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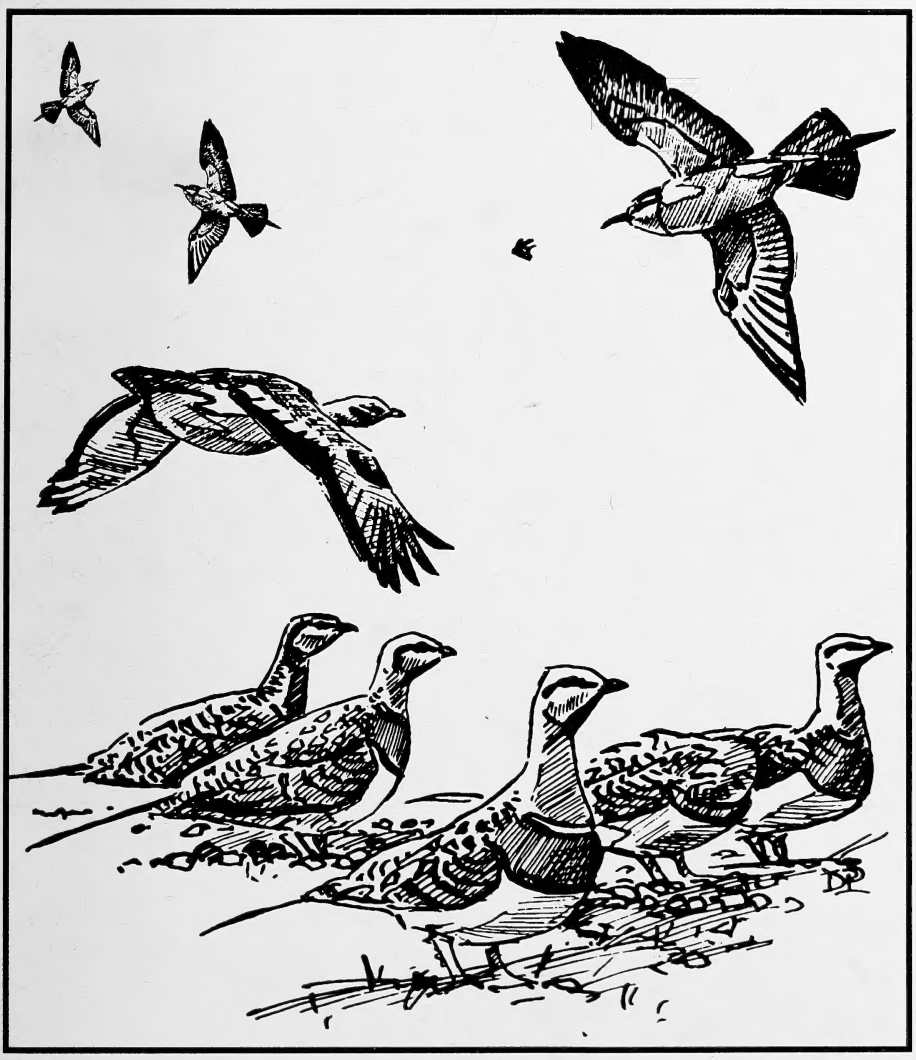

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All records in this *Bulletin* are subject to acceptance by the relevant records committees of the country concerned.

Any articles, announcements or requests to do with birds in the Middle East are welcome, and may be published free of charge, subject to the discretion of the Editor. Accompanying photographs and line-drawings are welcome. Bird names generally follow those of Birds of the Middle East and North Africa. *For further details on submitting articles, please refer to* Sandgrouse *14(2) or 15.*

New look *Sandgrouse*

As from 1996, *Sandgrouse* and the *Bulletin* will be merging into one journal, published twice a year - spring and autumn. To give the publication a broader appeal there will be more colour photographs than at present, and we will be adding some new features to the current mix of news and serious ornithology. These will include regular items on some of the region's key birds and birdwatching sites, a photospot giving photographers an opportunity to exhibit some of their best work, and profiles of individuals and organisations active in the region. Amongst all these changes the new editorial team will strive to maintain the *Sandgrouse* reputation for high standards of presentation and authoritative content. Contributions to OSME's journals from members are always welcomed, please submit any material for publication to the *Sandgrouse* Editorial Team, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.

Illustrations

We are grateful to the following artists for the illustrations used in this *Bulletin*: *per* R.S.P.B.

