	Possibly overlooked

Species	Breeding	Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Ran Det 2000-3	RLD (0.000-1.0)	Significance	Notes
Rock Sparrow <i>Petronia petronia</i>	Proven	Rocky habitats, cliffs	-	1	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	0.003	Probable 1st breeding record for CSD (11.05.2001), ¶	Contra Baumgart (1995)
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		Oases, any trees	1	□	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	■	2	14	0.003		Not "exceptional", contra Baumgart (1995)
Brambling <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.000	Probable 2nd record for CSD (01.11.2001), ¶	One amongst Chaffinches. 1st record 1948-50 (Peters 1956)
European Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>		Oases, any trees	-	■	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	0.002	Probable 1st record for CSD (01.02.2001), ¶	
Syrian Serin <i>Serinus syriacus</i>		Near pond	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD (26.02.1998) by J. Weiser (1998); 'Vulnerable' globally (IUCN 2004)	
European Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>		Oases, any trees	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	5	5	0.001		
Eurasian Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>		Rocky slopes	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	22	22	0.005		
Desert Finch <i>Rhodospiza obsoleta</i>	Proven	Oases, any trees	□	□	□	□	□	□	2	1	1	■	■	R	R			
Trumpeter Finch <i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	Proven in wet year (2003)	Open rocky habitats	-	■	■	■	■	■	1	2	1	-	-	13	13	0.003	Probable 1st breeding record for Syria (03.03.2003), ¶	
Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>		Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for CSD and 3rd for Syria (22.10.2002), ¶	Found dead
Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>		Shrubby habitats	-	1	-	-	-	■	□	-	-	-	-	15	15	0.003	Probable 3rd record for CSD (10.05.2000), ¶	
Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>		Oasis	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (02.01.2002), ¶	
Red-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza bruniceps</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	0.000	Probable 1st record for Syria (summer 2002), ¶	Adult male in summer plumage
Black-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>		Oases, any trees	-	-	-	■	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	0.001	Probable 1st record for CSD (14.04.2001), ¶	
Corn Bunting <i>Emberiza calandria</i>		Oases, any trees	-	■	□	-	-	-	□	-	-	-	1	21	21	0.005		
														4337	1.000			



Plate 5. Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*. 2002.
© Mahmud Abdallah



Plate 6. Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* chick. 2002. © Gianluca Serra



Plate 7 (left). Adeb Abdallah and Mahmud Scheisch Abdallah. © Gianluca Serra **Plate 8 (mid-left).** Ahmed Jeber Abdallah. © Gianluca Serra **Plate 9 (mid-right).** Talal Fayud, Gianluca Serra, Mahmoud Mohammed and Ahmed Jeber Abdallah. © Gianluca Serra **Plate 10 (right).** Gianluca Serra and Ghazy al Qaim. © Gianluca Serra

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APPENDIX 1

The following notes mostly summarise more general comments in Serra *et al* (2005), Part 1 of this survey. They are included in the expectation that future observers in the CSD will find at least a few of the species below. The OSME convention is that hypothetical information is enclosed in bold square brackets and anecdotal information in bold braces.

Hypothetical records

[**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*. On several occasions we believe we have detected individuals of this species (on 25–29.05.2000, 14–15.03.2001, 03.04.2001, 02.05.2001, 09.05.2001, 20.03.2002, 07.05.2002, 12.05.2002, 19.10.2003), either alone or, more often, intermixed with Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Steppe Buzzard *B.b. vulpinus* and Long-legged Buzzard *B. rufinus* during migration. Particularly because of the risk of confusing this species with *B. vulpinus* juveniles when views were less than perfect, our identification has always remained uncertain.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*. Adeb Assaad (a local Palmyran hunter) reported sighting a singleton in the *Hamad* desert during the 1995–96 winter, about 40km south of Palmyra, emphasising its ‘very long legs’ when the bird was on the ground, when comparing it to Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* with which he is familiar, having trapped and trained one for hunting before.

Black-winged (-shouldered) Kite *Elanus caeruleus*. Adeb Assaad saw one in the *Hamad* desert in November of 1997 or 98, attracted to ground bait intended to trap small falcons (typically, the trap is a small cage with nooses on top and a live rodent inside). The bird watched the bait for a while, but flew away. Adeb Assaad describes it as a very small raptor, with a ‘slower’ flight than a falcon, and almost completely white. Another hunter, known to be reliable, related a similar account for 1996 in the same area.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. We made three observations within the CSD (April 2000, December 2000 June 2001) of a medium-sized falcon, apparently uniformly dark-coloured, but insufficient detail made our identifications uncertain.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. An individual *Chlidonias* was spotted on 28.09.2001 flying on a reservoir, and apparently showing a light-coloured underwing. Because of distance and unfavourable weather conditions the identification could not be regarded as certain.

Sylvia sp resembling Dartford or Marmora’s Warbler *S. undata* or *S. sarda*. A single bird resembling one of these two species was seen on 16.10.2001 on large Tamarisk *Tamarix* sp trees at the entrance of *al Talila* reserve; its compact shape, its predominantly grey-blue plumage and its cocked tail being the sole features seen before it moved away.

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus*. Seen on 05.04.2002 in the vicinity of Palmyra. Its compact shape (rather like Chiffchaff *P. collybita*), its clear pale supercilium, its slim, longish and relatively light-coloured mandible, its longish primary projection, and its pale green body and evident yellowish throat, were indicative of *P. nitidus*, but Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* could not be ruled out.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*. We detected many *Acrocephalus* birds engaged in early-morning territorial singing on 25 July 2000 in *Phragmites* reedbed at a reservoir close to Palmyra (*Sed Wadi Abiad*). We assessed them as being Marsh Warblers from comparing the territorial song to Roché's reference recordings (1993). One bird even responded to the Roché calls played as a lure from the car; it came from the reeds to perch close to the vehicle. Because cross-species responses are known within the *Acrocephalus* genus (Mike Blair pers comm), and because Lubomir Peske identified breeding European Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus* at the same site few years later, our identification remains hypothetical.]

Anecdotal records

[Sand / See-See Partridges *Ammoperdix heyi* / *A. griseogularis*. Adeeb Assaed reports seeing six together (one was killed) in the *Hamad* desert in 1996. He states that it is resident in certain *Hamad* desert habitats, especially in stony *wadis*. It is not clear whether these partridges are very rare or simply overlooked.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*. Adeeb Assaed advises that this bird, usually seen in flocks, was still very common until about 1994 in the Palmyran *al Badia*, as given in Evans (1994), its favourite habitats being stony and barren undulating fields and *wadis*. One morning Adeeb Assaed found a recently abandoned roost, identified as such by the tracks and the soil scratches, of several birds. Local people reported that it had been seen on at least 3 occasions during the 2003–2004 winter (groups of 16, 3 and 2 birds) in an area some 40–50 km northeast of Palmyra. Accompanied by Adeeb Assaed, Team C of the OSME-supported 2004 Expedition surveyed the same area in late February, but without success.

Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*. Adeeb Assaed regards it as resident in the Palmyran *al Badia*, occurring within both the *Hamad* desert and the vicinity of *Sukhna* (a village 80km northeast of Palmyra). It favours flat plains possessing shrubs and volcanic rocks. He usually identifies it by its diagnostic call. Supposedly, it occurs in smaller flocks (fewer than 20–30 birds) than Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *P. alchata*. Adeeb Assaed last saw this species in the *Hamad* desert in autumn 2003.

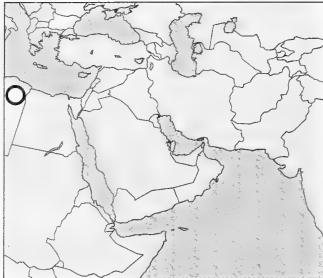
Barn Owl *Tyto alba*. Adeeb Assaed saw a Barn Owl leaving a well at *Tarfa* oasis, some 30 km northwest of Palmyra, in about 1984. Other old sightings recalled by locals were of small to medium-sized white owls occurring at Palmyra oasis. No Barn Owls were seen or heard during the study period, indicating that the species may no longer occur in the CSD.

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus*. During the 42 months of the project survey, we received several reports from falcon trappers about rare sightings and captures of a very large white falcon (called locally '*al abiad*', 'the white one'). From quite a number of reports, possibly the most reliable are: Adeeb Assaed describing chasing an individual by car in the *Hamad* desert in autumn 1980, but the bird crossed into Iraq; Adeeb Assaed examining an individual captured alive in 1997 in the desert some 30 km west of Palmyra and lastly, the trapping of a bird in 1998–99 in the desert east of the Euphrates, for which \$160,000 US was reportedly paid by Gulf falconers. Our present knowledge of Gyr Falcon movements makes a natural explanation unlikely of sightings of such a high-latitude raptor species particularly when these refer only to the morph prized by falconers. Unless any kind of corroborative information can be obtained, such as photographs, we treat the species as escapes, *pro tem*.

Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*. Mahmud Scheisch Abdallah found one perched on top of scaffolding in small hangar in the desert about 50 km west of Palmyra in the winter of 1981. He watched it at close range before catching it after climbing the scaffolding slowly and taking it by surprise from behind. He described it as an owl, about Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* in size, but completely white. Although Porter *et al* (1996) report that 1st-year Snowy Owls have been recorded in northeast Iran in winter, it is likely that this bird was an escape, because it was so unwary.}

Recent changes in the status and distribution of birds in Libya

JEREMY GASKELL



The opportunity to study the bird life of Libya for a sustained period rather than for just a few weeks has presented itself again with the gradual easing of United Nations economic sanctions against the country. The observations summarised below are not those of a scientific expedition, nor are they intended to be a review of the country's avifauna, but are simply the results of the regular observation of a number of sites over a period of months, together with a number of observations made during excursions of limited duration. Notwithstanding this non-systematic approach to the collection of data, it is evident that there have been significant changes in the populations of a number of resident and migratory species of birds since the 1970s when ornithologists were last able to roam throughout the country at will. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* and White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* now breed and Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus*

himantopus continues to increase in numbers as a breeding species. Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* is resident at one site in Cyrenaica, eastern Libya and Little Crane *Porzana parva* a regular spring migrant. Perhaps Libya is the only country where Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* has spread from the margins of the desert to occupy territory already inhabited by Common Raven *C. corax*; in the south of the country the Fan-tailed Raven *C. rhipidurus* has been recorded in Libya for the first time. Among the small passerines, European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* has established itself as a rare breeding species. There is new evidence of migratory raptors, including Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*, Steppe Buzzard *B.b. vulpinus*, European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, Short-toed Eagle *Circus gallicus* and possibly Booted Eagle *Aquila pennatus* using a migratory route via Crete and Cyrenaica. Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* and Merlin *F. columbarius* appear to occur more regularly than previously thought. Species that were formerly very scarce in Libya but which have been recorded in substantial numbers in winter are Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*, Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*, Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, Mediterranean Gull *L. melanocephalus* and Siberian Gull *L. fuscus heuglini*. In addition Armenian *L. armenicus*, Caspian *L. cachimans* and Great Black-headed Gulls *L. ichthyaeus* were recorded for the first time in Libya in the winter of 2004–5, when Benghazi's lagoons hosted, among other species, modest numbers of Little Gulls *L. minutus*, Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybrida*, 'White-spotted' Bluethroats *Luscinia svecica* and Eurasian Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. In the south of the country Eurasian Reed Warbler of the eastern race *fuscus* was observed on migration and a description of its appearance in fresh plumage is included here.

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INTRODUCTION

MOST OF THE OBSERVATIONS contained in this paper were made in two areas of Libya, coastal Tripolitania, mainly from mid-June to late August 2004, and Cyrenaica, mainly between September 2004 and March 2005. Also included are a small number of observations made from March 20–23 2005 at the Al Kufra oasis, which lies some 900km (560 miles) south east of Benghazi. The records are principally those that indicate that significant change of status has taken place in Libya's avifauna since the publication of the British Ornithologists' Union first national checklist (Bundy 1976). Accordingly, all reference to a small number of rare and local species, whose ascertained ranges in Libya are well-documented, has been omitted.

The birdlife of Cyrenaica, whose capital Benghazi lies nearly 700km (440 miles) east of Tripoli, differs from that of Tripolitania especially as regards the migratory birds that pass through *en route* to and from south-eastern Europe. For the purposes of recording birds, Bundy (1976), whose definition is followed here, excluded from Cyrenaica the areas of true desert south of 30° N, confining the term instead to the skull-shaped protruberance that lies between the Gulf of Sirte and Egypt's Western Desert, together with the semi-arid regions immediately to the south. The dominant topographical feature of this area is the Jebel Akhdar ('Green Mountain'), a juniper-clad highland plateau 700m (2200ft) in altitude that falls away to the Mediterranean coast in a series of dramatic escarpments.

SPECIES

Podicipididae - Grebes

Three Great Crested Grebes *Podiceps cristatus* discovered on a lagoon in the As Sabri district on the north side of Benghazi in the second week of January remained until the last week of March. All previous wintering records in Libya have been from Tripolitania.

Ardeidae, Threskiornithidae and Phoenicopteridae - Herons, egrets, storks, spoonbills and flamingos

Numbers of Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*, a species previously regarded as a scarce and irregular passage visitor to Cyrenaica, peaked at c100 in Benghazi on 10 October, thereafter declining to 26 by 3 November. A flock of 18, flying in V-formation, on 10 November following storms was the last substantial autumn count. A pair with bills flushed crimson, near a site where breeding could have been possible, was observed on the north side of Benghazi on 16 February. 15 birds were observed at rest or feeding at old Al Marj on 18 February, the site of a town at the foot of the Jebel Akhdar whose population was relocated after an earthquake in 1963. On 25 May 2005 some 6 Cattle Egrets were observed feeding in a field near Zlitan, 120km east of Tripoli. A small breeding population consisting of an estimated 25 pairs was first noted on 30 May 2005 in a lightly wooded suburb of the capital. There are no published breeding records of the species from either Tripolitania or Cyrenaica. Evidently a significant range extension of the species has already taken place in North Africa, a process likely to continue. Small numbers of Great Egrets *Ardea [Egretta] alba*, previously considered a very rare visitor to Libya (Bundy 1976), wintered from early October until the second week in March at two sites in Benghazi.

On 18 February c20 pairs of White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* were observed, some of them already at their nests, on the outskirts of old Al Marj, Cyrenaica. The largest concentration comprised five nests in a dead tree with three or more nests in adjacent conifers. Subsequently 8 adult birds were observed foraging in floodwater on the rich agricultural land between Al Marj and Tolmeta. The species' range has expanded significantly in recent years. It was considered by Bundy (1976) possibly to be a casual breeder in Libya.

Two Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* observed in Benghazi on 1 October were the first noted. From January to March parties of up to 24 were frequently observed at two sites on the edge of the city. A party of 14 was present at one of these two sites on 4 July 2005. Small family parties of Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus [ruber] roseus* were observed in Benghazi on 15 and 25 September. A flock of 30 was observed on 10 October on a lake south west of the city centre. On 24 February c70 were observed in flight over extensive lagoons some 50km north of Benghazi where Williams (1963) stated that up to 100 wintered from December to February. Over 50 immature birds were seen on Benghazi's largest lagoon on 4 March 2005, and modest numbers of non-breeding birds were regularly observed there in the late spring and summer (G. Haigh pers comm).

Anatidae - Wildfowl

A party of six Gadwall *Anas strepera*, three males and three females, observed as they alighted on a large lagoon on the south west side of Benghazi on 17 February, was the second record for Cyrenaica. Despite wintering in Greece, the Gadwall has only rarely been recorded in Libya. Only three species of dabbling ducks – Common Teal *A. crecca*, Northern Pintail *A. acuta* and Northern Shoveler *A. clypeata* – were found to be common winter visitors in Cyrenaica.

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* is listed as an accidental visitor to Libya by Snow and Perrins (1998) following Bundy (1976). However, since there are

significant breeding populations in Tunisia (M. Smart *in litt*) the sighting of a bird on 19 August flying west along the shore-line at Janzour, 13km west of Tripoli, is less remarkable than the occurrence of an immature among substantial numbers of other wildfowl on a lagoon in Benghazi on 8 November after a storm. The latter is the first record of the species in Cyrenaica.

As regards diving ducks, small numbers of Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*, a species previously unrecorded in Cyrenaica, were first observed in the As Sabri district of Benghazi on 1 October. This number increased to c50 in November and counts of more than 100 were made at the same site in January and February. A single female was still present on 3 July 2005. At the same site on the north side of Benghazi, numbers of Tufted Duck *Ay. fuligula* increased from five after storms in early November to peak at 35 in January. There is only one previously published record (Bundy 1976) from Cyrenaica. Two Ferruginous Ducks *Ay. nyroca* were also observed here on 29 October. The highest single count of the species, comprising six individuals, was made on 4 November, four days prior to the onset of winter storms. On 2 April 2005, at Labdah (Leptis Magna) c100km east of Tripoli, two Ferruginous Duck were located on a shore lagoon where breeding was strongly suspected judging by the manner in which one of the pair, after alighting, kept watch from a position half hidden at the edge of the reeds (*cf* Cowan 1983, 1985). At Benghazi on 31 May four birds, thought to be non-breeders, were observed on open water.

Two Red-breasted Mergansers *Mergus serrator*, an adult female and an immature male, were observed not far from the sea at As Sabri in Benghazi from 8–10 November following storms. There are no previously published records of this species from Cyrenaica.

Accipitridae and Falconidae - Raptors

A Eurasian Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* was observed over the corniche 3km north of Benghazi port, just after it had come in off the sea on 7 September, becoming the second record for Cyrenaica. Another individual, thought to have been a sub-adult male, was observed at Janzour, Tripolitania, on 30 May 2005. It seems probably to be the case that this species is better classified as a scarce passage migrant in Libya, rather than as accidental.

A Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* was observed coming in from the sea making for the port area of Benghazi on 7 September 2004. A second bird, a juvenile was observed using precisely the same flight line on 9 September. Since the North African population of Long-legged Buzzards of the rather small race *cirtensis* is non-migratory (Snow and Perrins 1998) - although they may disperse southwards in winter (Bundy 1976, *cf* Cowan 1982) - it is submitted that these observations constitute the first evidence of the Crete-Cyrenaica migration route being used by nominate *rufinus* Long-legged Buzzard, the majority of which follow the Nile Valley. The existence of a migratory route for raptors via Crete was postulated by Vagliano (1985) and confirmed by observations made by Massa (1999). Steppe Buzzard *B.b. vulpinus* appears also to use the route via Crete, for on 29 and 30 March two dark-morph Steppe Buzzards, were observed separately at Shahhat (Cyrene), which lies southwest of the largest of the Greek islands.

Short-toed Eagles *Circaetus gallicus* were observed on the following dates: one migrant carrying a snake on 16 September at Tolmeta (Ptolemais), Cyrenaica; one certain, and four very probable distant individuals, on 29 March inland from Susa (Apollonia), which lies on the coast some 18km from Shahhat; another on the same date perched on a pylon near

Shahhat and three together on 30 March south of Al Bayda near the Wadi al Kouf in the heart of Cyrenaica's Jebel Akhdar, one of which, with legs outstretched, was vocally attempting to drive off another while the third remained indifferent. Meininger *et al* (1996) observed two pairs of Short-toed Eagles at the mouth of this large wadi in July 1993.

A single Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, a very rufous-bellied individual, was observed on the morning of 22 March scavenging along the airport road as it migrated northwards at Al Kufra. Since the characteristically rufous populations breed to the east in Egypt and beyond, it is remarkable that this observation occurred more than 1000km west of the Nile Valley. Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* is a well-known migrant through North Africa. However, a small wintering population, numbering 3–6 birds, regularly frequented the large lagoons south west of Benghazi city centre in January and February and were also observed flying to and from their roost to the north of the city. A migrating Marsh Harrier was observed at Al Kufra on 22 March 2005.

Two Booted Eagles *Aquila pennatus*, one dark-morph and one light-morph, were observed separately circling over the Wadi al Kouf on 30 March. A party of Italian ornithologists observed a light-morph bird at Shahhat on 26 April (M. Visentin *in litt*). This species was previously considered as an irregular passage visitor to Libya (Bundy 1976). A first-winter Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* was observed at July 23rd Lake, contiguous with Benghazi port, on 21 October. Although distribution maps show the species to be a broad-front migrant across North Africa, Bundy (1976) knew of only three recorded sightings, all made in spring, from eastern Cyrenaica.

Three sightings of Merlin *Falco columbarius* in January, including two birds seen on the same occasion hunting on the north side of Benghazi, suggests that this raptor is not an accidental visitor but winters in small numbers in Cyrenaica. This was suggested as a possibility by Bundy (1976) who alluded to the wintering population in neighbouring Egypt. Eleonora's Falcon *F. eleonora* is also listed only as accidental in Libya. However, a neighbouring population, presumably southern Italian, appears to hunt along the coast of Tripolitania. One being mobbed by Pallid Swifts *Apus pallidus* was seen heading eastwards on 22 July at Janzour, and on 27 July at the same site a pair hunting co-operatively was observed heading westwards. Both sightings were made in the early morning. A male Peregrine *F. peregrinus* was observed on 6 February harrying an immature female Lanner *F. biarmicus* as the latter passed southwards over the July 23rd Lake, Benghazi.

Phasianidae - Partridges

Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*, which is quite commonly encountered in Tripolitania, was conspicuous by its apparent absence from many parts of Cyrenaica where it was a popular game bird only 45 years ago (Williams 1963). Two individuals were observed by a party of ornithologists from Italy on 24 April between Tolmeta and Ras al Hillel, a distance of c130km by road across the Jebel Akhdar. (M. Visentin *in litt*)

Rallidae – Rails, crakes and coots

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*, whose status in Snow and Perrins 1998 is given as migrant breeder in the environs of Benghazi, was present in low numbers from January to March and in July 2005 on the largest lagoon south west of Benghazi city centre. This suggests that the species is resident in small numbers in Cyrenaica. Four Little Crakes *Porzana parva* were observed at As Sabri in Benghazi on 25 March indicating that the species is not a rare visitor but a regular passage migrant. A Baillon's Crake *P. pusilla* that had evidently just made landfall was observed flying along a shingle beach and

subsequently located hiding under a stone on 11 November. Bundy (1976) knew of no records from Cyrenaica. A Coot *Fulica atra*, normally a locally common winter visitor, was observed with a single downy chick close to a small reed bed on 31 May in As Sabri, Berghazi. This is the first breeding record from Cyrenaica (cf Cowan 1983, 1985).

Recurvirostridae, Scolopacidae, Charadriidae and Burhinidae - Waders and Stone-curlews (All the wader records relate to Benghazi and its environs unless otherwise stated.) Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* is a common passage migrant on Benghazi's lagoons where modest numbers remain to winter. During a visit to one such site on 31 May 2005 three of us were frequently escorted by anxiously calling Black-winged Stilts, and an incubating bird was observed on an islet. Meininger *et al* (1996) first recorded the species breeding in Cyrenaica at Ain Zayana just north of Benghazi on the road to Aquriya (Tocra).

Small parties of Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* were observed on 14 and 17 September. Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*, Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis*, Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* and Little Stint *C. minuta* all proved to be regular autumn migrants on Benghazi's lagoons, Spotted Redshanks being noted in early July 2005 when still in breeding plumage. In addition, 30 Little Stints and a few Temminck's Stints *C. temminckii* were also observed in January and February on the north side of Benghazi where both species winter on extensive, well-vegetated salt flats that hold excess rainfall in winter.

Throughout the winter Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (in very small numbers), Redshank *T. totanus*, Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* and Sanderling *C. alba* frequented the tideline and shore lagoons. In Tripolitania, at Janzour west of the capital, a flock of c10 Sanderling, first observed on 15 July 2004, remained on the coast until 19 August at least. Wood Sandpipers *T. glareola* were found wintering at one site in Benghazi where counts of from 10–20 were made regularly. Green Sandpiper, common enough in autumn, proved to be a scarce winter visitor.

There is little habitat to suit the Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* in Cyrenaica. One that resettled quickly after being flushed from a mud patch on the edge of an extensive reed-bed south west of Benghazi city centre on 28 January was the only record. A Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* on 7 October was the second record for Cyrenaica. A party of 7 Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* observed on 28 January and again on 17 February at different sites in Benghazi were the only ones encountered.

Stone-curlews *Burhinus oedicephalus* were heard at night on four occasions between 17 February and 3 March on the northern edge of Benghazi. On 4 July 2005 one was heard on suitable breeding habitat southwest of Benghazi. Two Little Ringed Plovers *Ch. dubius*, an uncommon passage migrant in Cyrenaica, were observed at close range on 29 March at Susa (Apollonia), on the province's north coast, feeding on the tideline with other waders. Small parties of Whimbrels *Numenius phaeopus* were noted on the coast west of Janzour, Tripolitania, from 22 July 2004 onwards.

Laridae - Gulls

The first Siberian Gull *Larus fuscus heuglini* of the winter was observed sitting on a rock just offshore at Benghazi on 11 November. There appear to be no previously published records of this form from Libya. From January to March modest numbers, including individuals with peach-coloured legs ascribable to the race *taimyrensis*, were present. There was a noticeable passage of Siberian Gulls in association with Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L.f. fuscus* through Benghazi from 11 to 18 March.

Black-headed Gulls *L. ridibundus* now winter in considerable numbers in Benghazi, where flocks numbering several thousand fly southward to roost at dusk while many others fly out to sea on a north-west bearing and return on the opposite bearing shortly before sunrise. Approximately 500 Mediterranean Gulls *L. melanocephalus* also winter in Benghazi, the bulk of them in the north of the city. The great majority do not arrive until mid-November at the earliest.

Slender-billed Gull *L. genei* was formerly a very rare visitor to Cyrenaica (Bundy 1976). Now it is not uncommon as passage visitor to Benghazi in September and October but occurs only very sparingly in winter. Three sub-adult birds were observed on 31 May and two of indeterminate age on 4 July 2005. Audouin's Gull *L. audouinii* has traditionally been regarded as a winter visitor to Tripolitania from August onwards (Bundy 1976). Perhaps on account of the population increase in the Western Mediterranean, juveniles and adults were quite common on the coast near Janzour from the second half of June 2004 onwards. However, in 2005 despite occasional sightings as early as mid-May, inexplicably there were virtually no sightings in June or early July. Small numbers of first summer Audouin's Gulls were observed at sea off Tripoli's hotel district in early April. Accordingly, it is now theoretically possible to observe this species in the west of the country in greater or lesser numbers all year round.

Two Great Black-headed Gulls *L. ichthyæetus*, both of which were photographed (**Plate 4**), frequented the coast on the north side of Benghazi from 12 January, or earlier, until 19 January. This species, which was reported from elsewhere in Libya at about the same time (M. Smart *in litt*), has never previously been recorded in the country. Caspian (Pontic) Gulls *L. cachinnans* (nominate *cachinnans*), one of which was photographed (**Plate 5**), were present in small numbers in Benghazi from late January through to late March. This form, numbers of which were also reported from elsewhere in Libya at about the same time (M. Smart *in litt*), has never previously been observed in Libya.

An adult Armenian Gull *L. armenicus*, associating with nominate *fuscus* Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Yellow-legged Gulls *L. cachinnans michahellis*, was observed at close range on a beach and adjacent rubbish dump just north of Benghazi on 19 January. There are no previous records of this form from Libya.

Description based on Field Notes

Range 70m through 30x telescope; bright sunshine, windy (but observation position sheltered). Upper parts slate grey, a shade darker than Yellow-legged Gull; primaries black with white tips visible at rest, the white tips less conspicuous in flight than those of Yellow-legged Gull; when overhead the secondaries appeared grey. Legs yellow; bill rich yellow, stubby, blunt; the bill tip: red; black and whitish (the last only at the very tip); Nostril distinctly bulbous-shaped, broadening distally, tapering towards forehead; head white with distinctive dark iris. The pattern of the bill, it may be added, was *precisely* like that illustrated in Shirihai and Christie (1996).

The occurrence in January of two Common Gulls *L. canus*, a first winter at As Sabri lake and an adult at at Qar Younes beach, which lies south-west of Benghazi, indicates that this species is a scarce, rather than accidental, visitor to Libya. These are the first records of the species from Cyrenaica. Low numbers of Little Gulls *L. minutus* were present continuously from January to March on Benghazi's lagoons.

Sternidae - Terns

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* proved to be a regular autumn passage migrant in Cyrenaica, visiting lagoons daily at As Sabri in the north of the city until 19 October.

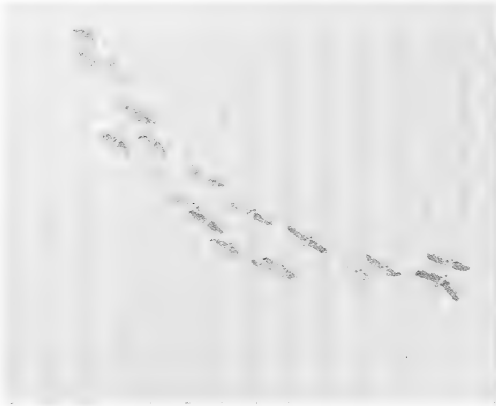


Plate 1. Black-crowned Night Herons *Nycticorax nycticorax* at Al Kufra, Libya. March 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 2. Mediterranean Gulls *Larus melanocephalus* and Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, Benghazi, Libya. February 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 3. Jebel Akhdar, Cyrenaica, Libya. March 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.

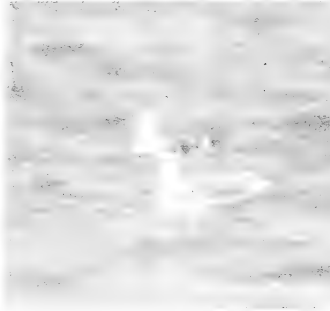


Plate 4. Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*, Benghazi, Libya. January 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 5. Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*, Benghazi, Libya. January 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 6. Date plantation below escarpment, Al Kufra, Libya. March 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 7. Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* in floodwater, Benghazi, Libya, March 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 8. Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* and Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea*, Benghazi, Libya. March 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.



Plate 9. Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*, Tolmeta, Cyrenaica, Libya. February 2005. © Jeremy Gaskell.

A few individuals on passage or dispersing after the breeding season were observed offshore at Janzour, Tripolitania, in late June 2004.

Small numbers of Lesser Crested Terns *S. bengalensis* were observed off the coast at Janzour and at Sabratha, Tripolitania, in June 2004 and 2005 respectively. In Cyrenaica a solitary Lesser Crested Tern was observed flying south past Benghazi on 25 February. In late May and early July 2005, adult birds were observed returning with small fish to a breeding colony of over 50 pairs on an island in one of Benghazi's lagoons which they shared with breeding Little Terns *S. albifrons*. Family parties of, and occasional individual, Gull-billed Terns *S. nilotica* flying east were noted at Janzour in late June 2004 and early July 2005. Unless it flies high overland this species must pass along the north coast of Cyrenaica *en route* for the Nile delta. However, it has seldom been recorded in the east of the country. The only Gull-billed Terns seen in the autumn were a single bird passing over a lagoon in Benghazi on 25 October, and two birds offshore 3km north of Benghazi port on 5 November 2004. Sandwich Tern *S. sandvicensis* proved to be a winter visitor in modest numbers to the coast near Benghazi. Bundy (1976) knew of few records from Cyrenaica.

Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybrida*, which never used to be recorded from Cyrenaica at all, are now a common passage migrant in autumn from late September onwards. Counts of up to 50 were made daily in autumn and more than 85 seen at a roost on 5 November. The species is also a winter visitor in modest numbers. One bird photographed on 12 January was already in breeding plumage. Small numbers of Black Terns *C. niger* were also encountered irregularly in autumn on passage in Benghazi until 28 October; a single bird was found on a lagoon on the north side of Benghazi associating with wintering Whiskered Terns on 6 February after strong southerly winds. A single White-winged Tern *C. leucopterus* on 6 October at the same site in Benghazi is the first autumn record from Cyrenaica where the species is a regular passage migrant in spring (Bundy 1976).

Columbidae - Pigeons

Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* observed at Al Kufra 20–23 March were distinctly paler than those observed under similar light conditions in the north of Libya, and appeared also to have less prominent rufous edging to their scapular feathers. Both populations are usually attributed to a single race, *arenicolor*

Psittacidae - Parakeets

Up to three Ring-necked Parakeets *Psittacula krameri* were frequently observed during the late autumn and winter flying to roost from the date palm plantations on the north side of Benghazi where they fed. It is probably too early to say whether a feral population of this species has become established in Libya.

Apodidae - Swifts

On 20 February two Pallid Swifts *Apus pallidus* were heard screaming as they dashed at rooftop height along one of Benghazi's main streets. Although small numbers (max 15) were occasionally encountered over lagoons in January, it seems preferable to regard this species as a migrant breeder occasionally overwintering in Cyrenaica (Bundy 1976; Snow and Perrins 1998) rather than a resident species as indicated by the distribution map in Mullaney *et al* (1999). The last observation of Pallid Swifts in Benghazi in the autumn was a party of six on 26 September. A single bird with a full crop, perhaps of nesting material, was observed flying up to the underside of a concrete water tower at Al Kufra on 22 March. This species was not included by

Misonne (1974) in his list of the birds of Kufra. A dead chick found on a Benghazi pavement on 12 June 2005 was well-feathered and almost fully-grown.

Small numbers of Common Swifts *A. apus* were observed during the summer at Janzour, Tripolitania. A single Little Swift *A. affinis* was observed at the village of Taghma in the Jebel Nafusa, Tripolitania, in the early morning of 24 June 2005. This species has been described as a 'passage visitor' in the Jebel from February until June (Bundy 1976). Since many of the Pallid Swifts seen on the same occasion were clearly passing through, it seems more likely that most of the Little Swifts observed in spring and summer are on wide ranging foraging expeditions from their nearest breeding grounds further west. The Little Swift is a resident species in north-west Africa, migratory in the Levant.

Alcedinidae, Meropidae, Coraciidae and Upupidae - Kingfishers, bee-eaters, rollers and hoopoes

European Kingfishers *Alcedo atthis* were much more common on Benghazi's lagoons and along the shore from September to November than they were from January to March. A strong passage of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *Merops persicus* was observed at Al Kufra from 21–23 March (*cf* Misonne 1974). A juvenile Roller *Coracias garrulus* was observed at Janzour, Tripolitania on 6 August.

A resident breeding population of Hoopoes *Upupa epops* has established itself in Benghazi where the distinctive song was heard in January. The courtship behaviour of pairs of Hoopoes at Al Kufra from 20–23 March, and the observation of an individual inspecting a disused building, indicated that not all birds at the oasis were on passage. One bird was heard to give a high sibilant call during a period of intensive, presumably territorial, interaction involving three birds.

Alaudidae - Larks

A male Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes* was observed displaying west of the airport road at Al Kufra on 22 March. This is the first record of this widely distributed species in the area. The occurrence of Short-toed Larks *Calandrella brachydactyla* in ones and twos at Al Kufra 20–23 March was similar to that observed in April 1968 by Cramp and Conder (1970). A migrating party of c7 birds was observed among weeds at Susa, on the coast of Cyrenaica on 29 March.

Hirundinidae - Swallows and martins

The only Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris* observed away from the species' stronghold in the Wadi al Kouf in the Jebel Akhdar was one on 10 February 2005 feeding at very low altitude 80km to the west of Tolmeta on the coastal plain below the jebel. A census of this species in Libya would reveal a low population density. Up to seven House Martins *Delichon urbicum* were regularly observed in loose parties during the early mornings at Janzour, Tripolitania in May and June flying along the shore in the company of Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica*. As they never paused to feed it was assumed they were on foraging excursions from their breeding grounds further west. Whether or not the species breeds in the far west of Libya remains unascertained. Two Red-rumped Swallows *H. daurica* in a mixed party of hirundines were observed moving ahead of a weather front at Benghazi on 5 November. These constitute the first autumn records in Cyrenaica.

Motacillidae - Pipits and wagtails

Three Tawny Pipits *Anthus campestris* observed together on 2 November in Benghazi were the first autumn record for Cyrenaica. A Tree Pipit *A. trivialis* seen as it flew northwards calling on 18 January was the first record in winter in Libya. However, in the light of the fact that the first House Martins were observed on 2 February, this

observation could relate to an exceptionally early spring migrant rather than to a wintering individual. Searches for Water Pipits *A. spinoletta* in suitable habitat on the north side of Benghazi in January proved inconclusive and the only certain records were of one on 17 February and three on 11 March. Three distant birds considered likely to have been Water Pipits were observed on 3 November. It is possible that Water Pipit is a passage migrant through Cyrenaica rather than a winter visitor as indicated by Snow and Perrins (1998). Bundy (1976) emphasized the lack of any records from the region.

Most migrating Yellow Wagtails *Motacilla flava* showed features of more than one race but certain individuals showed characteristics of the race *feldegg* or the *flava-feldegg* intergrade, *dombrowski*. A few very bright individuals evidently belonged either to the race *flavissima* or *lutea*. The majority, but not all, of the contact calls heard were the harsh, rasping calls of eastern populations. One such bird, considered from its behaviour to have been an early migrant, was observed on 4 July 2005 on the margin of one of Benghazi's lagoons (cf Meininger *et al* 1996). Grey Wagtails *M. cinerea* were observed on two dates only - two birds in Benghazi on 21 October and one near Al Marj, Cyrenaica on 18 February.

Turdidae - Chats and thrushes

A European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* observed feeding in a well-shaded park in Tripoli on 8 July 2005 is the first-ever record in summer of a species known as a regular winter visitor to both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Three Common Nightingales *Luscinia megarhynchos*, a species listed by Bundy (1976) as of uncertain status, were heard at Labdah (Leptis Magna), Tripolitania, on 2 April. Bluethroats *Luscinia svecica* (white-spotted morph) were observed at four locations in Benghazi from January to March.

The sole record of Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* was the discovery of the fresh corpse of an accidentally killed male in Benghazi on 11 November. Common Stonechats *Saxicola torquatus* of both the Western group *rubicola* and the Eastern group *maurus* ('Siberian' Stonechat) were observed from early November to early March on both cultivated and uncultivated terrain in Benghazi. According to Urquhart and Bowley (2002), who split Common Stonechat into three species on the basis of DNA classifications, the latter are considered to be the *armenicus* subspecies.

A female Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* was observed on 2 March at Benghazi. There was a marked passage of Isabelline Wheatears *O. isabellina* and Northern Wheatears through Al Kufra oasis on 20 March. On 29 March two Isabelline Wheatears together were observed among the ruins at Susa, on the north coast of Cyrenaica. A single Black-eared Wheatear *O. hispanica* of the eastern race was observed on 20 March at Al Kufra. Collectively these records of different wheatears constitute the earliest for the oasis.

Song Thrushes *Turdus philomenos*, which are very shy winter visitors in Libya, were observed near Al Marj on 18 February, and on 3 March near Qasr Libya, which lies mid way between Al Marj and Al Bayda. A party of four Mistle Thrushes *Turdus viscivorus* was also observed near Qasr Libya on the same date. Two calling Fan-tailed (Zitting) Cisticolas *Cisticola juncidis* were observed at Labdah (Leptis Magna) on 2 April (cf Meininger *et al* 1996).

A Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon* was observed at close range on 28 January in a reed bed on one of the lakes south west of Benghazi city centre. A bird with a cocked tail seen as a shadow through reeds in bright sunlight on an adjacent lake on 10 October which appeared too small to be a Bluethroat was probably of the

same species. A single Eurasian Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus* was observed on migration on 23 September on the north side of Benghazi. Small numbers of wintering birds were heard in song and then observed on 28 January, and subsequently, in reedbeds that border the lakes south-west of Benghazi city centre.

On 20 March at Al Kufra a Reed Warbler of the eastern race *fuscus* ('Caspian Reed Warbler') was observed at close range for twenty minutes feeding at close range on insects infesting a carcass; another Reed Warbler considered to have been of this race was observed while in song on 21 March. The song of this individual was striking for having similarities to of the songs of nominate *scirpaceus* and the Sedge Warbler *A. schoenobaenus*.

Description based on Field Notes

Broadly similar to nominate *scirpaceus* but distinctly olive-toned. Tail prominent, dark; rectrices faintly tipped olive-white. Faint buff wash on flanks, otherwise underparts off-white, but showing faint grey 'tramlines' on breast, creating the impression of a miniature eastern race Great Reed Warbler *A. arundinaceus*. Remiges with slightly rufous edging; faint panel on secondaries. Approximately 7 closely bunched primaries visible; tertials with darker olive centres; dark alula with ochre-buff edging. Rump and uppertail-coverts warmer but not as warmly-coloured as on nominate *scirpaceus*. Long, pale under-tail coverts. Pale periocular ring; supercilium prominent in front of eye only, appearing to kink upwards slightly towards forehead. Lores pale. Slightly pinkish tint on entire lower mandible was more prominent at base; upper mandible dark, tarsi ditto. Orange gape. Call - a quiet 'churr'.

Eastern Olivaceous Warblers *Hippolais pallida* of the race *elaieca* were in song at Al Kufra. A single bird of the same race was observed on 30 March in the Wadi al Kouf. A female Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* of indeterminate race was observed at Al Kufra on 20 March. This is the first record of the species for the oasis.

Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*. At least five belonging to the local subspecies *saharae* were found on 24 June 2005 on the lower slopes of the Jebel Nafusa north of Yefren at a spot which lies due south of Surman on the coast c100km from the Tunisian border.

A Chiffchaff showing characteristics of the race *abietinus* and two showing characteristics of the putative race *fulvescens* were observed on 5 November in allotment gardens on the north side of Benghazi. An unidentified *Phylloscopus* warbler showing a pronounced supercilium was also observed briefly on the same occasion.

Paridae – Titmice

Blue Tits of the race *cyrenaicae* - one of six races of the *teneriffae* group found south of the Straits of Gibraltar - were observed not only in the species' stronghold, the Wadi al Kouf in the Jebel Akhdar, but also at much lower population density, 25km to the north in pine woods at Shahhat.