D. Powell: Pin-tailed sandgrouse, Great bustard and Bee-eaters (Cover)
Lesser Whitethroat 13

Trapping of spring migrants on Qummah Island, Farasan archipelago in the Red Sea

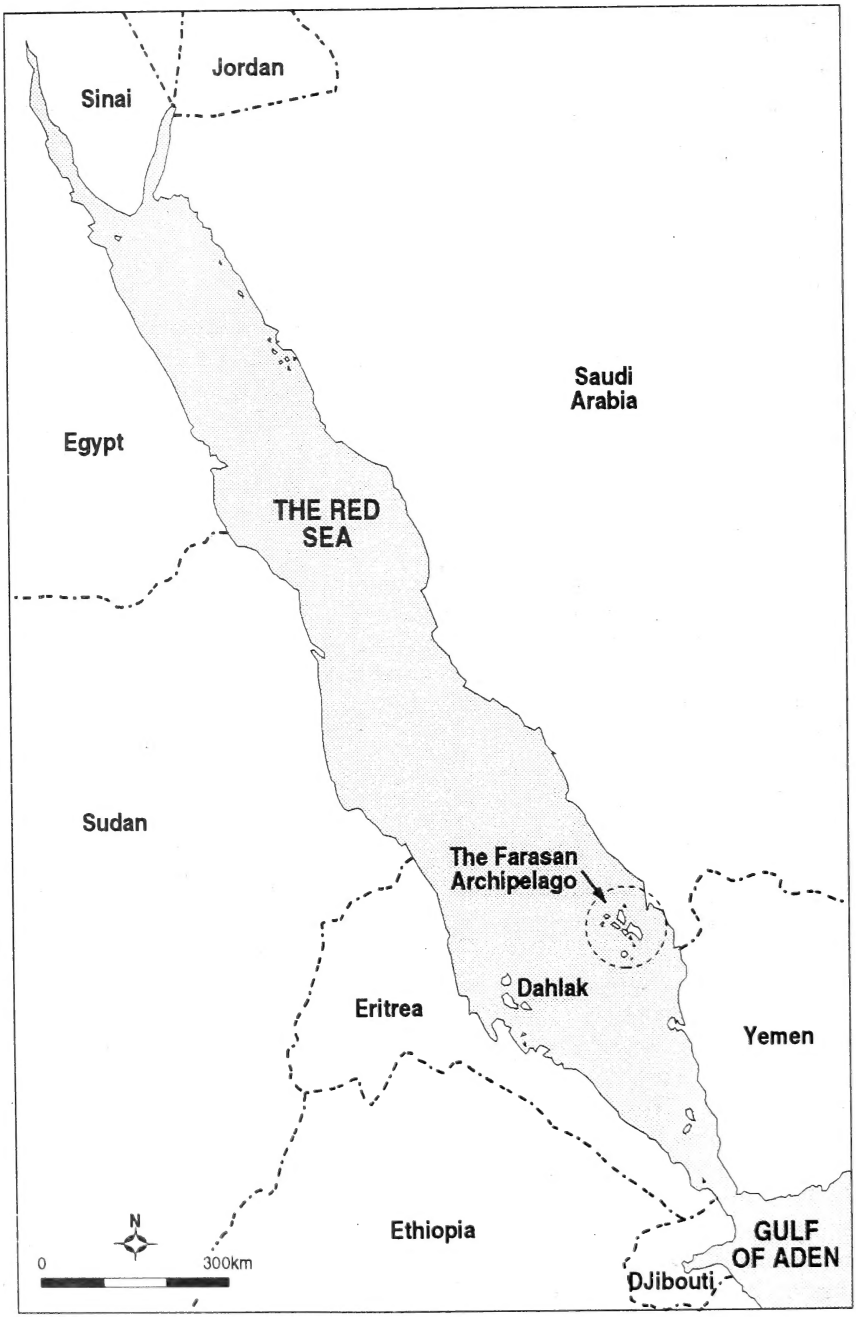
Dr Hassan M Felemban

Introduction

The trapping of migratory birds is well known as a serious problem in several Mediterranean countries eg. in Malta, Italy, Cyprus and Spain. In Egypt passerines are taken in large numbers: an estimated 270,000 to 540,000 are captured for food each autumn along the Mediterranean coast alone (Goodman & Meininger 1989). In Saudi Arabia birds are caught for economic reasons in a small number of areas along the Red Sea coast (Buttiker 1988) and on Qummah island in the Farasan Islands (Juniper 1988).