Laniidae - Shrikes

Southern Grey Shrikes *Lanius meridionalis* of the race *algeriensis* observed in Cyrenaica were indistinguishable from those observed in Tunisia in early September. On the coast of Tripolitania, both east and west of Tripoli, the species is represented by a paler form. As regards the populations in Tunisia and Tripolitania, this pattern of distribution would appear to confirm the statement in Snow and Perrins 1998 that variation is clinal with the palest birds occurring in the south, the darkest in the north. However, with regard to the race *algeriensis* in Cyrenaica, there proved to be a considerable degree of plumage variation within the population observable in the environs of Benghazi, some birds being much darker on the under-parts than others. The consistently paler birds that

predominate in Tripolitania and showed a very narrow grey-white line above the facial mask predominate in Tripolitania. These appear to be ascribable to the race *elegans*. A very small number of birds of this type were observed near Benghazi in late winter.

Corvidae - Crows

Attention was drawn by Massa (1999) to the northward expansion of Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* to the arid zones of coastal Libya. The spread of this species has continued into the Jebel Akhdar where both Common Raven *C. corax* and Brown-necked can be encountered. A pair of Brown-necked Ravens perched on a tree was observed near Shahhat on 30 September 2004; another bird was seen briefly at close range on 10 February 2005 feeding on a roadside carcass near Al Abiar. Several other ravens seen in flight from a moving vehicle shortly after this observation were considered likely also to be Brown-necked; a single bird in flight, identified by call and tail-shape as Brown-necked Raven, was observed near the Wadi al Kouf, where Common Ravens were breeding, on 30 March.

A Fan-tailed Raven *C. rhipidurus*, a species never previously recorded from Libya, was observed on the escarpment east of Al Kufra on 20 March.

Description based on Field Notes.

Attention was drawn by the sound of a distinctly Raven-like double call emanating from a bird that was not immediately visible flying southwards along the west-facing edge of the escarpment that overlooks Al Kufra town some two kilometres away. However, the quality of the call was not as barking as the call of Common Raven *Corvus corax* (whose commonest call in Cyrenaica's Jebel Akhdar is a triple 'quark'). On the other hand, this call was quite unlike the more crow-like call of *C. ruficollis* - the species that replaces Common Raven in arid areas of Africa and Arabia. The bird, when located as it was moving away from where I was standing, seemed smaller than the Common Raven, noticeably broad-winged and relatively small-headed in appearance. The most striking feature was the presence of a very short tail. The central feathers were marginally shorter than the outer rectrices, thereby creating a slight concave tip to the tail when not fully spread. If this feature is consistent with the moult sequence of a first summer bird it would correlate with the documented 'wanderlust' of first year birds which sees them prospecting congenial habitat beyond the confines of their traditional range. Nominate *rhipidurus* occurs from the Horn of Africa westwards in a broad swathe across sub-Saharan Africa including the Tibesti Mountains which mark the southern limit of the Western Palearctic, and separate Libya from Chad.

Passeridae - Sparrows

The population of House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* in Tripolitania is evidently derived from interbreeding between House and Spanish Sparrows *P. hispaniolensis* and appears similar to the '× *italiae*' ('Cisalpine' or 'Italian') Sparrow found in Italy. They are distinguishable from Spanish Sparrows primarily by the smaller black bib and much reduced streaking on the flanks, although some adult males show a few flecks of grey on a chestnut-brown background above the bill. House Sparrows in Cyrenaica, attributable to the race *tingitanus* (Bundy 1976), seem similar to House Sparrows elsewhere but for a narrow, off-white semi-collar. These birds appear to hybridise with Spanish Sparrows only occasionally. Their usually bizarre-looking offspring share characteristics of both parents in equal measure. One such bird observed on 4 July 2005, however, appeared identical to the dominant type of *italiae* Sparrow found in Tripolitania but for the presence of the semi-collar and a broad grey strip on the crown and nape.

The continued existence of Spanish Sparrows in Tripolitania is a little mysterious. While discrete populations occur on farms as might be expected, the species also occurs in Tripoli, notably on the old fortified harbour wall near the hotel complex on

the north side of the old city. More surprisingly, a small, apparently unmixed population of Spanish Sparrows was found breeding in modern buildings alongside House Sparrows at Janzour tourist village to the west of the capital city. In Benghazi fairly small, local populations of Spanish Sparrows were observed in reedbeds and date plantations on the edge of the city.

Fringillidae - Finches

A male Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* in song was observed in pines at Janzour, Tripolitania, on 29 June 2004 and breeding was confirmed the following year when a single fully-fledged juvenile was observed on 3 June. At least three singing males were present in the area in 2005. In Cyrenaica, single wintering Greenfinches were observed southwest of Benghazi city centre on 14 January and 17 February. A solitary bird was observed feeding in a field at Shahhat (Cyrene) on 29 March. In Tripolitania, 4 juvenile Linnets *C. cannabina* were observed feeding on thistles at Taghma in the Jebel Nafusa on 24 June 2005. A singing male was heard at Soffet, also in the Jebel Nafusa, on 11 June. The sighting of birds of the year effectively adds a third discrete breeding population in Libya to those already known in eastern Tripolitania and in eastern Cyrenaica, as indicated by the distribution map in Mullarney *et al* (1999).

Two unidentified estrildrid-type finches were observed in a stand of tamarisk at Al Kufra on 23 March. They were very fast flying, siskin-sized, olive-grey in colour but with conspicuous white either in the tail feathers or in the posterior of the bird. It is possible that these birds were introduced artificially by one of the many economic migrants to the area, but they behaved as if wild, plunging into the tamarisk tops so as to be invisible when feeding.

Emberizidae - Buntings

Small numbers of Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* winter in suitable habitat in Benghazi (cf. Mullarney *et al* 1999). Bundy (1976) highlighted the absence of records of the species from Cyrenaica.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

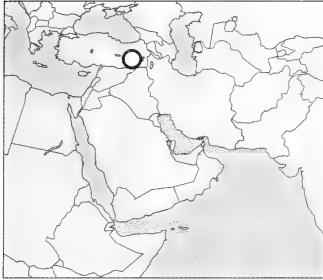
Many thanks to Dr Peter Cowan for obliging me throughout the year with answers to numerous queries on the status of individual species in Libya and also for his valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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The Birds of Kralkızı Dam (Diyarbakır), Southeast Turkey

RECEP KARAKAŞ & AHMET KILIÇ



The birds of Kralkızı Dam, which is 80km north of Diyarbakır, were studied from February 2000 to February 2002. During the observation period, 140 bird species were recorded, amongst them being 50 confirmed as breeding, 35 probably or possibly breeding and 53 migrant or wintering species. Two species are globally threatened. Two species had not previously been recorded in Diyarbakır: Greater Sand-plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* and Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*. Several other species, little-studied in this region, were also recorded including Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* and Fire-(Red-) fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*. Selected species accounts are appended. The accurate determination of bird species' numbers and distribution will help to evaluate and define future changes in the area's bird fauna, by establishing a data 'baseline'.

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TURKEY'S VARIABLE CLIMATE and topography provide a great diversity of habitats. The ornithological importance of Turkey has long been recognized, but despite much individual effort by local and international researchers (eg Murphy 1984, Beaman 1986, Martins 1989, Eames 1990, Kasperek 1992, Ayvaz 1993, Kirwan & Martins 1994 & 2000, Biricik 1996, Kılıç 1999 & 2001, Karakaş & Kılıç 2002) systematic and detailed distribution, breeding and passage data are lacking, not least because of the size and remoteness of much of the country. Turkey is rich in bird species, but there is little standardisation of approach between ornithological studies across the country (Yarar & Magnin 1997). The southeastern region of Anatolia is important because many of its species occupy semi-arid or fresh water ecosystems, but detailed knowledge is lacking, because until recently, there had been no systematic field studies, apart from atlas work that in part monitored the effect of the many dams constructed here as part of the GAP project (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi – Southeast Anatolia Project) since the 1970s; these reservoirs now are important for some species, albeit at the expense of others (Welch 2004). Most bird records from the region are opportunistic, from individuals travelling through. Doubtless many visitors have not passed on their records. However, there have been a few, more formal records.

Diyarbakır and its environs in southeastern Anatolia possess the near-continental climate of steppe-lands amid hills, providing varied breeding and foraging habitats for birds. After the GAP project has been completed, it is expected that the region will undergo large-scale changes in agriculture and flora composition and distribution, partly reflecting past conditions (Ünlü *et al* 1997).

We have used the latest distribution maps (Welch in prep) and so this present study will go some way to filling the gaps in our knowledge for birds in southeast Anatolia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Between February 2000–2002, systematic observations were made of the bird species of Kralkızı Dam and its environs, comprising 62 sets of line transects (Table 1); the fieldworkers used binoculars and telescopes and some photography was undertaken. Bird species were identified in the field or by reference to the standard ornithological literature

(Harrison 1975, Cramp & Simmons 1978 & 1983, Heinzel *et al* 1998 and Mullarney *et al* 1999). For the systematic list of birds, Kirwan *et al* (1998) has been followed. Breeding status was determined by applying the EBCC criteria (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997) to our observations of courtship, behaviour and whether eggs, chicks or nests were found.

Table 1. Number of transect sets

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
2000	1	3	4	4	4	2	1	3	4	2	3	31	
2001	2	3	4	4	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	28	
2002	1	2	8	8	7	3	3	5	6	3	5	3	
Totals	3	5	6	8	8	7	3	3	5	6	3	5	62

STUDY AREA

Kralkızı Dam at 38°20'N, 40°01'E is approximately 80km north of Diyarbakır city centre and is 6km from the province of Dicle. It was constructed on the Maden River in 1998 to provide both irrigation and energy (**Figure 1**). The reservoir covers 5770ha and is at 750m asl. The water level varies according to seasonal rains. The main study area comprises the shores and littoral of the reservoir and the marshes below the dam. Above the dam are wooded slopes, the hinterland being steep and rocky. A landfill tip northwest of the Kralkızı bridge is a regular foraging site for some species.

The region has a typical steppe climate, the annual average temperature being 16°C, mean maximum being 44°C and minimum being minus -2.86°C (July and January respectively). Precipitation primarily occurs in winter and spring, averaging 457 mm annually, comprising snowfall in winter, sometimes between November and March. All these data are from the Turkish State Meteorological Service at Diyarbakır Station.

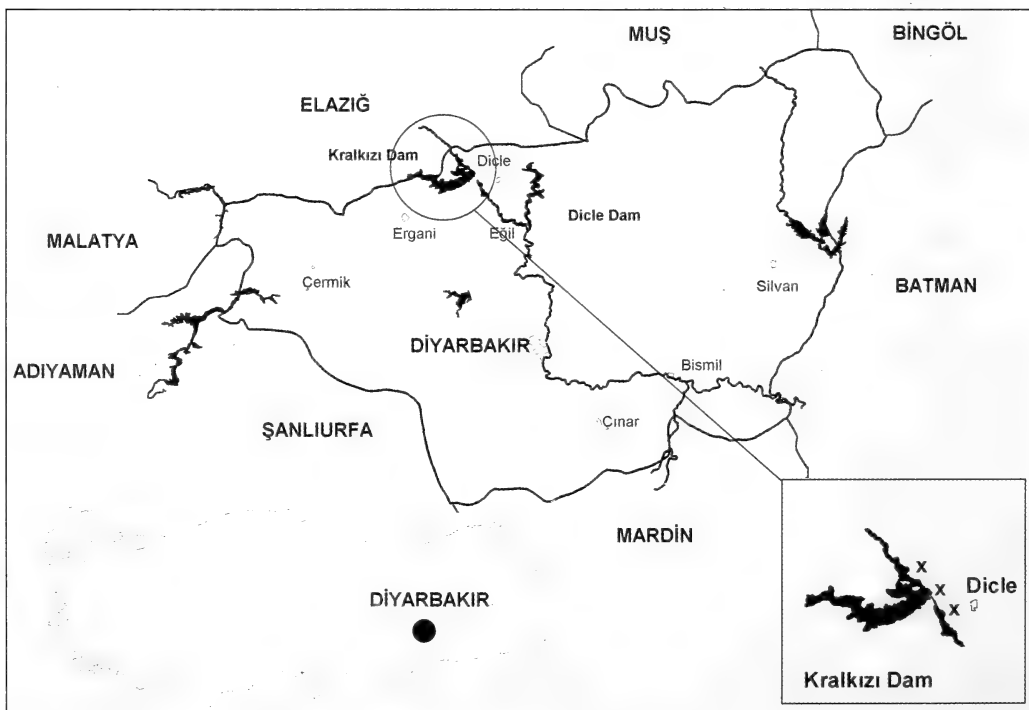


Figure 1. Map of the study area, x indicating fixed observation points.

In the region, altitude and topography determine the different vegetation communities. Important trees include two species of oak (*Quercus*), two species of hawthorn (*Crataegus*), mastic *Pistacia* sp, almond *Amygdalus orientalis*, fig *Ficus carica* and juniper *Juniperus* sp. However, there are some bush-like plants, such as Christ's thorn *Paliurus spina-cristi*, yellow jasmine *Jasminum fruticans*, dog-rose *Rosa canina*, bramble *Rubus* sp and tamarisk *Tamarix* sp. Over-grazing and over-use of the land has affected the natural environment. Cattle- and sheep-grazing are widespread and the area is subject to hunting pressure, especially during winter below the dam and on the mountainsides.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2 gives a list of bird species and maximum numbers observed at Kralkızı Dam and its environs. 140 species were recorded, 35 being resident, 52 summer migrants, 23 winter visitors and 28 passage migrants. The seasonal status of two species was not defined fully. 50 species were confirmed breeders, 35 are probable or possible breeders and 52 were winter visitors or passage migrants. Among the total of 78 endangered species, Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*, European Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* are defined within Europe by BirdLife International (Burfield & van Bommel 2004) as 'Non-SPEC Secure, SPEC 3 Depleted and SPEC 3 (Critically Endangered)' respectively. Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* is Near Threatened (NT) (BirdLife International (BLI) 2004a) while Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*, a local breeder, is evaluated as Vulnerable (VU) (BLI 2004b), (Hilton-Taylor, 2000). Ferruginous Duck probably breeds in the study area. However, according to national criteria, the recently-published Red Data Book of The Birds of Turkey (Kılıç & Eken 2004) gives *Ceryle rudis* as Critically Endangered (CR) and *Aythya nyroca* as Endangered (EN); 9 species are listed as Vulnerable (VU) and 12 as Near Threatened (NT) (see **Table 2**).

We compared this study with other similar locality studies carried out in the region (Biricik1996, Kılıç 2001, Karakaş & Kılıç 2002). We note that Anseriformes had decreased, only 6 of 13 expected species being found. We speculate that hunting pressure has played its part, but changes in land-use probably have been the major influence. Further studies are needed. {Local people commented that Chukar *Alectoris chukar* had been seen previously until recent years, but we did not find it.} In spite of this decline, many bird species occur, especially in spring (**Figure 2**).

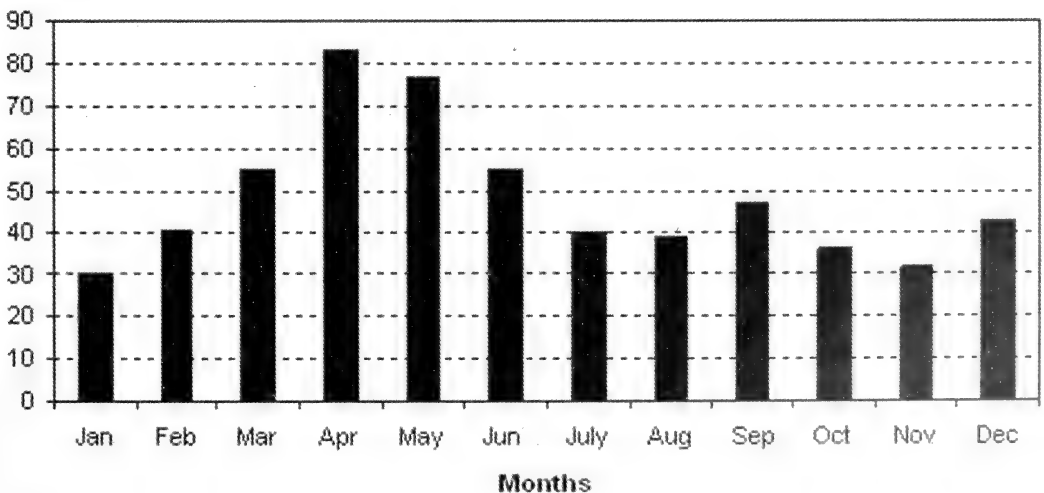


Figure 2: Number of bird species at Kralkızı Dam each month

Table 2. List of bird species recorded in the study area, with maximum numbers counted each month. (** = breeds in the region; * = probably or possibly breeds in the region; + = numbers not counted; (1) = one probably seen).

Species	Months											
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> **	2	1	4	1	2	1			6	1		
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> *	6	4	6	2		2						13
(Great) Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		3		2								29
Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i> *					3							
Black-crowned Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>					2					4		
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> *				4	2							
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>							1					
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i> **				2	4		2	2				
Great Egret <i>Egretta (Ardea) alba</i>		9		2	1					21	4	3
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> **	2	3	17	7	5	1	1	6	28	40	7	13
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i> *				1	2		1					
Black Stork <i>Ciconia nigra</i> *				1	1	3						
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i> **			2	22	7	12	6	5	1			
Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>				1								
Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>											1	
Eurasian Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>		2										
Common Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>		9										
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> *	12	45	8					5	1	9	46	41
Common Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>		3								2	4	
Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i> *				1		1	4	2	6	6	2	
European Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>					2							
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>				1	3				17			
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i> **					2	3	1					
Western Marsh Harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>					1							
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>				1					1			
Northern Goshawk <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>				1								
Eurasian Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i> *		1		1				2				
Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i> **	1		2	11	3				8		1	
Long-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo rufinus</i> **		1	1		1	1			1	1	1	1
Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> *						1						
Booted Eagle <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i> *				1					2			
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i> **					10	10						
European Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> **	1	1	3	4	4	2	1	1	2	1		2
Eurasian Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>					2				2			
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>					1							
Spotted Crane <i>Porzana porzana</i>									2			
Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i> *		32	2	1					5		26	35
Eurasian Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> *			3	2								
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i> **			1	19	13	3	7	2		2		
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>										1		
Greater Sandplover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>											9	15
Northern Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>			41									13
Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>				1	1							5
Common Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	2		1	2								
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	1	3		1			2	5	1			2
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> **			2	14	10	3	6	7	2	4	2	7
Great Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>			29									
Black-headed Gull <i>Larus ridibundus</i> *	23	17	177	17					1			48
Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i>			35	35								
Armenian Gull <i>Larus armenicus</i> *	281	630	424	258	1		18	42	218	420	995	870
Gull-billed Tern <i>Sterna [Gelocheilidon] nilotica</i>				8								
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> *				18	2							
Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> *				3	6							
White-winged Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i> *					20			5	5			
Rock Dove <i>Columba livia</i> **	334	203	80	43	32	30	15	35	262	599	367	355
Eurasian Collared Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *		3	10	9						17		
European Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> **				5	10	2	7	12	91			
Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i> **	4	4	6	23	6	7	2	4	6	4	8	6
Common Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i> *				1								
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i> **	1	1		3	2	1	2	2		1		1
European Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> *					1							
Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i> **			40	52	45	52	27	3				
Common (European) Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> *	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1		
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i> **			1		2	1	1	2	4			2
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i> **				52	98	18	19	17	21			
European Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i> **				16	21	4	5	5	4			
(Eurasian) Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i> **				3	1							
Syrian Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i> **	1									1	1	

We compared published distributional data (distribution areas and maps) for bird species recorded in our study. (eg Roselaar 1995, Kasperek & Bilgin 1996, Porter *et al* 1996). We also noted that the commonality of species between our study and various earlier sources often was quite low; some we have not observed, and others we had seen were not listed elsewhere. This is scarcely surprising, given the vast area of Turkey and the relatively low level of coverage of even the most intensive work. We believe that our records of Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, Greater Sand-plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*, Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*, Fire-(Red-) fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus* and Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus* are the first records for Diyarbakır (cf Beaman 1986, Martins 1989, Eames 1990, Kasperek 1992, Ayvaz 1993, Kirwan & Martins 1994 & 2000, Biricik 1996, Kasperek & Bilgin 1996, Kılıç 2001, Karakaş & Kılıç 2002, and Kirwan *et al* 2003). We confirmed Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* as breeding, but unlike Murphy (1984) east of Diyarbakır, we failed to find the globally-threatened Great Bustard *Otus tarda* in the Diyarbakır-Ergani-Eğil triangle (see **Fig 1**), where suitable habitat exists. Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* probably breeds in our study area and we assess Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris* and Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* as probably breeding (**Table 2**).

Further to Welch (in prep), we note that we recorded some additional species, due in part perhaps to the study periods being different: Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*, Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Common Teal *A. crecca*, Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*, Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, Greater Sand-plover, Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*, Common Gull *L. canus*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*, (Winter) Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*, Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*, Fire-(Red-) fronted Serin and Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*.

A possible reason for raptor populations diminishing could be the widespread and indiscriminate use of pesticides in intensive agriculture following the GAP, which may lead to water pollution. Although quantitative data are lacking on the accumulation of pesticides in plant and animal tissues, we noted that species that require clear and productive water, such as European and Pied Kingfisher remain present. Species that use river banks and cliffs, such as Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*, House Martin *Delichon urbicum* (David & Gosselin 2002), European Roller *Coracias garrulus* and European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* may lose some prime nesting habitat as the dam water levels rise. Our study helps establish baseline data upon which systematic monitoring of indicator bird species can be implemented, to ensure that pollution levels are tracked and countermeasures proposed so that the region can maintain healthy and stable populations of its resident and migrant bird species.

SELECTED SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Observed in the study year-round, except in January and February, usually on the dam shoreline and nearby muddy areas. In late March, pairs formed. On 28 Apr 2000, one pair was observed making display-flights, calling vigorously in the air and then perching together, accompanying each other in territorial and feeding activity. Similarly, on 22 Apr 2001, one of a pair with neck outstretched pursued the other in a chase, before behaving as above. We assessed this as evidence that they probably bred.

European Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

The study area contains areas of suitable breeding habitats, some of which were inaccessible due to restrictions. We often saw this species perched on lakeside tree

branches or plants, or flying close to the water surface. We assess this species as possibly breeding.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Observed on a hill slope on stones and herbaceous plants on 23 March 2001, a maximum of two pairs, male and female together. This species uses the region during passage.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschenka*

On 28 Apr 2000, 5 males and one female were observed on a rocky hillside. One of the males hunted insects by swooping down from a rocky perch, returning to the same place to sing. The female was seen emerging from a cavity in the same rock to accompany the male up the hillside. On 9 Jun 2000, a female was seen to be carrying possible nesting material. Kirwan & Martins (1994) gave the species' status as uncertain; they believed it had formerly been an uncommon passage migrant, mainly through eastern two-thirds of Turkey. They also cited records from 20km south of Şanlıurfa on 19 Apr 87 and from Devegeçidi Barajı on 26 May 90.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

We have one probable record from 12 May 2000 of a male on a poorly-vegetated hillside. During flight, the black on its wings was prominent, but we could discern the white speckle. Karakaş & Kılıç (2002) recorded three males at Göksu Dam on 1 April 1999 and Kirwan *et al* (2003) one at Cizre on 13 Jun 1999.

Olive-Tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*

We obtained a single record of two individuals on 26 May 2000, on a thorny bank of a small river-bed. Beaman (1986) regarded it as a rather local and generally uncommon summer visitor to Thrace, western Anatolia and the southern coastlands. Martins (1989) agreed and included a record for Birecik on 8 Jul 86. Kirwan & Martins (1994) note records for 2 individuals at Birecik on 10 Aug 89 and one 18km east of Bingöl on 20 May 89.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

On 6 May 2001, two individuals were observed moving from an oak *Quercus* sp tree to a Neapolitan medlar *Crataegus azarolus* tree. The male was 'wagging' his tail laterally. The observations are insufficient to fulfil the EBCC requirements for 'possibly breeding'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The first Black-billed Wood Doves *Turtur abyssinicus* in Yemen and the Middle East

DAVID B. STANTON

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BLESSED WITH A WEEK OFF for *Eid al Fitr*, I invited Dwight Taylor, a keen birder and my wife Sharon's interim boss, for a few days of birding before his impending departure from Yemen. Sharon, though not a birder herself, was able to join us at short notice.

On November 12th 2004 our itinerary took us from Sana'a to Jebel Bura' and thence to Al Urj on the 13th, where the coastal mudflats possess a small stand of mangroves, both interesting habitats. At about 0845 on the 14th, having overwhelmed Sharon at the mudflats with a broad array of waders, gulls, and terns, we all headed for the mangroves, expecting to see some of the more secretive herons.

I spotted a pair of small doves nestled close together on a dead branch, about 15 metres away. The sun was behind us and the birds were fully exposed in good light. Assuming them to be Palm Doves *Streptopelia senegalensis*, I trained the scope (Kowa, 20x) on them so that Sharon could get a good view of the birds and add them to her rapidly expanding list. The tails were 'normally' proportioned, lacking the long tail of Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*, a species I know well and had last seen the previous October. As I focused the scope, I noted several characters that Palm Doves do not exhibit.

Description

The birds were proportioned like rather small Palm Doves. They were generally paler and more uniformly coloured than Palm Doves, being predominantly pale grey above blending inconspicuously to an even paler grey, almost white, below. The birds' necks were devoid of any markings whatsoever. The most striking feature which was clearly visible on the closer bird was a pair of irregular iridescent purple spots in the vicinity of the greater coverts and scapulars. The wings were slightly lowered revealing two parallel sooty bands across the middle back. A similarly coloured, though narrower, band could be seen at the base of the tail.

I recognized the birds as being similar to the Emerald-spotted (*Turtur chalcospilos*) and Blue-spotted (*T. afer*) Wood Doves with which I am familiar from southern Africa, but I knew of no allied species with purple spots on its wings. As I commented on the unusual characteristics of the doves they flew away before we could get them in view in our binoculars. We were unable to relocate them. I took detailed notes and made a sketch of the characters that we had observed, however, and later compared these with illustrations in van Perlo (1995) and Williams and Arlott (1988). Finally, a quick search of Google images under '*Turtur abyssinicus*' left me in no doubt that we had found the first pair of Black-billed Wood Doves for Yemen and the Middle East.

It is interesting to speculate about the future status of the species in Yemen, given that there were two birds only about 100 miles from their known range in Eritrea across the Red Sea, in a direct line with the Zubair island group. Given the Black-billed Wood Dove's very superficial resemblance to the widespread and common Palm Dove, the paucity of observers in Yemen may have led to *abyssinicus* being overlooked.

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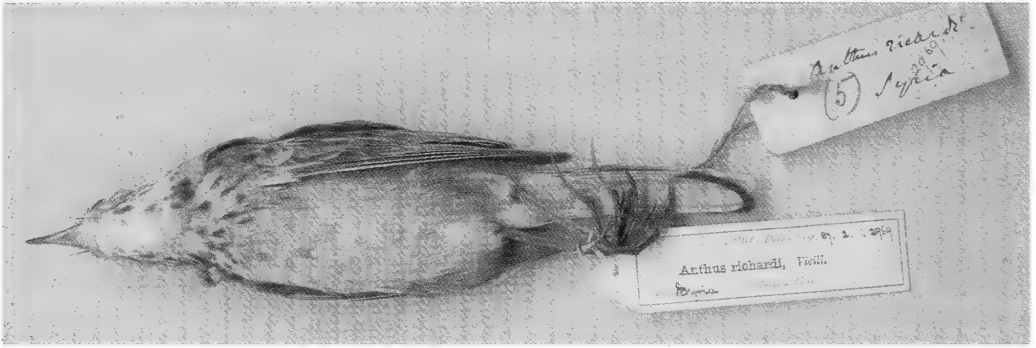


Plate 1. Specimen of Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* from 'Syria'. (Guy M. Kirwan, © Natural History Museum, Tring)

An early specimen of Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* from Syria?

GUY M. KIRWAN

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RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi* is an uncommon winter visitor and or passage migrant to Israel, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and southern Arabian Gulf (Porter *et al* 1996). The same authors considered it to be a vagrant in Kuwait and Syria (but did not mention Turkey, where it is increasingly recorded; Kirwan *et al* in prep). Baumgart *et al* (1995) listed the only Syrian record as being one at Sukhne, north-east of Palmyra, on 13 April 1993.

While examining specimens of the species held in the Natural History Museum (Tring), in particular searching for any previously overlooked examples from Turkey, I discovered an individual (BM 87.2.1.2969) simply labelled 'Syria' that had previously been incorporated within the Hume collection, although a search of the appropriate specimen register revealed that the bird was a Tristram specimen. It is a classic Richard's Pipit, as evident from Plate 1. Tristram collected extensively in Palestine and Syria between the early 1860s and early 1880s, but I have been unable to find any mention of this specimen in his publications (Tristram 1882, 1884) and it is not included in the catalogue of his own collection (Tristram 1889). His particular motives for passing the specimen to Hume are unknown, but Canon Tristram was well known for 'friendly exchanges and the judicious sale of duplicates' in order to minimise the cost of acquiring a large collection (Mearns & Mearns 1998). That precise locality information or a date is unavailable for the Richard's Pipit is unsurprising; many of Tristram's specimens in Tring lack detailed data (pers. obs.). Without such information, it is obviously impossible to be certain that the specimen is from Syria. Kirwan (2004) discussed the difficulties of identifying whether pre-1940s specimens were collected within the boundaries of modern-day Syria or Lebanon, and during Tristram's time, the possibility that the specimen was taken in south-east Turkey, where the borders of 'Syria' extended north to Gaziantep, must also be borne in mind. There is but one record of *A. richardi* for Lebanon, from the mid-20th century (Ramadan-Jaradi & Ramadan-Jaradi 1999), but it is clearly interesting to record the existence of the NHM specimen, which appears to have gone unmentioned in the previous literature and is potentially the earliest ever Middle Eastern record (cf. Kirwan *et al* in prep, Shirihai 1996, F. E. Warr unpub ms).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is always a pleasure to thank members of staff at the Natural History Museum (Tring) for their invaluable and patient assistance: Mark Adams, Robert Prys-Jones and Effie Warr. I am most grateful to Moira & Roy Hargreaves for their generous hospitality during my periods at the museum.

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An unusually-coloured White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* and its offspring: a case of colour inversion?

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ON 20TH JUNE 2004, while conducting a breeding seabird survey on Jarnein Island (24.92767 °N, 52.85323 °E) in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, three birds, an adult and two chicks, with unusual plumage coloration drew our attention. They were resting in the shade of a tree, about 10–15m from nearby nesting White-cheeked Terns *Sterna repressa*. Jarnein is important because it holds the largest breeding colonies of Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*, Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*, Swift (Crested) *Sterna bergii*, Lesser Crested *Sterna bengalensis* and Bridled *Sterna anaethetus* Terns in the country. Given its importance for breeding seabirds, regular population surveys have been carried out on the island since the mid-1990s.

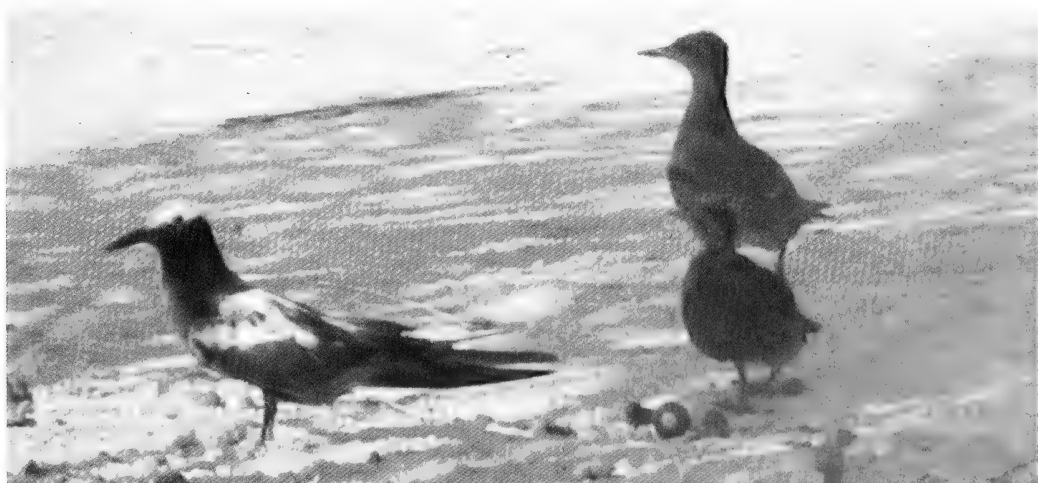


Plate 1. Unusually-coloured terns: an adult White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* and its two offspring.

© Sàlim Javed.

The adult bird was dark brown with a white cap and white on the wings, while the two chicks were sooty-coloured (See photo). The bare parts were also dark brown. A similar bird had been photographed in the summer of 1998 on the same island (Simon Aspinall, pers. comm.). The adult bird resembled a Common Noddy, but closer examination of the photos confirmed it to be a White-cheeked Tern with inverted plumage colours, dark for white and white for dark, the normally plumaged adult having a prominent black cap, a white band across the face and an ash-grey back and underwing; its bill and feet are red.

The unusual colouration might be a case of genetic inversion where a mutation type has an inverted DNA sequence of nucleotides, called chromosomal inversions, and are visible in the chromosome structure. Such chromosomal inversions protect epistatic interacting genes from recombination, so that the gene in an inversion behaves as a 'supergene', and segregates. The 1998 record of similar birds suggests that the inverted genes may have been passed on to subsequent generations. The adult photographed in 1998 had no white on its back, unlike the 2004 adult, so they may be different individuals.

Genetic polymorphism (also a result of chromosomal inversion) and its effects on plumage (and behaviour) in birds is well known, particularly in buzzards, eagles and the Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (Blank, 2002; Johnson *et al* 1993). However, colour inversion in White-cheeked Tern is sporadic, because there are no described morphs as individuals or populations.

Albinism, the absence of pigments, is not applicable here (Gross 1965, Forrest and Naveen 2000). Albinism, melanism and inversion may be disadvantageous adaptations, rendering individuals more sensitive to ultraviolet radiation, more noticeable to predators, affecting display and mating behaviour and increasing antagonistic behaviour in colonies from normally plumaged birds. We noted the last-named when our three birds were chased away by the normal White-cheeked Terns nesting nearby.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of ERWDA Governing Board and H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Governing Board and owner of Jarnein Island. We thank H.E. Mohammed Al Bowardi, Managing Director of ERWDA, Mr. Majid Al Mansouri, Secretary General of ERWDA and Dr. Fred Launay, Assistant Secretary General of ERWDA for their support. We also thank Mr. John Newby, Director TERC, and Mr. Thabit Abdessalam, Director MERC for their support and Dr. Christophe Tourenq for his comments.

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Wintering Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* in southeastern Anatolia

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA is mainly lowland steppe in character. The southeastern Taurus, mostly around 2000m asl, constitutes a natural boundary unlike the political border to the south with Syria, where both the Euphrates and Tigris flow. Turkey holds the largest

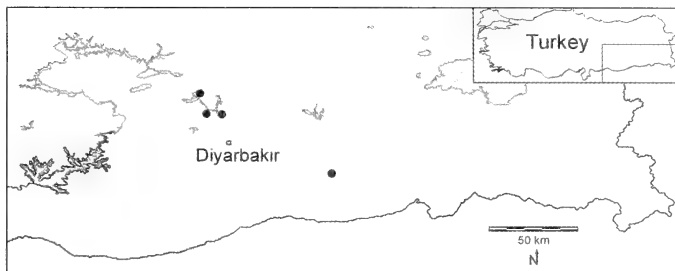


Figure 1. Dots are Wallcreeper winter records, around the Kralkızı and Dicle dams and in Hasankeyf province.

population of Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* of all the countries of the western Palearctic (see Cramp 1998 and Kılıç & Eken 2004). The species breeds in wilderness areas of the Turkish highlands mostly at 1000–3000m asl and often higher, particularly in the Taurus chain in southern Turkey, in the mountains of the Black Sea coast to the northeast, and in the eastern and southeastern mountains (Beaman 1986, Roselaar 1995, Cramp 1998, Grant *et al* 1999, Kuşbank 2004). Although largely an altitudinal and short-distance migrant, a proportion of the population regularly disperses further afield in winter, right down to sea-level, individuals even reaching Cyprus (Beaman 1986, Cramp 1998).

During numerous ornithological trips we have undertaken in the region, mostly in winter and spring from 2000 onwards, all as part of research projects that focus particularly on the birds of reservoir areas of various dams along the two river systems, we regularly encountered the Wallcreeper as it searched for food on sheer limestone cliffs, usually near water. Such sites are at 500 to 700m asl, just on the edge of the steppe area. Altogether, we recorded 19 birds, earliest and latest records being 17th November and 1st April respectively: the majority were seen in December at the northernmost site in Figure 1. The Wallcreeper was seen mostly on perpendicular rock faces, whereas potential competitors such as Western Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer*, Eastern Rock Nuthatch *S. tephronota* and Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* occurred mainly on rocky outcrops, stony and earthen slopes, and even in open woodland. In this vast area of suitable but inaccessible habitat, it is likely that Wallcreeper occurs more widely outside the breeding season than records suggest (Beaman 1986). The size of the breeding area and population may also have been underestimated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Breeding success of Brown-necked Ravens *Corvus ruficollis* in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area, Saudi Arabia

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As part of the ornithological monitoring programme in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area, nests of Brown-necked Raven were recorded during 2001 and 2002. The location of the nesting tree, species of tree used, height of the tree, and height from the ground of the nest were recorded. In addition nests were monitored to determine the incubation period, nesting success and factors affecting the breeding success. During this study, 12 nests were found in 2001 and six in 2002, with the majority of nests built in umbrella thorn *Acacia tortilis* trees. The nesting tree was the tallest in the area, located mostly in a small depression. Hatchability overall was 30% and the proportion of chicks that hatched and reached fledgling stage was 30%.

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DESPITE BEING A COMMON SPECIES on the Arabian Peninsula, the Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* is poorly known in Saudi Arabia (Jennings 1995). Apart from Cramp *et al* (1994) who reviewed data on the species' breeding biology in the Western Palearctic, I am aware only of the observations by Jennings in Arabia (1981, 1986, 1987 & 1998); and Harvey *et al* in Yemen (1992). This paper presents information on the breeding season, breeding success, nesting sites and nest description of Brown-necked Ravens in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area (in central western Saudi Arabia) where it is considered a common breeding resident (Newton and Newton 1993). The species has been recorded as a predator to a number of ground-nesting bird species in the reserve (Shobrak 1996, Joseph B. Williams pers comm); other studies showed that its predation is an important cause of mortality among newborn sand gazelles *Gazella subgutturosa* and Red-necked Ostrich *Struthio camelus camelus* hatchlings (Haque & Smith 1996, Ismail 2001).



Plate 1. Black-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* fledglings in an acacia tree nest in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area. 2002. © Mohammed Shobrak.



Plate 2. Black-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* nest lined with rags obtained from outside the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area. 2002. © Mohammed Shobrak.

Study area

The study was carried out during 2001 and 2002 at Mahazat as-Sayd, a 2244km² fenced protected area, located on the arid Nadj plains of western Saudi Arabia, 170km north-east of Taif, the area having been established specifically to provide a safe haven for reintroduced captive bred Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx*, sand gazelles, Asian Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii* and Red-necked Ostrich (Greth & Schwede 1993, Haque & Smith 1994, 1996). A perimeter fence erected in 1989 has kept livestock out, allowing the vegetation inside the protected area to recover from overgrazing and has discouraged illegal hunting. The larger part of the reserve comprises sandy gravel plains with open vegetative cover. *Acacia tortilis* is the commonest tree species, *Fagonia indica* and *Indigofera spinosa* the commonest herbs, and *Panicum turgidum* and *Stipagrostis* sp. the commonest grasses (Seddon 1996, Shobrak unpub).

The climate is tropical and arid, the mean monthly minimum and maximum ambient temperatures ranging between 9–25°C in winter and 21–46°C in summer. The maximum air temperature of 48°C was recorded in July (Shobrak 2001, Williams *et al* 1999). Rainfall is sporadic and unpredictable but showers are more frequent between November and April, annual precipitation ranging from 15–240 mm (Seddon 1996, Shobrak 2001).

Study methods

During regular visits to active nests of Lappet-faced Vultures, *Torgos tracheliotus* I would search for Brown-necked Raven nests by driving randomly throughout the protected area. For each nest, I recorded the tree location, the tree species, the height of the tree and the height of the nest above ground level. The nest position in the tree relative to the upper, middle or lower third of the crown (categorized as up, central or low) was noted. Nests were monitored every two to three days during 2001 and every seven to 15 days during 2002 to estimate the incubation period and nesting success. If the nest contents had disappeared prematurely, I would check the tree and its surroundings for tracks or evidence to try and identify of the predator. In both years of the study in April, migrating raptors were counted during a transect of the area. The relative abundance of these raptors was calculated by dividing the number of birds seen by the distance driven (Tourenq *et al* 2005).

Results

Nesting sites: During the study period, I found 18 active raven nests, 12 in 2001 and 6 in 2002. In addition, the sites of 10 nests from previous years were selected to obtain tree species and height and nest height above ground. The results showed that 24 of these nests were in *Acacia tortilis*, and three in maerua *Maerua crassifolia* trees. The mean height of the *Acacia* nest trees was 3.7m (SD=±0.6, n=24), whereas the mean height of *Maerua* nest trees was 5.1m (SD=+1.8, n=3). The mean height above the ground of *Acacia* tree nests was 3m (SD=+0.5, n=24), while for *Maerua* tree nests it was 3.8m (SD=+0.51, n=3). However, the number of nests found in *Maerua* trees was too small to be significant.

Visual assessment of each nesting tree suggested that the ravens usually selected the tallest in the area, the majority being not in wadis but located in small open depressions where tree densities were highest (Shobrak unpub). Most nests (91%) were in the upper crown, 9 % were in the central crown and none were in the lower crown.