Study area and methods

The Farasan archipelago comprises about ninety islands, located in the southern Red Sea, off the western coast of Saudi Arabia (see figure 1). The islands vary in size from about sixty kilometres in length (Farasan Al-Kebir) to islets of a a few square metres. They are formed of fossilised coral and are low, barren and rather sparsely vegetated. Only a few small bushes and several palm trees occur on Qummah (16°14'N 42°02'E) which is six kilometres south of Farasan Al-Kebir (see figure 2). About 300 people inhabit its 10km^2. This study was carried out during three consecutive spring migrations in order to observe the average number of species and individuals caught on Qummah. Most trapping was performed by local fishermen, with women and children regularly checking the traps between 0600 and 0900 each day. Fewer birds were collected during the rest of the day. Birds were identified and counted at a gathering spot near the houses. The birds from all traps on the island were counted on a daily basis between April 10th and May 6th. The total numbers recorded are likely to be an underestimate as some birds were probably not brought to this central point. Most birds were identified by reference to Heinzel *et al.* (1979) and Hollom *et al.* (1988) but it was not always possible to separate close species pairs once counting started due to the limitations of time; the birds are cooked soon after capture. Therefore it is possible that among those birds identified as Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*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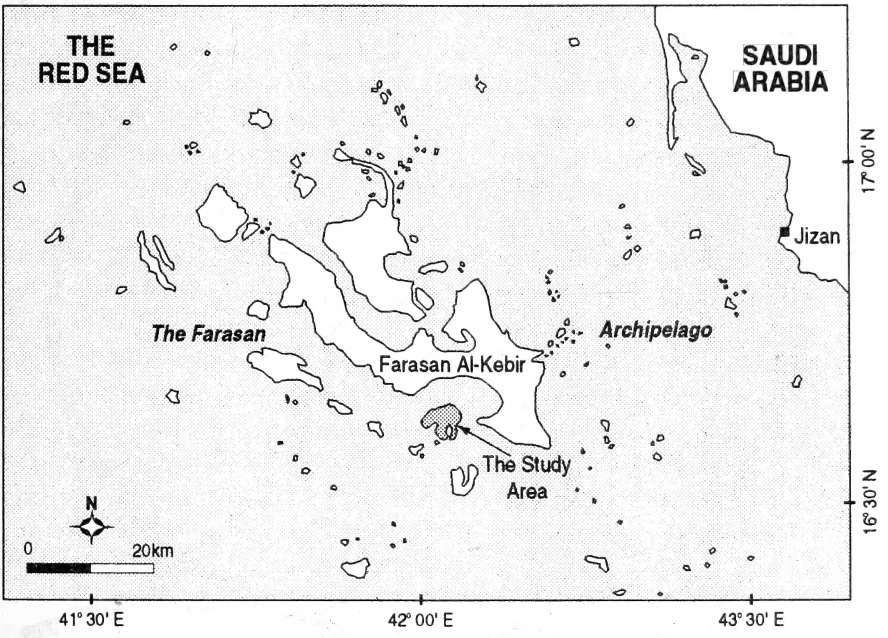

Figure 1 (left): A map of the Red Sea with the Farasan archipelago.

Figure 2 (above): Map of the Farasan archipelago, showing the location of Qummah Island (*The study area*).

there may have been Marsh Warblers *A.palustris*, and among the Great Reed Warblers *A.arundinaceus* some Clamorous Reed Warblers *A.stentoreus* may have gone unnoticed. Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* were separated from Willow Warbler *P.trochilus* solely on leg colour, and thus some birds may have been incorrectly assigned to species. Two types of trap were in use: the Samus and the Mihnab (see figure 3). The Samus is a small trap (a metre high) made of dry mangrove sticks and usually used for catching lone birds. About thirty such traps were counted on the island. The Mihnab trap is two to four metres high and completely covered by a fishing net. It has a single front entrance. Much of the area inside the trap is filled with Araak *Salvadora persica* and other dry bushes or sticks. Children chase birds towards the entrance. Once inside the birds are grasped by hand through the back of the net. At least 350 such traps were found on the island. Similar traps have been used in Kuwait (Dickson 1939).