Nest description: The nest is a cup structure built with *Acacia* sp. sticks, lined with sheep and goat hair, grasses and often with conspicuously-coloured (eg pink, red or black) cloth fragments. The inner mean diameter of the nests was 22.2cm (SD=+1.94, n=20), with a mean outer diameter of 45cm (SD=+2.55, n=5). The mean inner depth was 11.3cm (SD=+1.45, n=11), the mean outer depth being 24.2cm (SD=+2.28, n=5).

Egg sizes and laying dates: (See Table 1 and Figure 1). The majority of eggs were sub-elliptical, one in each clutch often being elongated. The colours ranged from blue to greenish, with black or brownish spots. The mean egg-length was 43.79mm (SD=+3.19, n=51), the mean width being

29.68mm (SD=+0.99, n=51). The mean clutch size was 3.4 (SD=+1.63, n=17), the clutch size range being one and six respectively. The earliest laying date was 10 February (2001) and the latest was 22 April (2002), this latter possibly representing a second clutch: this nest held six eggs in early March.

Table 1. Number of nests, eggs laid and hatched and chicks fledged during 2001 and 2002.

Year	Nests	Eggs laid	Eggs hatched	Fledged chicks
2001	12	43	12	3
2002	6	24	8	3
Total	18	67	20	6

Hatching and nesting success: During the incubation period, eggs disappeared from 8 of the 12 nests monitored in 2001, but the remaining 12 eggs all hatched, overall hatchability being 28%. However only 25% of the chicks became fledglings. The overall productivity of the 12 nests was only 7%.

Due to time limitations in 2002, I was not able to monitor all six nests as systematically as in 2001. However, the following data were obtained: from three nests the eggs disappeared during incubation and from a fourth nest the chicks disappeared few days after hatching. Only three chicks (**Plate 1**) fledged from the remaining nest, overall hatchability being 33.3% and the fledging rate from the hatched eggs was 38%. **Figure 2** shows growth rate for the nestlings over the first eight days after hatching, but the chicks' weight data comprised too small a sample size to allow significant body mass analysis.

At only one of the unsuccessful nests did I find possible evidence of a cat *Felis* sp as the predator. Thorough searches at the other unsuccessful nests and their environs drew a blank as to the predators' identity. However, other work in Mahazat as-Sayd (Joseph B. Williams pers comm) indicates that raptors do take eggs and chicks from nests. The raptor transect counts I conducted in Mahazat as-Sayd may include the Brown-necked Raven's nest predator. The relative abundance of raptors was 1.7 birds per km driven in April 2001 and 0.4 birds per km driven in April 2002. Commonest were European Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* and Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*. Three other harrier species were recorded in the reserve during the raven study, Western Marsh, Hen and Montagu's (*C. aeruginosus*, *C. cyaneus* and *C. pygargus* respectively). According to Cramp *et al* (1994) the Brown-necked Ravens starts incubation after laying the second egg, which example I followed to calculate the incubation period, which varied from 20 to 23 days. New hatchlings were blind, featherless and had a body mass of 13–17gm (Mean=15gm, SD=±2.8, n=2); they have pinkish orange skin, their down being long but sparse on the centre of the back, forming tufts on each shoulder.

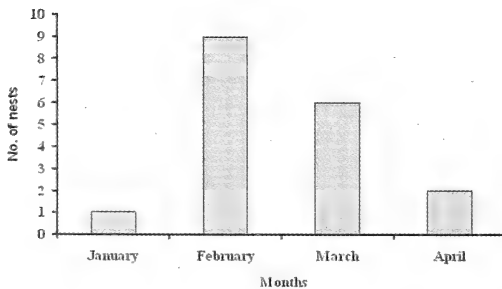


Figure 1. The numbers of first eggs laid per month.

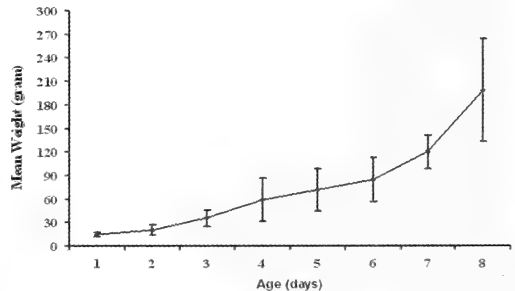


Figure 2. The growth rate of Black-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* chicks.

Discussion

Breeding season: In Egypt, Goodman and Meininger (1989) give Brown-necked Ravens as starting egg-laying in late February to early March and in Israel Shirihai (1996) gives mid-February to early March. In the Arabian Peninsula, the first eggs are laid in January, the main laying period occurring between February and early March (Jennings 1995). In the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Bundy *et al* (1989) have the first eggs being laid at the end of January and the last in March. However, in eastern Saudi Arabia breeding has also been recorded in November (Cramp *et al* 1994). While surveying the Saudi Red Sea coast from Tabuk to the Farasan archipelago, Jennings (1986) found that the majority of nests had eggs in February and young in March.

The above study suggests that the Brown-necked Raven's breeding phenology at Mahazat as-Sayd is similar to that found elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula and in neighbouring countries. The species may select this time of the year because rainfall may lead to increased food availability, a circumstance that correlates with many bird species starting to lay (*eg* Lack 1971, Perrins and Birkhead 1983). Additionally, the relatively cool ambient temperature during the incubation period (February to March) minimises thermal stress on eggs, chicks and incubating birds.

Nests and nesting sites: Lappet-faced Vultures are breeding residents in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area (Shobrak 2004), and Brown-necked Ravens sometime nest below them. The sheep and goat hair lining the Ravens' nests probably comes either from Lappet-faced Vulture nests or from vulture pellets lying around the nest or roost trees. The ravens probably adopt this method as a low energy strategy. However, some of the cloth and carpet fragments in raven nests must come from outside the protected area, actions demanding an increased energy expenditure. This additional energy outlay may be offset by the rags acting as a heatshield for eggs, chicks and incubating birds. Twice I have found rags covering the eggs (See **Plate 2**).

In Arabia, the Brown-necked Raven prefers *Acacia* trees for nesting (Jennings 1987), in Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area the commonest species being *Acacia tortilis*, especially in wadis. *A. tortilis* also grows in the open, sandy, gravel and basalt stony plains. Whereas *Maerua* is common in the east of the reserve, there are only a few trees scattered throughout central and western parts (Shobrak unpub, Seddon 1996). *Acacia* provides a dense thorny barrier that discourages human and animal predators, something that the Brown-necked Raven has probably learnt. The notable exception to this rule, given by Ticehurst & Cheesman (1925), was the nest they found in Saudi Arabia in a thornless and leafless *Calligonum* *Calligonum* spp bush, only 1.5m tall, but the bush was 80km from the nearest tree.

Causes of mortality: For many bird species, predation is the major cause of egg and chick losses (Newton 1998). During the breeding season Brown-necked Ravens are territorial, defending a nest site against other birds (Goodwin 1976, Cramp *et al* 1994), but in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area the main predators of their eggs and nestlings are possibly migrating raptors and cats (feral cat *Felis catus* or sand cats *F. margarita*).

Nest predation increases with increasing aridity and causes higher nestling mortality in desert birds, *eg* Tieleman *et al* (2003) showed that the probability of lark nestlings surviving until fledging in a hyper-arid environment is about 2%. The results of my study support this finding. However, future studies in the reserve must determine the predators of Brown-necked Raven before any conclusions can be drawn about the large losses of the eggs and chicks that they incur. These studies need to test at least three hypotheses:

1. Nest predation is influenced by the female's nutritional status, which may affect how long she spends away from the nest or how vigorously she tackles predators (Newton 1986). The recent drought in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area lasted three years, affecting adversely most animal species (Shobrak & K. Ismail 2000, unpub). Reduced food availability forced the raven parents to spend more time foraging, which meant that nests were unprotected for longer periods than normal. I noted that on several nest visits to measure and weigh chicks,

even for newly-hatched chicks the parents were absent, although the adult birds mostly returned before I was through. I noted also that nests where both parents were present when I visited contained chicks whose growth rate was the fastest I recorded.

2. The alternative prey hypothesis suggests that at times of reduced food availability, not only resident mammalian carnivores, but also migrating raptors have to find alternative food supplies. The recent drought produced noticeable reductions in insect and rodent populations in reserve, and hence may have put at risk Brown-necked Raven eggs and chicks. This pattern has been documented elsewhere; for example Northern European grouse species numbers fluctuate in synchrony with rodent numbers (Ranta *et al* 1995, Newton 1998) and annual nest predation rate for Norwegian Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus* varied between 10% and 63% (Myrberget 1984), occurring in inverse proportion to annual rodent numbers.
3. Even in periods of drought the effective protection inside the protected area ensures higher densities of prey and thus also of predators than outside the protected area. Studies on reptile and rodent populations showed that the density of these populations were significantly higher inside the protected area when compared to populations outside the protected area (Abdul Muhsin Alqfari *in litt* 2002, N.J. Wells *in litt* 1999). Studies on the fox populations have shown similar trends (Danny Lenain *in litt* 2000). This may attract migrating raptors to roost and feed in the reserve.

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On the distribution of Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe chrysopygia* (de Fillipi, 1863) in Armenia.

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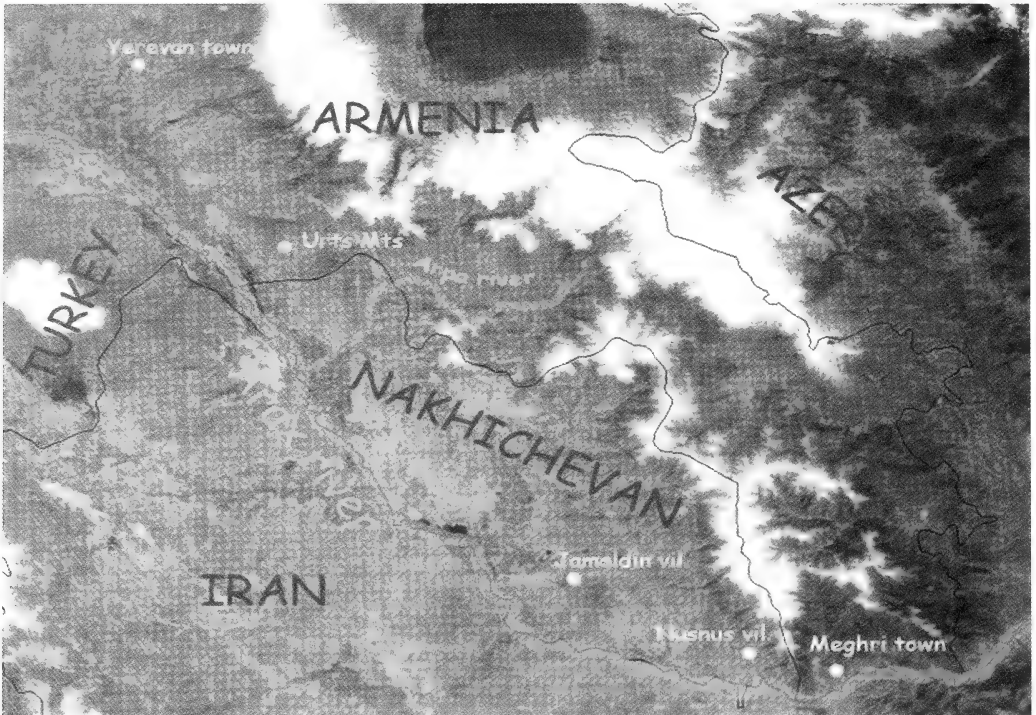
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ALTHOUGH IT HAD LONG BEEN SUGGESTED that Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe chrysopygia* be regarded as an independent species (Zarudny 1896, Dement'ev 1937, Ivanov 1940, Panov 2005), in recent lists it is treated as a subspecies of the Rufous-tailed Wheatear *O. xanthopyrmyna chrysopygia* (see, eg Sibley & Monroe 1990). However, here we retain the view that the Red-tailed Wheatear should remain an independent species, considering it a member of a superspecies comprising two good species, *Oenanthe chrysopygia* and *O. xanthopyrmyna* (For the detailed arguments in favour of this approach see Panov 2005). The superspecies' breeding range covers the Middle East and parts of the Central Asia (namely Turkey, Iran, NE Afghanistan and S Tadjhikistan). In its NW range, in Transcaucasia it could be found only in a restricted area confined until recently to the southernmost foothills of the Zangezur Mountains, a minor part of the Caucasus range, in the central Arax valley. Most of these sightings and specimens came from Naxçivan territory (previously Nakhichevan or the Nakhichevanskaya ASSR), an Azerbaijanian exclave SW of Armenia bordering Turkey and Iran. As regards the species' occurrence in Armenian territory proper, prior to our recent observations only four specimens had been collected in 1965 and 1968; from then, nothing until 1995, since when there have been a few observations at irregular intervals (Ayrumian & Movsesian 1987, Adamian & Klem 1999, VA & MG pers. obs); the 1965–8 specimens (taken by A. Abrahamian) is in the Armenian Institute of Zoology in Yerevan). It should be stressed that all these data were obtained to the east of and around the town of Meghri (Syunik Province), which is quite close to the species' main breeding sites in SE Naxçivan (not far from the towns of Ordubad and Jolfa).

This paper deals with new records from an area some 160km north-west of the species' previously known breeding sites on both sides of the border between SE Naxçivan and



Plate 1. Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe chrysopygia* singing, Urts Mountains, 15 June 2005. Armenia. © Vasil Ananian



Map 1. General map of the Arax basin, where Vasil Ananian and Mamikon Ghasabian recorded Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe chrysopygia* breeding in 2004. © Vasil Ananian

Armenia. We documented *O. chrysopygia* breeding in central-south Armenia, namely in Ararat Province adjoining NW Naxçivan. In October 2002 MG informed VA that on 18 October, he and colleagues had observed one Red-tailed Wheatear in a gorge in the Urts Range, not far from the border with Naxçivan and Turkey. We were unable to revisit the gorge that autumn, but it appeared to be a possible breeding site. On 9 June 2003 together with N. Kazanjian we returned to that gorge and located one bird (possibly two). Two weeks later there were two or three birds, including a juvenile whose remiges and rectrices were not fully grown (**Plate 1**). We gained positive proof of breeding in the area in 2004. On 24 and 26 June we saw 3-4 individuals carrying food and noted two singing males, one of which had been attracted to a loudspeaker broadcasting the species' advertising song – the bird landed adjacent to the loudspeaker, adopting poses characteristic of territorial conflict and uttering specific aggressive vocalizations (*qv* Panov 2005). On 1 July we found a nest (but did not inspect it) in a small fissure on a vertical surface of a large crag massif; adult birds were regularly bringing food to the nest. On 20 July, we observed three fledglings, possibly from this brood, perched in a bush at the bottom of the gorge being fed by their parents. Subsequently, we observed breeding activity at this site from 3 April 2005.

Discussion

The first time Red-tailed Wheatear *O. chrysopygia* was found breeding in Transcaucasia was in June 1929 near Jamaldin village, c30km north of the town of Jolfa in southern Naxçivan, when G.V. Sosnin collected an adult male and a juvenile from a family group (Lyaister & Sosnin 1942). The other specimens obtained by the same authors and also originating from Naxçivan were collected in late July-early August 1935 from the outskirts of Nusun village, c10km north of the town of Ordubad, the southeasternmost part of the republic. Lyaister and Sosnin thus authors failed to find the species within the Armenian borders (though they did stress that it probably occurred). In their species account, they noted an erroneous statement by Dement'ev (1937) that Red-tailed Wheatear had been found in 1929 by Sosnin in the outskirts of Yerevan in Armenia. Later, Gladkov (1954) amended Sosnin's original account (though mentioning an adult female rather than the male being collected) but makes another baseless error, possibly with reference to

Ivanov (1941), attributing Worobiev as reporting a bird in the outskirts of Yerevan. Worobiev (1934) had written about the species in Armenia, where had examined Sosnin's specimens from Naxçivan, describing them as being 'found in Armenia in 1929' and collected on 11 June near Jamaldin (correct) some '24km southeast of Yerevan town' (wrong). Jamaldin, being in Naxçivan, is c150km southeast of Yerevan. The error was compounded by being repeated by Roselaar (1995)

Both complete lists of Armenian birds (Dahl & Sosnin 1947, Dahl 1954) include the species, but we found no factual evidence as to its occurrence in Armenia until the documented collection of specimens in late May 1965 by A. Abrahamian near Meghri. Both the above lists obscurely ascribe the Red-tailed Wheatear's Armenian distribution to the semi-desert areas of the Arax river valley without supporting comment. Dahl (1954) indicated also that the Red-tailed Wheatear in Armenia is found between 550 and 860m asl. In Armenia habitat within these elevation limits suitable for the species exists only in the Meghri area. We therefore conclude that no one had found the species before we did in the upper Arax basin. We would point out that not only the newly discovered breeding site but also the Urts Range as a whole had been thoroughly investigated by Sosnin (Lyaister & Sosnin 1942) and Dahl (1944). Had the Red-tailed Wheatear been overlooked there by these authors, or has it recently colonised the area? Notwithstanding the above, further investigation of all suitable habitats of the Urts Range and in the Arpa river basin is clearly a priority (See **Map 1**).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank John Barnett, Chris Batty, Lee Evans, Andrew Holden, Nerses Kazanjian and Tom Lowe for their company in the field and for funding some of the site visits and Michael Blair for editorial assistance. We are particularly indebted to Dr Evgeniy Panov for taking the time to review the draft and for his extensive comments and sound additions to the note. The first author is grateful to Jean-Marc Pons, Nigel Redman and Michael Wilson for their help with obtaining some references.

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Heron breeding records in Cyprus 2003–2004

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AFTER FIVE YEARS OF DROUGHT, and the subsequent lowering of the water table and levels in dams (reservoirs) in Cyprus, the winter of 2001/2 saw a wetter period followed by high rainfall in 2002/3 and in 2003/4. As a result, wetlands extended and dam levels were at their highest for many years, some overflowing for the first time. We believe this, perhaps aided by restrictions on shooting since the last wet period, was the main reason we were able to confirm breeding for the first time in Cyprus during 2004 by three heron species and record breeding by two other rare breeding herons.

Three sites were involved. Close to the western suburbs of Famagusta, the Nicosia road bisects a large flooded area, known as Fresh Water Lake or Canakkale Lake. The area south of the road is full of large and half submerged tamarisk trees/bushes *Tamarix tetragyn*. To the north lies flooded agricultural land, including citrus orchards. Near Limassol, Polmidhia Dam forms a reservoir whose shallow end is in a quiet, hidden valley. The tamarisks standing in water make the site safe and unapproachable by man or other predators. Phasouri Reedbed (Livadhi wetlands) on the Akrotiri Peninsula recovered rapidly after a major fire 1999 and for the first time since the early 1980s has remained flooded since 2003. We visited Canakkale Lake for the first time in July 2004 to discover a large flock of egrets, mostly Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, nesting in an area of flooded tamarisk, young being present. Squacco Herons *Ardeola ralloides* were also nesting. We informed Peter Flint (PRF), then living near Kyrenia. He and Karen Flint visited the site several times. We continued to visit Polmidhia Dam and Phasouri Reedbed regularly.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

At Phasouri Reedbed on 27 June 2004 high water levels flooded the stands of reeds *Phragmites australis* and *Arundo donax*. At least three males, probably 5, some with bright red bills, were seen prominently at different locations. From less than 40m range we had good views of a juvenile in a clump of *Phragmites australis* from which a male had flown. The juvenile then followed the male and later returned to the reed clump. At the same location on 1st July 2004 we recorded 11 Little Bittern sightings. From these positions and the flight patterns we estimated that there were at least seven individuals – once they were in the cover of the reeds they could move without being detected. These observations correspond to confirmed breeding categories C12 and C13 (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997).

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

At Polmidhia Dam on 1 July 2004, whilst watching the Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* colony we saw a Squacco Heron settle, as if incubating, deep among the flooded tamarisk. On 10 July 2004 we were excited to find that the Squacco was indeed sitting on at least two downy chicks, probably less than a week old. Another adult was nearby. Also on 10 July 2004 at Canakkale Lake, we saw three Squacco Herons, one of which was incubating. PRF visited the site on 13 July 2004, finding at least 6 adults. Two were on nests, one with at least one egg, the other with three well-grown but unfledged juveniles. On 4 August 2004 PRF revisited the site, recording 19 fledged and 4 unfledged juveniles in two nests. Adults were dispersed around the lake. Clutch size is usually 4–6 (Cramp & Simmons 1977) suggesting that at least 6 pairs bred successfully.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

At Canakkale Lake on 10 July 2004 we found many Cattle Egrets on nests. Accurate counting was impossible because of the thick growth of tamarisk, but we estimated a total of 25, of which three were certainly juveniles. On visiting the site on 13 July 2004, PRF counted some 30 adults



Plate 1. Juvenile Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Cannakale (Fresh Water) Lake, Cyprus July 2004. © Peter Flint



Plate 2. Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* incubating, Cannakale (Fresh Water) Lake, Cyprus July 2004 © Peter Flint



Plate 3. Flooded tamarisk *Tamarix* sp, Cannakale (Fresh Water) Lake, Cyprus July 2004 © Peter Flint

and juveniles, and at least six nests. By 4 August 2004 PRF counted some 55, of which perhaps 30 were fledged juveniles. At least one nest still held two unfledged juveniles. From these numbers we believe that about 12 pairs bred successfully. PRF had recorded the species at this site in spring 2004, and had noted flocks there for several years, mainly in winter.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

In May 1994 at Polmidhia Dam, prior to the drought, we saw an adult and five immature Night Herons and assumed that the immature birds had flown in with adults (Flint & Stewart 1992). There had been one confirmed Cyprus breeding record, at Phasouri Reedbed in 1982 (COS '57 Annual Report 1982). On 26 July 2003, we saw 4 adults with 5 fledged and three unfledged juveniles, and two nests. The nests, small platforms of loose twigs, were less than 1m across, mostly built towards the tops of the well-grown flooded tamarisk in an area of c1ha. On 9 August 2003 we found a third nest with two downy juveniles and 5 fledged juveniles of two ages. These sightings comprised the second confirmed breeding record for Cyprus (Cyprus Breeding Birds Atlas 2003).

Night Heron increased in numbers in 2004, in June and July 13 adults and up to 18 juveniles being seen. We believe that there were at least 7 successful nests. The unfledged birds, being short of nest space, were climbing and perching on the surrounding foliage. Near the north-east shallows of Kouris Dam, 5km north of Polmidhia, we saw an adult on 15 June 2004 but there was no evidence of breeding. During June and July, individuals were seen at Phasouri Reed Bed, numbers rising to 12 by 19 July 2004. We assumed that they had come from Polmidhia, only 12km away but by 12 August 2004, the total had risen to 43 adults, aged from second calendar-year (2CY) to mature, and 14 juveniles. Five of the juveniles still with extensive down,

and associating with 4 adults in two family groups were judged to have been too young to fly into the site from Polmidhia Dam. These figures, especially taking into account the 2CY birds that had not been recorded at Polmidhia Dam, suggest that Phasouri Reedbed had held a second breeding colony. At Canakkale Lake PRF had seen a first calendar-year juvenile on 29 July 2004 and 4 adults on 4 August.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

On 10 July 2004 we found three well-grown juvenile Little Egrets among the Cattle Egret colony at Canakkale Lake. On his 4 August visit, PRF found a Little Egret nest containing 4 half-grown juveniles. At least 14 adults were present and 15 or more flew in to roost at dusk. From the number of adults present it seems likely that more than two pairs bred. This is the fifth breeding record for Cyprus (Cyprus Breeding Birds Atlas 2003).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Although we saw Grey Heron regularly during the summers, neither we nor PRF had any confirmed breeding records, according with its assessed status (Flint & Stewart 1992). However, as this paper was being prepared, we received from Michael Miltiadou (Conservation Officer, BirdLife Cyprus) his previously unpublished notes of breeding by this species. On 4 June 1993 he had flushed two adults before noticing 5 juveniles hiding in tamarisk bushes by the east side of Kiti Dam. Some were recently fledged and could scarcely fly. The smallest had many feathers in pin, exposing its body skin, could not fly and was restricted to jumping from branch to branch in the tamarisk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful for the help of Peter and Karen Flint in following up our initial observations in the north. Michael Miltiadou kindly allowed us to use his unpublished notes. Botanical information came from Yiannis Christofides.

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Plumage deviation in the left wing of Common Swift *Apus apus*

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THE COMMON SWIFT has 10 primary feathers on each wing, but one bird in Jerusalem apparently lacks two primaries (probably Nos 6 and 7) in the left wing (see **Plates 1 and 2**). It was first seen in 2001 entering a hole in the Western Wall of the Temple Mount and was noted there until 2003. It seems to have overcome any handicap and be a successful parent without obvious problems. Why the feathers should be missing is not known, but we can speculate that an accident or a growth defect was responsible. The only other known plumage deviation (apart from colour) in the Common Swift was of a bird with twelve rectrices, described by de Roo (1967).



Plate 1. Silhouette of Common Swift *Apus apus* lacking primary feathers in the left wing. This individual completed at least two outward and two return migrations from 2001 to 2003 despite this apparent handicap. © Ulrich Tigges



Plate 2. Seen against the backdrop of the Western Wall in Jerusalem, this Common Swift *Apus apus* lacking primary feathers in the left wing, survived at for least three years. © Ulrich Tigges

REFERENCE

DE ROO, A.E.M. 1967. A Swift, *Apus a. apus*, with twelve rectrices. *Bull. B.O.C.* 87: 141–142.

First record of Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* for Egypt since 1917?

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PIN-TAILED SANDGROUSE *Pterocles alchata* occurs in a variety of arid, flat, treeless desert or semi-desert areas in several disjunct populations in SW Europe, N Africa and the Middle East, where it is described as resident or nomadic (Madge & McGowan 2002). Furthermore there is a strongly migratory population breeding centred in Turkestan and supposed to winter principally in Iran (*loc cit*). Some movements are also apparent in the Middle East as winter numbers are boosted for instance in Jordan and Central Arabia. Apart from the European populations, all birds belong to subspecies *caudacutus* whose closest breeding grounds to Sinai lie in southern Israel, where it is reported as declining (*loc cit*) but also as a 'quite common local resident, to some extent nomadic, also common locally during winter, all chiefly in northern Negev' (Shirihai 1996). It seems thus surprising that the sighting of a female near Naama Bay on December 18th 2004 (and again five days later) is the first record of this species for Egypt since one was collected at Rafa on November 14th 1917 (Goodman & Meininger 1989, Dawn Balmer pers comm) and indeed Shirihai claims it to be 'uncommon in winter and apparently an irregular local breeder in Northern Sinai, also very rare elsewhere in lowlands of the peninsula'. The Pin-tailed Sandgrouse was found at the sewage ponds 3km northwest of town where, on both days, it was in a small group of Crowned Sandgrouse *P. coronatus* that came between 0800 and 0900 to drink at the lower pools (**Plate 1**). Like the Crowned Sandgrouse, it was wary, but not particularly shy and allowed excellent telescope views from closer than 20m range in perfect light.

The bird observed was a female in its striking plumage, which included its long, easily-visible pintail feathers, making the identification straightforward: white belly with pale brownish breast, framed by black lines above and below, upperparts heavily marked brownish-greenish-black in a wavelike pattern, some greyish parts in the flight feathers, the face uniformly warm orange-yellow with black lores and its black eye framed by a blue-grey patch; its whitish throat was framed below by a black bar-line and the upper head and nape were heavily and densely marked, like the upperparts. In addition, it was slightly bigger and clearly heavier in built (especially apparent in its thicker neck and stronger bill) than the surrounding Crowned Sandgrouse, making it obvious to



Plate 1. Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* associating with Crowned Sandgrouse *P. coronatus*. Digiscoped © Ingo Waschkies.

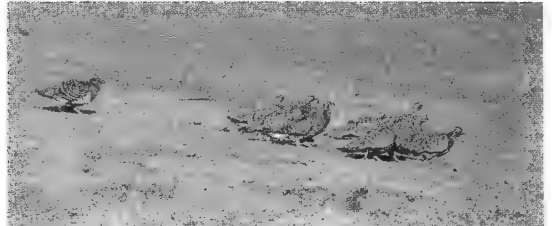
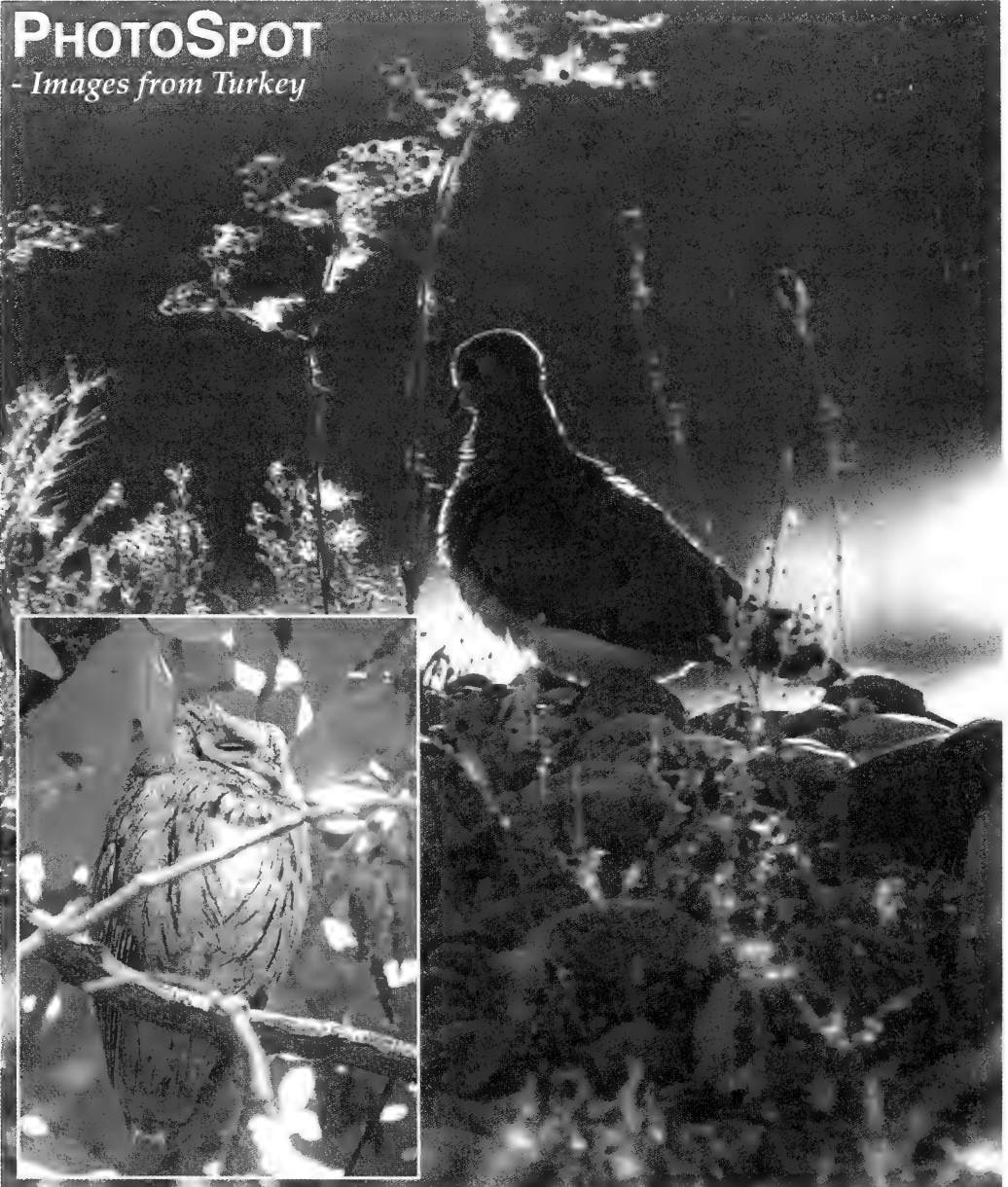


Plate 2. Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* lagging behind a scurrying flock of Crowned Sandgrouse *P. coronatus*. (See text). © Conny Schmidt.

PHOTOSPOT

- Images from Turkey



Photospot Plate 1. Female Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* May 2005, in the gravel pits north of Birecik (west bank of the Euphrates), a first record for Turkey. © Sidonie Veyrunes. **Photospot Plate 2 (inset).** Pallid (Striated) Scops-Owl *Otus brucei* May 2005, in Birecik tea-gardens. © Frédéric Veyrunes.

pick out even at a distance against the light. Although associating with the 15-strong Crowned Sandgrouse group and adapting its general rhythm, the Pin-tailed Sandgrouse reacted slowly to the other sandgrouse, often lagging slightly behind them when they moved, or wandering off a few metres when feeding (Plate 2). In contrast, it merged well with the group in flight.

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Second clutches by Common Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* breeding on buildings in Israel

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DOUBLE BROODS have been recorded for rodent-hunting raptors, such as American Kestrels *Falco sparverius* (Toland 1985), White-Tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus* and Harris' Hawks *Parabuteo unicinctus* (Newton 1979). The reproductive success of Common Kestrel (*F. tinnunculus*; hereafter Kestrel) has been studied throughout most of its range (eg Korpimäki 1984, Village 1990, Kostrzewa & Kostrzewa 1997) but laying second clutches after rearing a first brood successfully has been observed in the field only in Spain (Sánchez 1990, Fargallo *et al* 1996) and South Africa (van Heerden *et al* 1994). Fargallo *et al* (1996) reported that three out of 11 Kestrel pairs began possible second clutches. Kestrels in captivity, under designated photoperiods, have produced second clutches (Meijer 1989, Meijer *et al* 1992). We report three instances of Kestrels laying second clutches that were started before or after first broods were raised during the 2004 breeding season in three locations in Israel.

Methods and results

During the 2004 breeding season, three out of 40 breeding Kestrel pairs (being monitored as part of a yearly survey in Israel of breeders in buildings) started potential second clutches after the first had fledged. None of the three pairs were ringed or otherwise marked, but we adjudged that the same pairs had laid two clutches from our field observations, the timing of laying between clutches, and the same nests being used continuously. Pair A nested in Rishon L'Zion, pair B in Tel Aviv and pair C in the Kibbutz Merom Golan. All three pairs nested in flowerpots on building window sills. Pairs A and B nested in densely populated urban areas and pair C in a village.

Table 1 summarises the following paragraphs. Pair A started its first clutch on the 11th floor of a 15-storey building on 13 March 2004, laid five eggs, two nestlings hatching and fledging. The 2nd clutch – comprising four eggs – was laid in the same flowerpot starting on 19 May. This date was only five days after the first brood had flown the nest, but. They kept returning to the flowerpot to sleep at night while the adult female incubated the second clutch, which the male would incubate when the female went off to feed. After three weeks' incubation, the female abandoned the clutch, at which time the first brood stopped sleeping there.

Pair B nested in two different flowerpots on separate buildings, 35m apart. The first nest was started on 23 March on the top floor of an 8-storey building; from 5 eggs, 3 nestlings hatched

and later fledged. The second nest was on the 10th floor of an adjacent 15-storey building. It was begun on 15 May 2004, 7 days before the first brood's nestlings began to fledge (22 May). Both male and female visited both nests. The female stopped hunting about a week before beginning to lay in the second nest, staying in close proximity to the first nest, but starting to visit the second flowerpot. The male supplied all the food for the first brood and his mate. On 21 May 2004, the female began incubating the second clutch, but continued to feed the first brood in the first nest when the male brought prey. After fledging, the young would visit the second nest frequently, but when the young approached too closely, the female would chase them away. As for the first clutch, the male incubated the eggs when the female left the second nest to eat the prey he had supplied to the first nest. The female continued to incubate the eggs for 30 days round the clock; she then continued for 7 nights before abandoning the eggs. The clutch was found to be infertile.

Pair C nested in a flower pot on a window sill of a single-storey house in Ramt HaGolan, laying 6 eggs, all of which hatched and later fledged on 25 May. On 26 July, the same nest held three nestlings, estimated to be around 23 days old. Their hatching date probably was 3 July and the laying date 6 June, some 12 twelve days after the first brood had fledged.

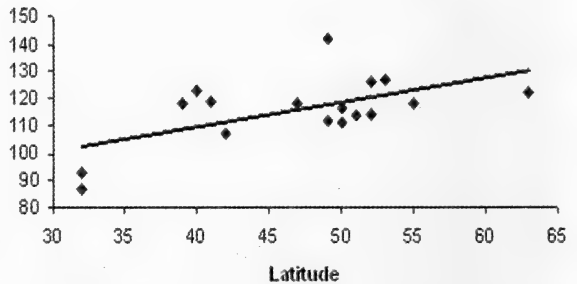
Discussion

From direct observation, we know Pair B comprised the same two adults involved with both nesting attempts. We believe that the second nesting attempts by pairs A and C were likewise by the unchanged pairs that had raised the first broods, because Kestrel fledglings stay close to the nest after fledging and the parents feed them in that vicinity. Sometimes the fledged brood use their nest to sleep in. All three pairs laid their second clutches within 12 days of fledging their first brood. Indeed, one pair started before the brood fledged. It is unlikely that Kestrel parents would allow another pair to use their nest so soon after the first brood fledged. Furthermore, the female ceases hunting and remains near the intended nest before starting to lay, an unlikely event if the intended nest was already was occupied by a another pair with nestlings.

For Kestrels, the dates of the breeding season and initiation of laying become later as latitude increases (Fig 1). Replacement clutches are less frequent and clutch size is larger at higher latitudes (Newton 1979). Fargallo *et al* (1996) suggested that prey abundance and latitudinal trends allowed Kestrel pairs to lay second clutches in Spain. It seems no coincidence that our study, like most reported cases of Kestrel double clutches (Sánchez 1990, Fargallo *et al* 1996), involves Mediterranean populations.

Figure 1. Relationship between laying date (1= 1 January) and latitude for Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. Data Taken from 16 different studies*. Pearson's $r=0.60$, $n= 17$, $P=< 0.05$

*Cavé 1968; Bonin & Strenna 1986; Korpimäki 1984; Village 1986; Village 1990; Aparicio 1994; Pikula *et al* 1984; Plesník & Dusík 1994; Gil-Delgado *et al* 1995; Kostrzewa & Kostrzewa 1997; Korpimäki & Wiehn 1998; Avilés & Sánchez 2000; van Zyl 1999; Salvati 2002, Charter 2005.



The adults faced the conflicting requirements of continuing to feed the first-brood fledglings and of incubating the second clutch in different ways. The female from Pair A allowed her first-brood fledglings to visit the nest during second-clutch incubation, but the female from Pair B frequently chased away her first-brood fledglings.

Further studies in similar latitudes and other locations (preferably including marked individuals) would be needed to determine the frequency of Kestrel double brooding and the conditions that permit it.

Table 1. Second clutches recorded during the 2004 breeding season in Israel

1st clutch	Laying Date	Clutch Size	Brood Size	No Fledged
Pair A	11 March	5	2	2
Pair B	23 March	5	3	3
Pair C	31 March*	6	6	6
Mean	17 March	5.33	3.67	3.67
2nd clutch				
Pair A	19 May	4	0	0
Pair B	15 May	3	0	0
Pair C	06 June	NK	NK	3
Mean	17 May	3.50	0.00	1.00

*Approximate laying date determined by subtracting the average incubation of 28 days (Cramp & Simmons 1980) from the hatching date (determined from nestling age). NK=Not Known

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REVIEWS & Recent Literature

The Birds of Azerbaijan. Michael Patrikeev. 2004. Pensoft Publishers. Sofia. ISBN 954-642-207-X. 380pp. €68.80 + p&p (Pensoft), £69.50 (WildSounds) or £65.00 + p&p (NHBS).

There is relatively little available literature on the ornithology of Azerbaijan and as Simon Aspinall's paper in *Sandgrouse* 27 (1) showed, there is still much to learn about bird distribution in the country. This book is invaluable as the first full description of the birdlife of Azerbaijan in English although Napier Shelton produced a site guide in 2001 entitled *Where to watch birds in Azerbaijan*.

An introduction to the geography of the country and a history of its bird studies is followed by an analysis of the avifauna and discussion of conservation issues. Details of Important Bird Areas are included with several maps. The main section consists of accounts of the distribution, migration and population of 372 species that the author lists for the country. The research is deep, much of this information coming from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Maps are included for regular breeding and wintering species. These display a lot of information such as former and current wintering range, recent and historical breeding sites, other possible breeding records and migration routes for both spring and autumn. These are useful as similar maps in some recent field guides have been shown to be inaccurate for Azerbaijan. Unfortunately the decision has been made to combine some species on the same maps which causes confusion, although thankfully this has not been done often. For each species the published distributional information is summarised by geographical area, but these do not relate directly to the areas described in the book's introductory pages. Several appendices give extra information on mixed colonies of cormorants, herons, egrets and ibises, wildfowl hunting and the impact of cold winters and oil pollution and a glossary. The reader gets a real feel for the landscape and its history. There is also a list of references – mainly Russian – which are helpfully translated into English. Twenty-six pages of colour photographs show a range of habitats and some of the more familiar species. Mike Wilson's editing touch makes this a most readable book.

Keith Betton

Birds of Kuwait – a portrait. Abdullah F. Alfadhel. 2005. Kuwait Environment Protection Society. ISBN 99906-76-77-1. 304pp. \$40 US.

This is a very impressive book with quite outstanding photographs, all of which were taken by the author during 2003 and 2004. The text is in Arabic with each species also captioned in English with the scientific name. An introduction in English includes a checklist of 358 species and a description of 34 of Kuwait's best birding sites. In total 151 species are illustrated with over 400 photographs. These are mainly of passerines with particularly good images of larks, wheatears, warblers and shrikes. This book makes a huge impact and deserves a wider audience than it is likely to get - in fact it's one of the best books of bird photography I've seen for years. To see a range of images from it take a look at <http://www.kuwaitbirds.com>, where details are given on how to order a copy, but without details of the price, which is given above. An edition with more English text may be produced.

Keith Betton

Birds of the Western Palearctic Interactive (BWPi). DVD-ROM. Birdguides and OUP. £199.