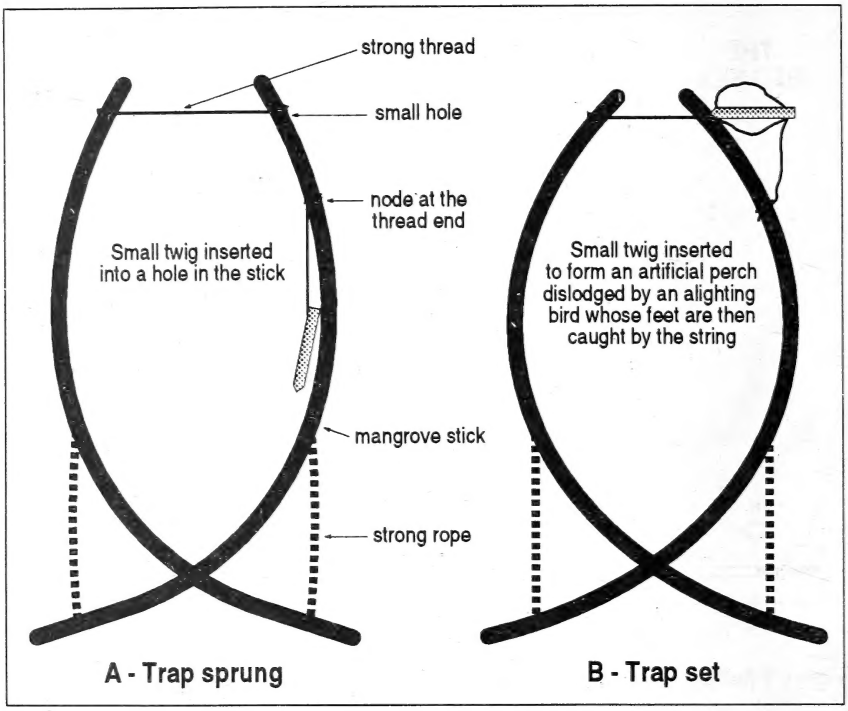

Figure 3: The Samus trap for catching a lone bird.

Results

Migrants of 33 species were identified during the project, of which 25 were passerines and eight non-passerines. The total number of individuals collected was 8,214 in 1990; 8,305 the next year and 11,140 in 1992 (see appendix 1). The daily occurrence of the fifteen most abundant species during spring 1990-1992 is displayed in tables 1-3. Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* proved to be the commonest species caught on Qummah, constituting 15% of the total number of birds captured. Most arrived between 20-25 April (see figure 4). Red-backed Shrike *L.collurio* constituted between 8-12% of the total catch in the three springs. This species acts as a signal to the villagers of the beginning of the massive arrivals of other migrants In consequence a special ceremony, where the local people gather to dance and recite chants, is held upon the first day of this species' arrival. The phenology of the Red-backed Shrike was similar each spring despite the low total numbers in 1991 (see figure 5). The Great Grey Shrike *L.excubitor* and the Lesser Grey Shrike *L.minor* showed no overlap in their arrival;

Figure 4: Phenology of Isabelline Shrikes during Spring 1990–1992.