This single DVD-ROM provides multimedia coverage of 953 species. It includes all the texts from the 9-volume *Birds of the Western Palearctic* (BWP), the two-volume *Concise BWP*, the first two volumes of *BWP Update*, supplementary texts to take account of recent splits, 2300 video clips providing over ten hours of footage relating to over 830 species, and in excess of 1000 sound recordings featuring songs or calls (or both) of over 580 species.

For those with the necessary hardware, it effectively makes the books redundant, because the information can be accessed so easily. Once you have installed the programme, it looks a bit mind-boggling at first, but a few minutes with the instructions and you won't look back. Each species can be readily found in a drop-down menu, from which all the available media can be

seen. By clicking on the thumbnail icon, they can be arranged in a rectangular grid, from where any can be selected to be enlarged (drawings and maps) or played (video clips and sound recordings). Different pieces of information for each species can be displayed side by side, and similar species can also be compared on a split screen. The drawings, taken from *BWP Update*, have been made all the more useful by the addition of individual annotations: in green to point out how to identify the particular species, and in purple to point out the characteristics of a particular plumage.

But how does *BWPI* stand up as a resource for research on birds breeding in the OSME region? The area covered by *BWPI* includes Turkey, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the Caucasus, but excludes most of the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Central Asia. Most species get either a Western Palearctic distribution map, or one for the world, but not both. So some species which breed both within and outside the WP only get a WP map, eg Red-fronted Serin and Desert Sparrow, whereas others only get a world map, eg Fan-tailed Raven. It is unfortunate that not all the range maps from the original books have been included. Of the three species mentioned above, Desert Sparrow and Red-fronted Serin have good quality video clips and recording of their calls. Fan-tailed Raven has only a poor quality video clip but calls can be heard on it. Clearly, this type of content is presumably limited by that available to *Birdguides*; the more extralimital the species range in the Western Palearctic, the less likely there is to be suitable material available.

Six recently-split warblers which occur in the OSME area get their own Split Supplement texts, which have been compiled by extracting the relevant information from the original books and updating it. All six get a WP map, but only four get video clips, three get recording of calls and two recordings of song.

As stated earlier, this is a superb resource, and is especially useful and good value to anyone without easy access to a library. However, for someone resident in the non-WP parts of the OSME area, they will find it frustrating because inevitably the information for some species is incomplete and other species are omitted. Clearly it is time for some enterprising soul to put together a similar package for our whole area!

John Clark

The Good Bird Guide. Keith Marsh. 2005. Helm. ISBN 0-7136-6848-2. Pbk. £16.99.

Despite the blurb about finding 'Europe's best birds', this book includes Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and several countries in the OSME region, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. The first 380 pages contain some 435 species accounts: these cover succinctly 'Range' and 'Tips', separated where applicable by 'Subspecies', and then follows the *raison d'être* of the book, a listing of sites where best to find each species by country or region. Hence Brown-throated (Plain) Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola* is listed for Morocco only, but at four sites all rated 3-star (75% chance or better of seeing it), whereas Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo (Ptyonoprogne) rupestris* is listed for 27 countries and dozens of sites. Essentially, this is a listing of best 'European' sites for British, not European birders. The remaining 220 pages comprise a country (or region) by country summary of the best national sites for finding birds.

The author writes well within the very narrow constraint of the space available for two such monumental tasks. The nomenclature is pretty up to date, incorporating many recent splits, although some BOU name changes don't make it. The species claimed for each site are reliably assessed, from my own experience of a random selection of those I have visited, Turkey particularly so since that entry had been vetted by Guy Kirwan! This is a monumental effort, but I have to question the publisher's view that 'a birder can efficiently target those particular species he (?) wishes to see', because if a birder has a destination, then consulting the country account in this book simply gives very much less information than the 'Where to Watch...' series. I see this more of a reference and reminder volume for the peripatetic birder, who will leave this none-too-sturdy volume at home, taking perhaps only a photocopy of the applicable bits. OSME readers will appreciate generally good accounts for the 8 countries of interest, but inevitably the opening up of places such as Syria will date these accounts sooner rather than later. The author probably could not have done better in 600 pages, but two companion volumes of 400 and 300 pages would have allowed justice to the subjects tackled. I am taken with the life in Marianne Taylor's species illustrations.

Mike Blair

Around the Region

compiled by
Dawn Balmer and Keith Betton

Records in *Around the Region* are published for interest only; their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. All records relate to 2005 unless otherwise stated.

Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse 28* (1) should be sent by 15 December to: Around the Region, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK; or to aroundtheregion@osme.org

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Bee-eaters
Merops apiaster
by D. Powell

BAHRAIN

An **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* seen at Dumistan Ponds on 21 June will be the 1st record for Bahrain if accepted.

Correction: sightings listed in *Sandgrouse 27* (1) from the Inland Sea (Khor-al-Udeid) refer to Qatar and not Bahrain. Apologies.

CYPRUS

On 15 April 21 **Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* flew past Paphos lighthouse – quite an amazing sight! A **Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* at Mavrokolymbos Dam on 24 April was a very late record. A **Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* was reported at Aspro Dam 6–10 April and will be the 4th record if accepted. A **Baillon's Crane** *Porzana pusilla* was at Sotira Pools from 9–20 April. A **Demoiselle Crane** *Grus [Anthropoides] virgo* was at Akrotiri Salt Lake on 4 April. An obliging **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor* was at Mandria on 31 March and one at Paphos Lighthouse from 9–11 April and then possibly the same bird at Kouklia on 16 April. A **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* was at Asprokremos on 8 April, four were reported at Akhna Dam 20–23 April and six were at Mandria on 22 April. A **Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius* at Spiro's Beach on 29 March, will be the 5th record if accepted and a **Caspian Plover** *C. asiaticus* at Lady's Mile on 17 April was the 16th record. The 16th record of **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* for Cyprus was at Larnaca Sewage Works on 14–20 April with two **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* there 14–17 April. A second year **Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyæetus* was at Kermia Beach, Cape Greco on 7 April. On 22 April two **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* were at Cape Andreas and will be the 9th record if accepted. There were several reports of **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* from mid March, with a maximum of 13 at Cape Drepanum on 29 March. A

Temminck's Horned Lark *Eremophila bilopha* was reported at Tomb of the Kings in Paphos on 22 April, the 1st record if accepted. Single **Siberian Stonechats** *Saxicola torquatus maurus* were at Akrotiri Salt Lake on 20 March and Paphos Lighthouse on 17 April; the 7th and 8th records. A late **Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* was at Paphos Headland on 5 April and was either a late departing bird or a passage migrant. Female **Hooded Wheatear** *O. monacha* were reported from Amathous Hill on 29 March, Baths of Aphrodite on 15 April and at Cape Greco 19–20 April and will be the 9th to 11th records if accepted. A **White-crowned Black Wheatear** *O. leucopyga* was at Mandria on 13 April and will be the 6th record if accepted. A **Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* was singing at Cape Drepanum on 30 March and an **Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina* was at Paralimni Pools on 16 April. The 10th record of **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* was at Mazotos on 7 April and at Aspokremnos Dam a **Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria* was seen on 23 April. **Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* apparently wintered but records came late in the winter; one at Avgas Gorge 6 March, one at Pissouri Bay 11 March and one at Sotira cliff on 16 March. **Isabelline Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* near Cape Drepanum on 27 March and one at Mandria on 12 April were the 15th & 16th records for Cyprus. The 4th record of **Steppe Grey Shrike** *L. pallidirostris* involved a bird at Paralimni Lake on 9 April. On 5 April a **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* was at Kouklia and a male **Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* was at Paphos Lighthouse on 28 March.

EGYPT

At least 400 **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* were counted along the Nile on the 27 January. Four (3 adults and 1 juvenile) **Common Crane** *Grus grus* were seen coming into roost at Naama Bay

sewage ponds on 18 Dec 2004, and were seen again flying on 23 Dec 2004; a scarce bird in winter. Fourteen **Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* on Elephantine Island (8 on one side, 6 on the other) on 1 January was a large count for the Luxor area. On 27 January two **Kittlitz's Plovers** *Charadrius pecuarius* were at Abbassa fish ponds NE of Cairo. A female **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *Pterocles alchata* near Naama Bay on 18 December 2004 (and again five days later) is the 1st record (this issue) of this species in Egypt since one collected at Rafa on 14 November 1917. A **Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis* and several **White-breasted Kingfishers** *Halcyon smyrnensis* were at Abbassa fish ponds on 22 January. A **Cyprus Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* was seen at a regular wintering site at Abu Simbel on 30 Dec 2004. More unusually, up to two **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* were at Naama Bay sewage ponds on 18, 23 and 24 Dec 2004; a rare species in south Sinai.

GEORGIA

On 19 January, 220 **Pygmy Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* were at Jandari Lake, SE Georgia and c500 were at Dalis Reservoir on 21 February; both good counts for this species. A **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* at Vartsikhe Reservoir, Imereti region on 13 February is a rare winter visitor. Four **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* were at Kolkheti National Park on 29 January and are the first to be noted to winter in Georgia for two years and constitutes the 6th or 7th winter records for Georgia. Between 3–7 May, 33 **Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpines* were recorded in the Kazbegi area and Truso George. On 6 February, 41 **Greater Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyaetus* were at Lake Kumisi, with a record count of 92 there on 9 February and at Lake Jandari 12 were recorded on 13 February. It is possible that bad weather caused them to congregate on Lake Kumisi. A single **Green Woodpecker** *Picus*

viridis was in gardens in Rokithi village in Baghdathi district 7–9 January; this is a rare visitor to the area, last recorded about 25 years ago. **Waxwings** *Bombycilla garrulus* from the invasion that occurred across western Europe strayed as far as Georgia with the first two small flocks of around 20–25 birds each, recorded on 29 January in Rokiti village, Imereti region, Western Georgia. On 4 February a flock of 120–150 individuals was watched in a garden in Mtskheta and the biggest flock, consisting of 150–200 birds, was watched on 11 February in vineyard near Abisi village. Four, or probably five **Red-rumped Swallows** *Hirundo daurica* were observed for several minutes on 28 March at Dali reservoir in eastern part of the Iori river valley, SE Georgia and four were seen together on 27 April in Kutaisi, Imereti region, Western Georgia; the 4th and 5th records for Georgia. Five **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisisicus* were recorded between 3–7 May in the Kazbegi area & Truso George. At least nine **Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilla* were between Gudauri and Jvari pass on 7 February; a rare winter location for this species. A flock of 250 was recorded at Kazbegi on 4 May after heavy snowfall.

IRAN

A pair of **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* with three chicks was seen east of Jask near Soorgalm village in June. Four **Oriental White-eye** *Zosterops palpebrosus* were in Khalasi mangrove at end of June and six **Great Stone Plover** *Esacus recurvirostris* were seen in Khalasi with a further four at Azini near Gaz in June.

ISRAEL

The 5th record of **Red-throated Divers** *Gavia stellata* involved two off Eilat North Beach on 22 April. Two **Black-throated Divers** *G. arctica* were at Eilat until at least 15 January. A **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* was

off Eilat North Beach on 8 March and again on 5 June, and at the same site a **Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* was seen on 16 April, the 4th for Israel if accepted. Two **Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus columbianus* were at Hama'apil coastal plains between 8–15 January. A good count of **Smew** *Mergellus albellus* involved nine at Bnei Yisrael Reservoir, Golan Heights 7–15 January. A **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* was off Eilat North Beach on 6 May.

At least eight **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* passed over the Eilat Mountains 28 April–21 May. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* of the race *vociferous* was at Gal'on from 13 January into February; the 7th record for Israel. A count of roosting **Black Kites** *Milvus migrans* was made at Karey Naaman-Acre reserve on 28 January and 11,558 birds were counted; twice the number ever counted before in Israel at a roost site. On 9 May a **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* was over the Eilat Mountains. Seventeen **Little Bustards** *Tetrax tetrax* were at Bnei Israel Reservoir, Golan 14–20 March. A female **Lesser Sandplover** *Charadrius mongolus* was found on 17 April at Kibbutz Geshar fish pond. Three **Dotterel** *C. morinellus* were at Ramat Serin, E Galilee 6–7 April. The 2nd record of **Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* was reported from Ma'agan Michael on 15 January. An **African Collared Dove** *Streptopelia roseogrisea* was trapped and ringed at Eilat on 17 April. On 17 March four **Thick-billed Larks** *Ramphocoris clotbey* were at Hiyon plains, South Negev and four were in the Eilat Mountains on the same day. There was an exceptional count of c250 **Bimaculated Larks** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* at Samar, South Arava 17–19 March and 40 near Dimona on 22 March. At least six **Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris* were at Alrom, Golan Heights during January. Three **Black Bush Robins**

Cercotrichas podobe were recorded during the spring; one Eilat 31 March, one Yahel, central Arava 8–9 April and one trapped at Eilat 21 April. Fifteen **River Warblers** *Locustella fluviatilis* at Yotvata on 15–16 May with seven at Sede Boker on the same date were exceptional counts. On 10 April two **Goldcrests** *Regulus regulus* were recorded at Jerusalem 10 April and one was at Ne'ot Smadar, S Arava on 10 May. A **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* at Lotan between 1–19 March was the first winter record for this species. A single **Common Mynah** *Acridotheres tristis* was seen flying north above km19 on 18 April. At Ramat Sirin, E Galilee **Red-fronted Serins** *Serinus pusillus* were recorded on 18 January and 5 March and a summer-plumaged male **Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* was at Samar on 25 March.

JORDAN

Two **Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus* were off Aqaba on 15 April and the first **Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus* for Jordan, an adult, was at Azraq on 20 January. An adult **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* was seen 15km west of Azraq on 16 January. Over 700 **White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* were seen in the Aqaba area on 19 April including a group of c650 on the sea front. On 14 April three **Hume's Tawny Owl** *Strix butleri* were heard calling at Siq George, Petra and four **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* were singing at Azraq on 12 April. Around 15 **White-cheeked Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus leucogenys* were seen in the Azraq area on 20 January and again 11–13 April. A **Booted Warbler** *Hippolais caligata* was in the Aqaba allotments on the 7–8 April.

KAZAKHSTAN

A pair of **Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* was at a possible breeding site at Sorbulak on 20 May. A flock of 45 **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* migrated over Tamgaly on 21

May with two more over Taukum Desert on 22 May. On 4 May an adult **Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* was seen at Sorbulak and an adult **White-tailed Eagle** *H. albicilla* was at Atyrau on the Ural River-north Caspian Sea on 5 February. A pair of **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* was at Kokpek Pass May–June and a **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* was seen on 5 February at Atyrau. A **Shikra** *Accipiter badius* was in breeding habitat at Taukum desert lakes and Sorbulak during May. A female **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* was seen at Atyrau on 5 February. An amazing record concerns 73 pairs of **Sociable Plover** *Chettusia gregaria* attempting to breed in Kurgalgin reserve during the spring. A **Striated Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* was found in a daytime roost Turanga grove on 22 May. Three pairs of **White-winged Lark** *Melanocorypha leucoptera* were on the southern shore of Alakol Lake on 31 May and two pairs were in the Taukam Desert 21 May with 23 birds there on 5 June. Also at Alakol Lake two singing male **Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* were heard on 29 May. A probable female **Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* was at Almaty Great Lake on 14 May and will be the 1st record if accepted. Four **Crimson-winged Finch** *Rhodopechys sanguinea* were in the Surguty Valley on 23 May and four **Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* were at Kurlgagin on 1–2 June; a rare species at this location. Huge numbers of **Mongolian Finch** *Bucanetes mongolicus* were in the Surguty Valley during late spring with c150 on 23 May and c1000 on 7 June.

KUWAIT

A **Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* was at Jahra East Outfall on 6 March. On Bubiyan Island on 10 February two **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* nests with three eggs and two with two eggs were found; this is the earliest egg-laying yet recorded in Kuwait. Nineteen **White Storks** *Ciconia*

ciconia were perched on a bridge on the road to Abdally during late March, this is the largest number of White Storks seen in Kuwait since 1967. On 5 February three **White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* were seen over Ras Subiya and a **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* was at East Doha 28–29 January with three in Kuwait Bay during March. A **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* was found long dead near Al-Abraq Al-Khabari on 7 January. A **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* was singing at Jahra Pool on 24 February and a **Baillon's Crake** *P. pusilla* was at Abraq Al-Khabari on 27 March. The 1st record of **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* for Kuwait was of a bird near Jahra East Outfall on 22 May. Forty-three **Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* at Kadab on 24 January was a record count. A female **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* at Sabah Al-Salem on 4 March was the 2nd record for Kuwait. At least five **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* were at three wintering sites during February and six were recorded at Kadab on 17 March. Four **Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunni* were in Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve on 24 March, two **Thick-billed Lark** *Ramphocoris clotbey* were near Wadi Al-Batin on 8 March and two **Small Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* were at Sabah Al-Ahmed NR on 31 January. The first **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens* for Kuwait was at East Doha on 11 February and a **Hume's Wheatear** *Oenanthe alboniger* at Sabah Al-Ahmed NR on 11 February was about 5th record. During February a **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* was at Jahra Pools and is also about the 5th record for Kuwait. Ten **House Crows** *Corvus splendens* were at Shuwaikh on 8 February and a **Brown-necked Raven** *C. ruficollis* was seen on 25 March at Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve.

LEBANON

Records from the Aammia Marshes late 2004 include a maximum of six **Cattle Egrets**

Bubulcus ibis on 1 November. Up to 100 **Night Herons** *Nycticorax nycticorax* in September was the highest number ever seen at this site. A huge flock of 800 **White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* was above Lake Qaaroun on 5 October. Ninety-five **Common Cranes** *Grus grus* headed south over Khirbet Qanafar in the Bekaa Valley on 27 October. A **White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* was present from July and two were recorded on 2 October. Four **Wigeon** *Anas penelope* were rare visitors to the area on 13 December as were four **Pintail** *A. acuta* on 14 October. A **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* was present from mid-October until December. A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* was at Khirbet Qanafar on 23 September and a **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius [meridionalis] pallidirostris* on 16 September just south of Aana. Finally a **Scrub Warbler** *Scotocerca inquieta* was near Khirbet Qanafar on 30 August. The species is rare in Lebanon.

OMAN

A record count of 4556 **Persian Shearwaters** *Puffinus (Iherminieri) persicus* was made at Ras Janjari on 6 January. Four **White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* were at East Khawr on 22 February - the 6th record. A **Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* was at Shinas on 10–11 January was the 1st record for Oman. Two further records at Qurayyat on 11 and 17 February are under review. A record count of 6200 **Cormorants** *Phalacrocorax carbo* was made at Barr al Hikman on 11 January. A new record count of 62 **Little Bitterns** *Ixobrychus minutus* at Khawr Taqah on 2 May lasted for just 24 hours, as an incredible 157 were seen there the next day! At least 400 **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* were at Raysut on 11 February. Two **Sacred Ibises** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (one of which was ringed) were at Al Ansab Lagoons on 21 March, being joined by a third bird the next day. Two were also seen at Sohar Sun Farms on 4

April. All are currently considered to be escapes. An **African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* was at East Khawr on 29 March and at nearby Khawr Rawri on 1 April. Two **Egyptian Geese** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* were reported from Safah on 3 February and are accepted as the 3rd record. Three **Crested Honey-buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* were seen at Khasab on 21 April and a single was at Salalah Lagoons on 2 May. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* was at Jarziz Farm on 10 February and would be the 8th record if accepted. **Amur Falcons** *Falco amurensis* were seen at Jarziz Farm, Salalah from 4 January–10 February with a peak of three on 22 January, while a single was at Sahnawt Farm on 8 January. A **Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata* was at Salalah Bird Sanctuary on 21 April and 4 May and would represent the 4th record if accepted. A **Great Stone Plover** *Esacus recurvirostris* was at Shinas from 1–23 January. Two **Sociable Plovers** *Vanellus gregarius* were at Sohar Sun Farms from 26 December 2004–5 January. Six were at Sahnawt Farm on 10 February. Five **Caspian Plovers** *Charadrius asiaticus* were at Salalah Nature Reserve on 12 February. A single **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* was at Sohar Sun Farms from 25 December 2004, being joined by a second bird from 2 January, and both remaining until 7 February (the 5th record). A **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* at Salalah Sewage Farm on 5 March has yet to be reviewed. Two **Long-toed Stints** *Calidris subminuta* were at Sohar Sun Farms on 26 December 2004, and a single was at Khawr Taqah on 21 April. Two **Common Gulls** *Larus canus* were at Mina al Fahl on 19 December, followed by singles at Qurayyat on 6 January and Khawr Taqah on 1 April and 3 May. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *L. fuscus* of the race *fuscus* (known as **Baltic Gull**) was at Khawr Dirif on 21 January. The species is a common winter visitor and passage migrant but the race

heuglini is normally seen. **Rufous Turtle-doves** *Streptopelia orientalis* were at Al Hijj on 11 January, Khawr Taqah on 10 February and Raysut on 22 April. The February record was of the race *meena*. **Koels** *Eudynamis scolopacea* were at Qatbit (up to two on four dates between 18 December–20 January and singles on 14 February and 29 April), and Hilf (seven on 11 January and eight the next day), plus singles at Sohar Sun Farms on 26 December), Al Beed Farm on 11 January, Sunub (calling) on 22 March and Suwayq on 11 April. A **Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* was on the north coast of Masirah on 24 May - well away from its normal breeding range south of the Dhofar mountains. An estimated 300–500 **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops persicus* were at Sohar Sun Farms on 14 April. Two **Small Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* were at Sohar Sun Farms from 13 January–18 February and represent the 8th record. Two **Pale Martins** *Riparia diluta* (sometimes considered as an eastern race of **Sand Martin** *R. riparia*) were at Sohar Sun Farms on 28 December. These are the 3rd record. A **Brown-throated Sand Martin** *R. paludicola* was at Sohar Sun Farms on 18 February and would be the 6th record if accepted. A total of 300 **African Rock Martins** *Ptyonoprogne fulgula* was at Sohar Sun Farms on 26 December 2004. Single **Meadow Pipits** *Anthus pratensis* were at Qatbit on 4 and 18 January and 9 February, and at Sohar Sun Farms on 22 January and 7 February. Two **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus rubescens* were at Sohar Sun Farms on 26 December 2004, with a single then on five further dates until 18 February. This is the 3rd record. A **Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* was at the Ghaftayn Motel on 8 February and 27 were at Thumrayt on 23 February. There are now a number of records from the central Desert and Thumrait areas which might point to a small wintering population. A **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* at