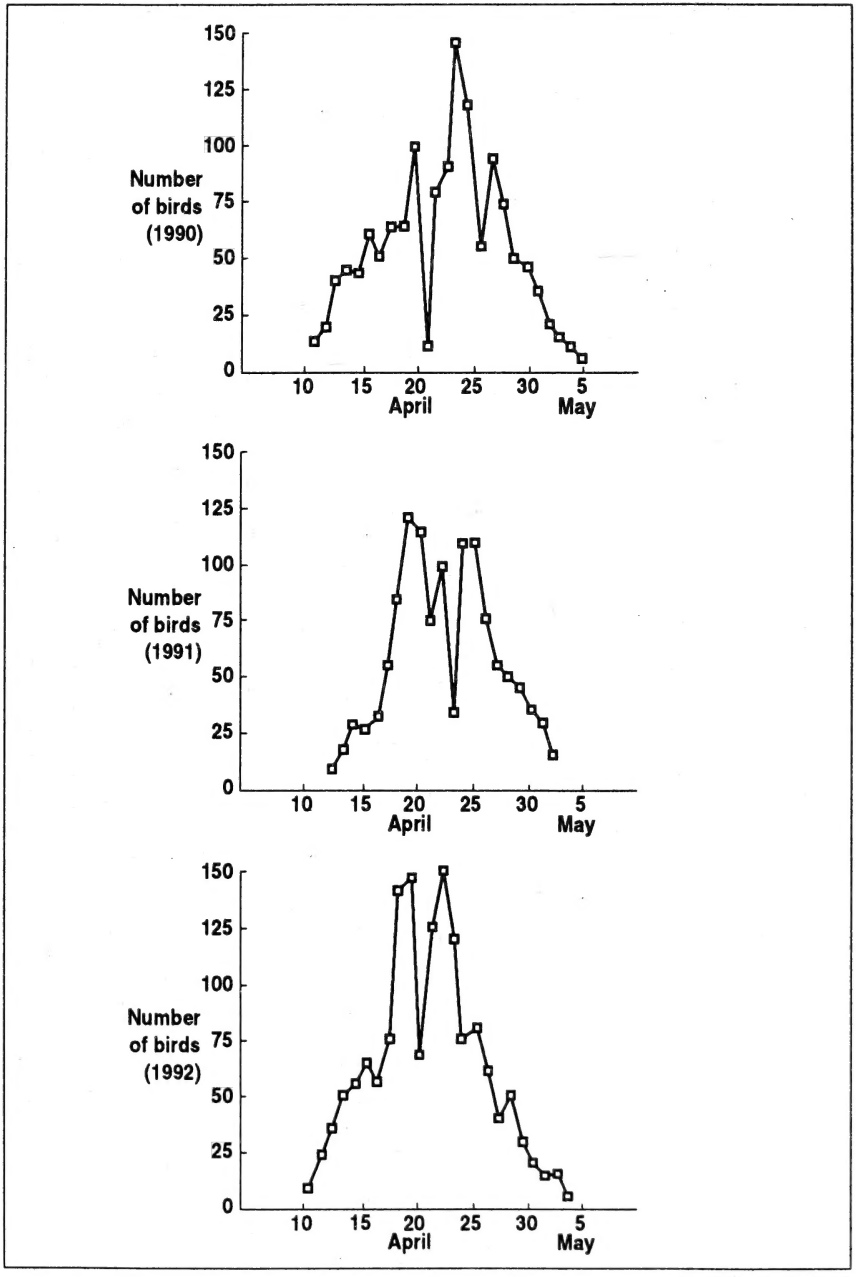

Figure 5: Phenology of Red-backed Shrikes during Spring 1990–1992.

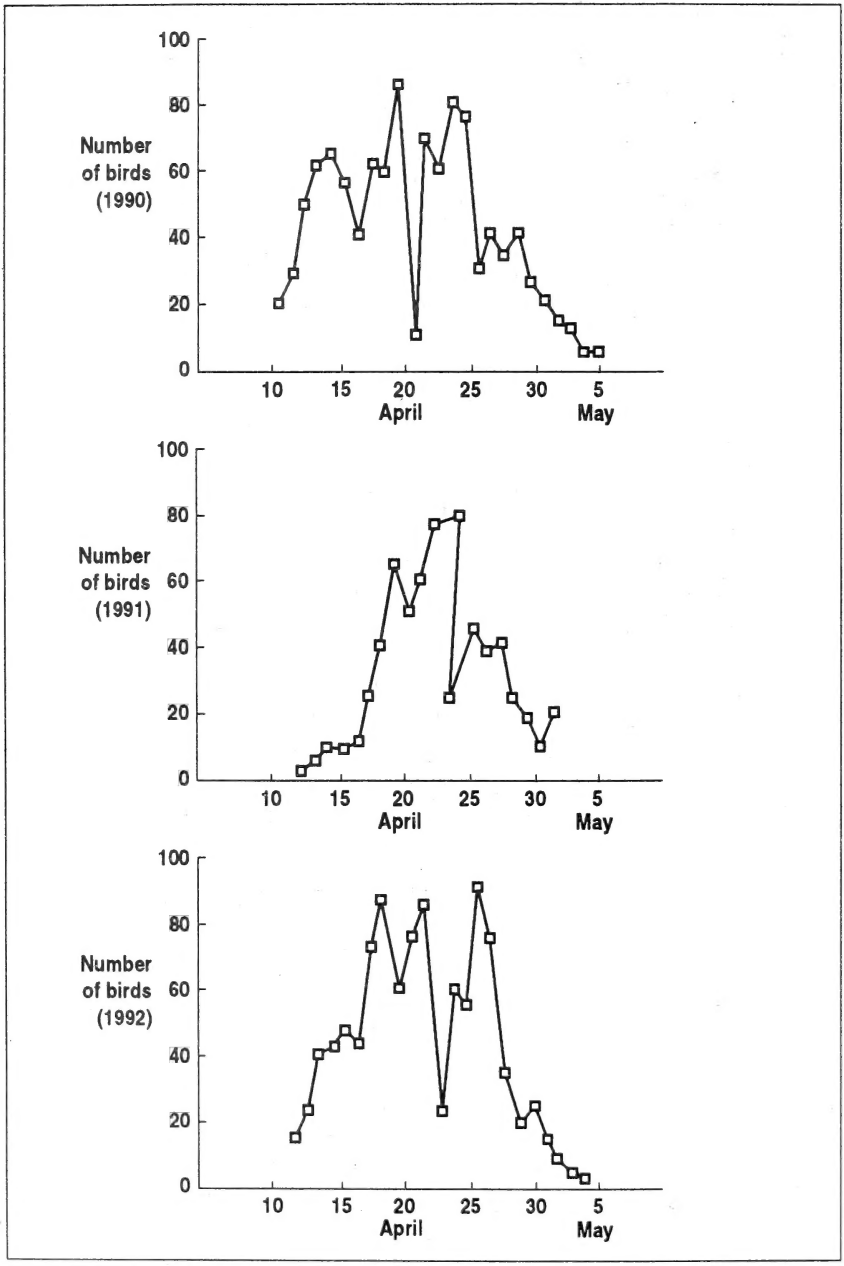

Figure 6: Phenology of Great and Lesser Grey Shrikes during Spring 1990–1992.