Sayh on 29 December 2004 was the 6th record. An **Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* at Al Beed Farm on 11 January will be the 4th record if accepted. A new record count of **Song Thrush** *T. philomelos* was ten at Sayh on 5 January. Also there was a **Blyth's Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* on 28 December 2004 and 6 February (the 2nd record if accepted). A significant count of **Marsh Warblers** *A. palustris* was 480 at Qatbit on 6 May. Two **Hume's Lesser Whitethroats** *Sylvia (curruca) althaea* were at Ar Rawdah on 20 December and a single was at Al Ghaftayn on 28 February (these will be the 3rd and 4th records is accepted). A new record count of **Rufous Bush-chat** *Cercotrichas galactotes* was 162 at Najd Research Station on 29 April. A **Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* was at Sayh on 21–22 April (the 4th record). Single **Mourning Wheatears** *Oenanthe lugens* were at Ar Rawdah on 20 and 30 December, Wadi Bih on 20 December and Sall Ala on three dates from 27 December–7 January (the 9th and 10th records). A female **Cyprus Pied Wheatear** *O. cyprica* was reported from Mabf Farm on 27 February (the 2nd record if accepted). A **Black-eared Wheatear** *O. hispanica* was at Dawkah on 29 March would be the 10th record if accepted). Single **Bay-backed Shrikes** *Lanius vittatus* were at Ar Rawdah on 7 April, Sayq Plateau on 12 April and Sall Ala on 23 April. A **Magpie** *Pica pica* was at Ras al Hamra on 4 January and is considered to be the same bird as that reported from Qurm in October 04. Its origins are not clear, but is considered likely to be ship-assisted. A female **Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* was reported from Sayh on 21 February - the 3rd record. A male **Little Bunting** *E. pusilla* in breeding plumage was reported from Sayq Plateau on 11 March was the 4th record. Eight **Siskins** *Carduelis spinus* were at Qatbit on 4 January, and eight were also at Sayq Plateau on 11 March. A

count of 85 **Yemen Serins** *Serinus menachensis* at Tawi Atayr on 5 January is a record count for this uncommon resident. Record counts of **Trumpeter Finches** *Bucanetes githagineus* were 213 at Sall Ala on 27 December and 300 at Jabal Qatar on 4 February.

QATAR

An impressive fall of migrants occurred on the morning of 8 May. In three hours one observer recorded the following in a normally quiet area near Doha: at least 45 **European Bee-eaters** *Merops apiaster*, three **Rufous Bush-chats** *Cercotrichas galactotes*, a **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*, two **Sedge Warblers** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, four **Olivaceous Warblers** *Hippolais pallida*, an **Upcher's Warbler** *H. languida*, three **Barred Warblers** *Sylvia nisoria*, five **Lesser Whitethroats** *S. curruca*, at least twelve **Common Whitethroats** *S. communis*, at least 50 **Willow Warblers** *Phylloscopus trochilus*, 20 **Chiffchaffs** *P. collybita*, at least ten **Spotted Flycatchers** *Muscicapa striata*, more than ten **Isabelline Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* and 15 **Red-backed Shrikes** *L. collurio*, two **Lesser Grey Shrikes** *L. minor* a **Woodchat Shrike** *L. senator* and a **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. Everything passed through quite quickly and three days later it was very quiet again.

SYRIA

A four-day visit (20–24 April) resulted in a list of 185 species, including the 1st Syrian record of **Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius* at Slenfe on 23 April and five **Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita* at the breeding site near Palmyra on 21 April. A trip from 30 April to 9 May to follow up the 2004 Wetland Expedition resulted in some interesting breeding observations. Rapid visits to Sabkhat al-Jabbul on 3–4 May and 8–9 May and to Lake Tishreen on 5–6 May revealed large numbers of waterfowl in suitable breeding habitat. The most exciting observation was of several

hundred **Pygmy Cormorants** *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* at Lake Tishreen on 5 May with at least 2500 flying south past Jerablus on the Euphrates on the morning of 6 May; these birds were roosting just into Turkey and feeding on Lake Tishreen in the day with, presumably, a huge breeding colony in Turkey. Records from Jabbul included hundreds of **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*, a flock of 25 **Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*, eight species of heron, eight **White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, a colony of at least 50 pairs of **Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* (1st breeding record for Syria), 7500 – 15000 **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus [ruber] roseus*; five **Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*; hundreds of each of **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*, **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*, **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* and **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* (breeding proven; 1st breeding record for Syria), and at least 25 **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*. At Tishreen, there were about 20 Great Crested Grebe, 2 White Pelicans, six species of heron, 400 **Wigeon** *A. penelope*, five **Pintail** *A. acuta* and about 40 Ferruginous Duck. Most of these species have rarely or never been recorded breeding in Syria. It is clear that both sites are of international importance with significant breeding populations of internationally threatened waterfowl. A report is in preparation. A colony of **Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* near Palmyra was visited on 21 April. Several species of eagle including **Great Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* flew over the Halabbiyah gorge on 22 April. Colonies of **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* were noted near Palmyra on 21 April and at Halabbiyah gorge on 22 April. Three **See-see Partridge** *Ammodendridix heyi* were in the Halabbiyah Gorge on 22 April; this may well be a reliable site for this species. A **Corncrake** *Crex crex* was at Sed Wadi Abied on 21 April. At Jabbul, there were

hundreds of **Purple Swamphen (Gallinule)** *Porphyrio porphyrio* with many chicks, a colony of 5 pairs of **Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* (1st proven breeding record for Syria), two nests of **White-tailed Plover** *Chettusia leucura*, a range extension of over 100km, and huge numbers of migrant waders including tens of thousands of **Little Stints** *Calidris minuta* and **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*. Seven **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* were at Mheimideh on 22 April. Six species of tern were at Jabbul with **Gull-billed** *Sterna nilotica*, **Common** *S. hirundo*, **Little** *S. albifrons*, **Caspian** *S. caspia* and **Whiskered** *Chlidonias hybrida* showing evidence of breeding. **Little Swifts** *Apus affinis* were over the Euphrates at Deir ez-Zor on 22 April. The 1st Syrian record of **Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius* was of a pair photographed in suitable breeding habitat at Slenfe, on 23 April; a territorial male was seen at the Cedar-Firs reserve 5km away on 2 May. A **Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunnii* was near Palmyra on 21 April, a **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* at Wadi Sed Abied on 22 April, and a **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cyprica* near Palmyra on 21 April. A pair of **Scrub Warblers** *Scotocerca inquieta* at Tel Maraga on 9 May was well north of the recognised range. **Savi's Warblers** *Locustella luscinioides* were singing at Jabbul and Tishreen; there is perhaps one previous Syrian breeding season record. Two singing **Olive-tree Warblers** *Hippolais olivetorum* west of Slenfe on 2–3 May were also a significant range extension. A **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata* was at Talila on 21 April. An **Iraq Babbler** *Turdoides altirostris* feeding young in the reed beds north of Lake Tishreen on 6 May is by far the most northerly breeding record of this species – and less than 5 km from Turkey. The 2nd Syrian record of **Yellow-throated Sparrow** *Gymnoris xanthocollis* was of a pair in a Deir ez-Zor

garden on 22 April. A pair of **Syrian Serins** *Serinus syriacus* was at Bloudan on 24 April. Significant breeding range extensions were recorded for a large number of passerines including **Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*, **Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* and **European Serin** *Serinus serinus*.

TURKEY

Three claims of 1st records were a **Fan-tailed Raven** *Corvus rhipidurus* at Belen Pass on 22 March (northernmost record ever), a **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* at Kulu Gölü on 9–10 May and a female **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* at gravel pits north of Birecik on 23–24 May (also perhaps northernmost record ever). A **Bar-tailed Desert Lark** *Ammomanes cincturus* was at the Göksu Delta on 21 May (3rd record). A male **Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* was at Birecik on 22 May (the species has only recently been discovered to occur in south-east Anatolia in the breeding season), and two **Paddyfield Warblers** *Acrocephalus agricola* were singing downstream, near the Syrian border on 23 May. A pair of **Siskins** *Carduelis spinus* at Akseki on 26–27 May (not previously definitely recorded in the summer in the Taurus), and also a **Grey-faced Woodpecker** *Picus canus* was there on 27 May. A female **Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus* was just east of Manavgat on 27 May. The species is rare in west of its range in Turkey. The 4th record of **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* involved one photographed at Sodali Gölü on 25 May. As in 2004, **Plain Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus neglectus* were found singing in late May from a sparsely vegetated sloping hillside south of Van on the Çatak road c1 km south of the junction with the road to Bahçesaray. A **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* was at the Kızılırmak Delta on 9 April and seven were at Kulu Gölü on 18 May. The 4th modern record of **Snow Bunting**

Plectrophenax nivalis was at Kulu Gölü on 12 February. A **Corncrake** *Crex crex* at Posof, Kars on 21 June is possibly indicative of breeding. A count of 204 **Knot** *Calidris canutus* at the Kızılırmak Delta is the highest-ever for the Black Sea coastlands. A count of 22 **Common Mynas** *Acridotheres tristis* at Kartal, Istanbul on 16 April is the largest ever. Following the recent decline in the species, a total of 14 **Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus* at Uzundere, Erzurum, is significant. A **Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis* on 29 January was at Balıkdamı, Eskişehir. 150 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* were at Adana, Yumurtalık on 9 May. A **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* was at Eğirdir Lake on 20 January and three were at Kızılırmak Delta on 15 January. A **Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* was at Meriç Delta, Edirne on 16 January (17th record).

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

A **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* was at Fujairah 18 January–7 March (first arrived on 1 December 2004) and one was at Ras Diba on 6 May, (11th and 12th records). A **White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons* was at Sharjah tip for several days from 9 February (16th record). An **Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* was at Khor Dubai and Wimpey Pits from 18 January–15 February. A **Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* was at Gbantut Polo Club on 15 February (8th record). A **Merlin** *Falco columbarius* was at Al Wathba Camel Track on 15 January. Two **White-breasted Waterhens** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* were at the Emirates golf course on 23 February (20th record). Two **Sociable Plovers** *Vanellus*

gregarius were at the Dubai Pivot Fields from 4 January–4 March (20th record). A reported **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* at Wimpey Pits on 21 April will be the 1st record if accepted – and only the 3rd for the OSME region). A **Black Tern** *Chlidonias nigra* was at the Gbantut Polo Club on 25 February and another was at the Fujairah breakwater 7 April (9th & 10th records). A reported **Common Noddy** *Anous stolidus* at Ras Diba on 25 February will be the 9th record if accepted. Single **Rufous Turtle-Doves** *Streptopelia orientalis* were at the Emirates golf course on 20 February and at Diba on 7 March (10th and 11th records). A count of 155 **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *Pterocles alchata* observed coming to a waterhole near the new Bab Al Shams Desert Resort Hotel, inland of Dubai on 9 April is the highest number recorded of this species which is rarely reported. Reports of **Koels** *Eudynamis scolopacea* were from Diba on 18 February and 11 March (different birds) and near Dhaid on 25 March (8th–10th records if accepted). Up to two **Sykes's Nightjars** *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* were reported at Al Wathba camel track fields between 14 January–6 March (4th record). The two wintering **Long-eared Owls** *Asio otus* were still present in Mushrif Park, Dubai, to 18 January, one remaining 19 February (12th record). A **Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra* was still present at Al Wathba Camel Track on 14 February, having been observed first on 25 November 2004 (6th record). Two **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus rubescens* first discovered on 24 December 2004, remained at the Dubai Pivot fields 13 January, and one remained until 27

February. Another was reported for about two weeks at Umm on Nar golf course, Abu Dhabi until 27 February (11th and 12th records). A **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* of the race *leucocephala* (often known as **White-headed Wagtail**) was in Abu Dhabi's Bateen Park from 25–26 March (2nd record). A **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* was in Abu Dhabi, opposite the GMC showroom on 12 March, after which two were present on 13 March. The only report of **Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* was a single in Gbantut plantation on 25 February. A **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* was at the Dubai Pivot Fields on 26 February (15th record). A **Dusky Thrush** *Turdus naumanni* was still at Gbantut Hotel garden until 27 February–26 March (2nd record). A **Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* was in the wood at Al Wathba Camel Track on 25 February and another one was in Bateen Park on 25 March. A **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* was in Mushref Palace Gardens on 8 May (11th record). An **Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina* was at Khalidiyah on 9 May (14th record and first since April 2001). A **Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* was at Jebel Dhanna on 2 May (4th record). A **Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina* was at Al Wathba Camel Track on 15–22 April (4th record and first since 1987). Three **Grey-necked Buntings** *Emberiza buchanani* were reported at Al Wathba Camel Track on 22 April and will be the 1st record if accepted). Away from its breeding range the species has only been reported from Oman where there have been two records.

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SANDGROUSE GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

The Sandgrouse Editorial Committee will consider for publication original papers that contribute to the body of information about birds of the Middle East and related zoogeographical regions; subject categories include, but are not limited to, species distribution, breeding biology, behaviour, identification, taxonomy, phylogeny and conservation. The Middle East for this purpose (the OSME region) includes Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt and Libya in the west, the Caucasus republics and Kazakhstan in the north, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan in the east, Oman and Yemen (including the Socotra archipelago) in the south, and all states within the above countries. The region follows a line that follows the approximate centreline of the Red Sea to include all islands belonging to Yemen and Saudi Arabia to the latitude of the Egypt-Sudan border on the western coast; north of this latitude, the Red Sea falls entirely in the OSME region. The Committee reserves the right to recommend that authors of papers concerning birds on or near the western and eastern limits of the OSME region should submit them to the African and Oriental Bird Clubs respectively, if in the opinion of the Committee or Editor they would be better placed in those regions.

Submissions are considered on the understanding that the work has not been published elsewhere substantially in the same form and is not being offered concurrently for publication elsewhere. Papers should be in English, but the Editor will endeavour to assist authors who are unable to obtain English translations of their work. The general principle is that contributions sent by e-mail, on floppy or CD (Microsoft, not Mac) in English to the Sandgrouse editor should preferably be formatted in English (UK) (Click 'Edit' >> 'Select All', then click 'Tools' >> 'Language' >> 'Set Language', scroll to 'English (UK)' and select). Mac-formatted submissions must be in PC format and the file in Word format, but as a last resort can be in ASCII text files lacking word processor formatting codes. Submissions in hard copy should be double-spaced and on only one side of A4 paper sheets.

The Editor's order of preference for submissions is:

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It would be appreciated that wherever possible all graphics are also produced in hard copy and mailed to the Editor. Figures should be drawn, **without lettering**, preferably in black ink on good-quality paper on white or translucent paper, and no larger than 150% of the final image. Captions and figure lettering should be given in full at the end of the text of the paper submitted. Do not incorporate drawings, pictures or graphics into the text – just indicate in the text where you would wish them placed. Transparencies or good-quality prints are most acceptable. Negatives may also be sent; the editor will arrange to have them scanned. Hard copy material authors require to be returned will be so.

OSME is undertaking a review of bird species and current nomenclature. The result is likely to comply generally with the IOC recommendations when these are made known. Until then, authors are asked to follow the Porter *et al* (1996) *Field Guide to the birds of the Middle East* for scientific names and sequence of bird species. Where possible, authors should consult a current (post-2005) issue of Sandgrouse and follow the layout conventions therein. The latest revision is summarised below:

Layout

Author addresses will now appear at the start of papers after the summary; where there is no summary, addresses will follow the author names.

Headings

The use of side headings (in **bold full capitals**) for papers will continue, but they no longer require to be underlined. Centre headings, in smaller **bold font** than the side headings, are retained for 'Acknowledgements' and 'References' at the end of papers, but these will now appear only with initial capitals.

Tables and Figures - uses of bold type

- Where a Table or a Figure is identified by a title, the words 'Table' and 'Figure' should be in **bold**, thus: **Table** and **Figure**.
- Similarly, when referring to a Table number or a Figure number in the text, these should appear in **bold** thus: **Table 1**, **Figure 1**. This enables a reader to find references to Tables and Figures very quickly in the text. However, see 'Abbreviations' below for the use of 'Fig'.
- Column headings in a **Table** preferably should be in **bold**.

Abbreviations and the form they take

The general principle of modern abbreviations is that they do **not** have full stops (periods) following them, the argument being that abbreviations are now recognised as such, and by definition a shortening of a word to form an abbreviation should **not** be accompanied by adding a full stop to lengthen it! Hence we have 'in prep', **not** 'in prep.' for 'in preparation'. Examples are:

- asl (not a.s.l.) = above sea level
- (pers obs) = personal observation(s), **not** (pers. obs.) or (pers obs) or (pers. obs.)
- eg (not e.g. nor eg) = *exempli gratia* for example.
- The general rule is that words and abbreviations from Latin and occasionally other languages are in *italic*.
- *et al* (not et al. or et al) = and others
- *ie* (not i.e. or ie) = that is
- *c* is the preferred abbreviation for 'circa' = approximately (not *c.* or *c.*), and it should be used without a space between it and the quantity, thus: *c*10 nests.
- *cf* and not 'cf.' or 'cf.' for 'compare'.
- **unpub** and not **unpubl**. Preferably, 'unpub' should be followed by 'data', 'ms', 'notes' or similar.
- 1km (not 1 km or 1 Km or 1 km.) = one kilometre

The general rule for abbreviations of quantity is that the abbreviation remains singular when the quantities are plural, eg 1km, 2km or 500km.

■ Fig (not Fig. or Fig.) = Figure; the use of this abbreviation is preferred in articles, but if 'Figure' is used, please be consistent.

The general rule is that the number of the Figure is also in **bold**, thus: **Fig 1** or **Fig 6**.

References and Citations

- In the reference list, the first author's name is followed by the relevant initials. Subsequent authors should have their initials placed before the surname.
- The general rule is that we treat authors of papers first as human beings, and so apart from the lead or sole author whose name must appear first to keep reference lists searchable in alphabetic order, we place the initials first.
- Full stops (periods) are not used to separate an author's initials, hence 'J.F.P. SMITH' and **not** 'J.F.P. SMITH'.
- A citation in the text with 3 or more authors should cite only the first author, thus '(Smith *et al* 2000)', omitting periods (full stops) and without a separating comma (see also *et al* in 'Abbreviations' above).
- A citation with two authors should follow '(Smith & Jones 2000)' in the text, using the ampersand (&), but should be written as 'SMITH, J.F.P. AND AB JONES. 2000.' in the Reference List. Note the change from '(2000)' to '2000.'
- Multiple citations in the text within a single set of brackets normally should be separated by a comma (,), thus: (Jones & Smith 1999, Heath *et al* 2000, Ramadan-Jaradi 2004). However, multiple citations of a single author or the same team of authors may require separation by a semi-colon, thus: (Brown 1998, 1999, 2001; Jones and Smith 1999, Ramadan-Jaradi 2004).
- Citing an author by name within the text is unchanged, thus: 'as recorded by Jones (1997)'.

General

- Except in regular news features in *Sandgrouse*, the first mention of a species in any paper must include the species name, thus: 'House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*'. Note that placing the scientific name in brackets is no longer required. However, English is such a flexible language that sometimes context may still require the use of brackets. Usually there will be no need to repeat the scientific name in the text unless comparisons between one or more species are being drawn.
- In a species account, if it mentions another species that does not have a preceding species account, that species must have its scientific name included. For example, in an account about, say, Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, in which a prey species, say, Chaffinch, is named, if Chaffinch does not have a species account in the paper, then *Fringilla coelebs* should appear after the English name.

Summaries of full-length papers should be brief (less than 300 words), should not cite references and should cover only the subjects contained in the main text. The convention adopted is that authors will receive one or more edited electronic versions of their original texts to check for typographical errors and to confirm that the changes have not altered the meaning of the content before the journal is sent for typesetting. For authors without access to e-mail, arrangements will be made on an individual basis. No changes of substance can be made to typeset proofs. In research journals, it remains the convention to report in the third person and in the passive voice, purportedly to allow a neutral presentation. In *Sandgrouse* the use of the first person and active voice is encouraged, while noting that the more technical papers may benefit from the former, non-partisan style.



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