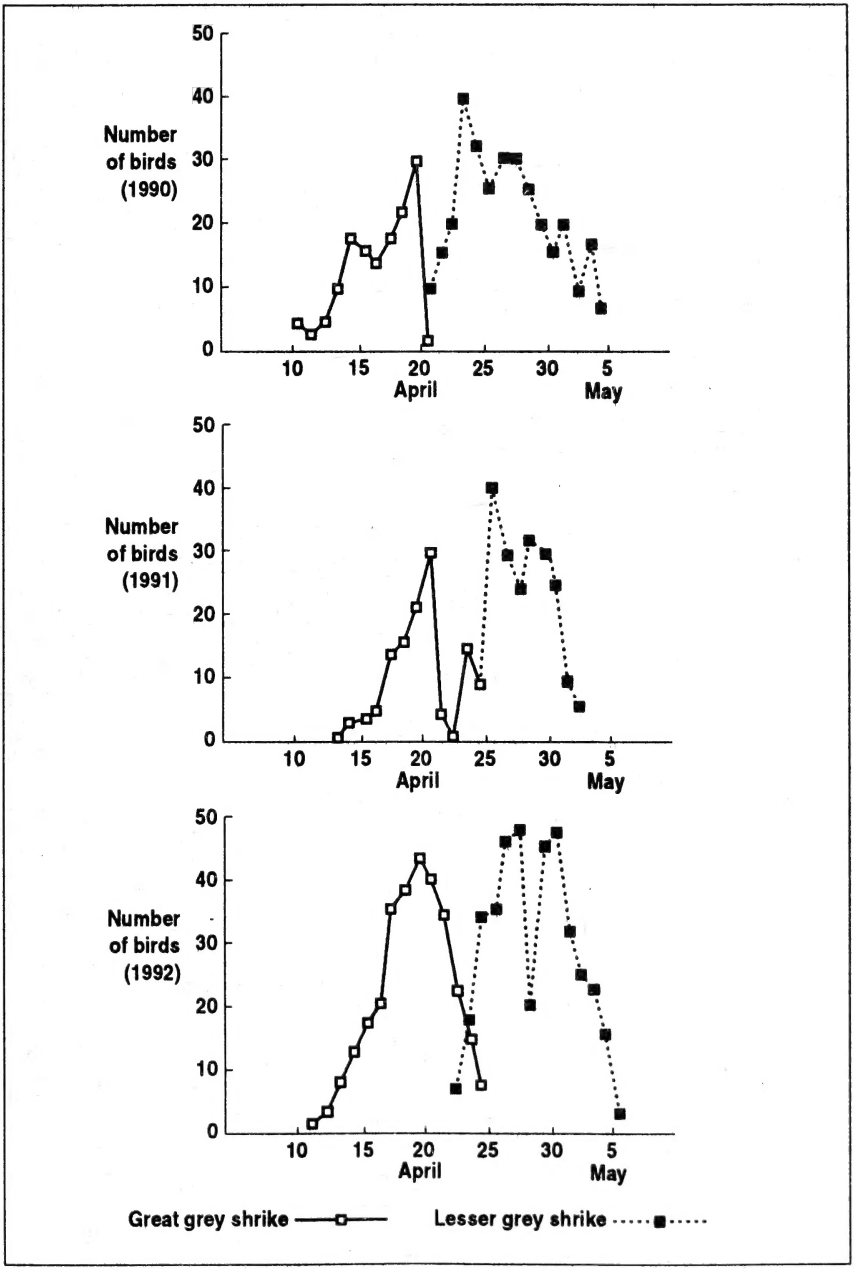

Table 1: The numbers of individuals of the most abundant species trapped on Qummah Island during April 10–May 5 of 1990

	Species	April																				May				Total
		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Quail	-	2	4	10	10	6	5	2	4	8	-	6	3	1	2	4	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	81
2	Rufous Bush Chat	6	10	20	12	22	18	16	18	16	26	-	15	20	30	16	16	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	267
3	Nightingale	10	8	8	11	20	46	45	20	-	32	4	30	40	50	43	30	40	39	30	29	20	10	-	-	-	565
4	Redstart	30	40	45	40	45	50	50	43	39	60	5	30	25	25	20	16	15	10	6	10	12	10	-	-	-	626
5	Sedge Warbler	5	10	10	-	15	16	10	24	16	30	5	36	40	40	29	15	30	22	19	23	-	-	-	-	-	395
6	Reed Warbler	7	10	10	-	15	-	10	18	22	25	-	14	14	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	161
7	Great Reed Warbler	10	20	20	14	20	20	30	32	40	36	8	40	43	-	60	50	36	45	36	38	28	20	-	-	-	646
8	Whitethroat	30	30	25	36	46	46	46	40	30	72	4	60	56	48	15	10	20	9	5	9	8	6	-	-	-	651
9	Blackcap	-	-	10	8	12	20	10	14	6	30	2	26	8	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	151
10	Chiffchaff	29	25	39	32	31	42	45	40	48	45	13	29	24	14	10	6	7	6	8	7	5	2	-	-	-	507
11	Willow Warbler	21	20	31	8	19	18	15	21	13	25	8	21	12	1	-	3	1	-	6	2	1	2	-	-	-	248
12	Isabelline Shrike	13	19	40	46	45	61	53	63	63	97	11	81	90	146	116	56	95	73	50	46	35	20	14	11	5	1349
13	Red-backed Shrike	20	29	50	61	65	55	40	61	60	86	10	70	60	80	76	30	40	34	40	25	20	14	12	4	4	1046
14	Lesser Grey Shrike	4	3	5	10	18	16	14	18	22	30	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	141
15	Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10		15	20	40	32	25	30	26	20	16	20	10	18	7	319

Table 2: The numbers of individuals of the most abundant species trapped on Qummah Island during April 10–May 5 of 1991

	Species	April																				May				Total
		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Quail	-	-	3	1	2	3	2	23	7	15	10	30	61	54	12	40	45	22	15	9	4	10	4	-	-	372
2	Rufous Bush Chat	-	-	3	5	5	6	3	20	23	15	17	17	40	55	13	60	65	44	30	12	17	5	-	-	-	455
3	Nightingale	-	-	5	2	12	15	17	36	45	20	30	3	35	42	49	25	13	43	34	26	10	8	7	5	-	482
4	Redstart	-	-	10	5	15	10	14	45	49	51	42	40	60	15	44	32	19	20	15	9	4	7	5	-	-	511
5	Sedge Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	25	17	25	40	22	16	15	33	50	53	31	20	10	8	7	-	-	393
6	Reed Warbler	-	-	1	3	11	14	10	10	30	55	50	39	22	55	49	48	13	20	11	1	10	2	1	-	-	442
7	Great Reed Warbler	-	-	1	2	3	4	2	15	25	25	5	23	24	45	50	60	43	20	19	12	23	4	4	2	-	409
8	Whitethroat	-	10	10	13	20	23	10	30	46	45	30	46	73	3	65	52	40	10	10	24	8	5	-	-	-	573
9	Blackcap	-	-	3	6	5	7	8	13	30	41	43	50	61	20	30	45	10	25	13	3	5	5	4	4	-	431
10	Chiffchaff	-	8	18	13	29	44	10	33	56	40	42	30	34	20	23	36	26	20	12	11	8	1	-	-	-	514
11	Willow Warbler	-	2	12	8	21	21	-	17	27	5	11	30	30	11	17	19	29	10	9	8	12	3	-	-	-	302
12	Isabelline Shrike	-	-	8	18	29	27	32	55	82	117	113	75	98	37	110	111	78	53	50	44	36	31	10	-	-	1214
13	Red-backed Shrike	-	-	4	6	10	9	11	25	41	65	50	60	77	25	80	45	39	41	25	19	10	20	-	-	-	662
14	Lesser Grey Shrike	-	-	-	1	3	4	5	14	16	22	30	5	1	15	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	126
15	Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	40	30	24	32	30	25	10	6	-	-	207

Table 3: The numbers of individuals of the most abundant species trapped on Qummah Island during April 10–May 5 of 1992

	Species	April																			May						Total
		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	Quail	-	3	6	12	17	15	10	8	7	13	11	12	8	19	14	13	-	8	5	4	6	3	2	2	-	-	198
2	Rufous Bush Chat	-	14	11	26	33	29	41	30	48	43	47	48	36	31	35	22	34	29	18	19	11	-	-	-	-	-	605
3	Nightingale	-	3	6	10	14	23	37	52	39	8	41	42	47	51	38	17	25	21	18	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	499
4	Redstart	15	33	76	12	46	53	58	61	49	28	36	44	37	27	42	30	28	29	23	33	21	18	14	-	-	-	813
5	Sedge Warbler	-	-	12	16	10	19	23	26	29	28	17	21	35	42	26	14	18	18	23	13	11	9	-	-	-	-	410
6	Reed Warbler	-	8	14	36	46	48	36	67	12	-	43	37	52	71	46	49	31	37	34	29	15	-	-	-	-	-	711
7	Great Reed Warbler	1	4	29	17	14	11	23	26	30	38	14	12	27	10	29	35	13	39	21	18	20	17	19	13	14	-	494
8	Whitethroat	40	29	36	72	35	33	48	41	45	57	42	63	46	30	28	34	27	35	19	16	19	14	5	5	-	-	819
9	Blackcap	-	-	-	-	7	21	41	35	14	19	16	17	12	10	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	197
10	Chiffchaff	21	26	29	67	64	79	81	85	93	90	46	58	38	51	23	18	16	19	23	22	25	20	8	7	10	5	1024
11	Willow Warbler	5	10	23	19	34	41	39	37	24	25	53	19	42	36	14	19	12	6	10	8	3	4	1	3	2	-	489
12	Isabelline Shrike	-	10	23	33	50	55	65	55	73	140	145	70	125	150	121	75	82	60	41	53	32	19	16	17	7	-	1517
13	Red-backed Shrike	-	15	23	41	42	47	45	71	86	60	75	84	23	60	55	90	75	33	20	25	15	9	5	3	-	-	1002
14	Lesser Grey Shrike	-	1	3	8	12	17	20	35	38	43	40	34	22	15	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	296
15	Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	18	34	35	46	47	20	45	48	32	25	23	16	4	401

Appendix 1: Migratory bird species and their numbers trapped during Spring of 1990 -1992 on Qummah Island.

	Bird Species	1990	(April – May) 1991	1992
1	Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*)	61	–	–
2	Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)	81	372	198
3	Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*)	49	–	07
4	Corn Crake (*Crex crex*)	25	06	03
5	Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)	–	12	–
6	Grey-headed Kingfisher (*Halcyon leucocephala*)	–	02	20
7	Roller (*Coracias garrulus*)	44	–	–
8	Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)	–	01	07
9	Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*)	106	–	–
10	Rufous Bush Chat (*Cercotrichas galactotes*)	267	455	605
11	Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)	565	482	499
12	White-throated Robin (*Irania gutturalis*)	–	262	395
13	Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)	626	511	813
14	Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)	173	46	37
15	Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*)	–	410	597
16	Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)	–	01	03
17	Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)	395	393	410
18	Reed Warbler (*A. scirpaceus*)	161	442	711
19	Great Reed Warbler (*A. arundinaceus*)	646	409	494
20	Barred Warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*)	–	402	506
21	Lesser Whitethroat (*S. curruca*)	131	37	32
22	Whitethroat (*S. communis*)	651	573	819
23	Blackcap (*S. atricapilla*)	151	431	197
24	Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)	507	514	1,024
25	Willow Warbler (*P. trochilus*)	248	302	489
26	Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)	43	22	14
27	Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)	12	–	09
28	Isabelline Shrike (*Lanius isabellinus*)	1,349	1,214	1,517
29	Red-backed Shrike (*L. collurio*)	1,046	662	1,002
30	Lesser Grey Shrike (*L. minor*)	141	126	296
31	Great Grey Shrike (*L. excubitor*)	319	207	401
32	Masked Shrike (*L. nubicus*)	–	03	20
33	Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*)	417	08	15
	Total	**8,214**	**8,305**	**11,140**

the former usually arriving ten days earlier. This pattern was observed in all three years.

The Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* occurs on the Farasan Islands in both spring and autumn. On the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia the bulk of the spring passage is between mid March and mid April (Buttiker 1988). However, few doves were caught during the present study, all in late April 1991. The traps used on Qummah are not ideally suited for catching doves and are different from those described by Buttiker (1988). Turtle Doves are apparently largely trapped for sale as food. On Qummah Island birds are caught in order to produce a special oil from the birds' fat, only rarely used for cooking, but usually presented as a gift or used for medicinal purposes. The amount of oil may total five to six lites from a single spring catch. The remaining meat is then fried and eaten.

The following species were only caught in very small numbers: Turtle Dove, Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*, Hoopoe *Upupa epops*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* and Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*.

Conclusions

In comparison to the situation in some Mediterranean countries that on Qummah Island is not critical. However it is essential to control the trapping and prevent its spread to other islands in the Farasan archipelago. An action plan which is acceptable to the local people should be formulated by the relevant government authorities. Any plan should consider the following: 1) an educational programme addressing both adults and children 2) discouraging the trapping of migrant birds in order to obtain cooking fat and medicinal oil by suggesting an alternative source acceptable to the people of the island 3) establishing a ringing scheme to be organised by local people and supervised by the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and its Development (NCWCD).

Acknowledgements

My sincere appreciation goes to Prof. Abdulaziz Abuzinada (NCWCD Secretary General) for his support of the survey. Thanks are also due to the following research students at the Faculty of Science, K.A.A.U.: Mohamed A. Aqily, Abdullah Y. Mossawa, Mohamed Y. Mossaw and Yehia A. Khalifah for their assistance in the field. I am grateful to John and Patsy Gasparetti for their valuable comments on the manuscript.

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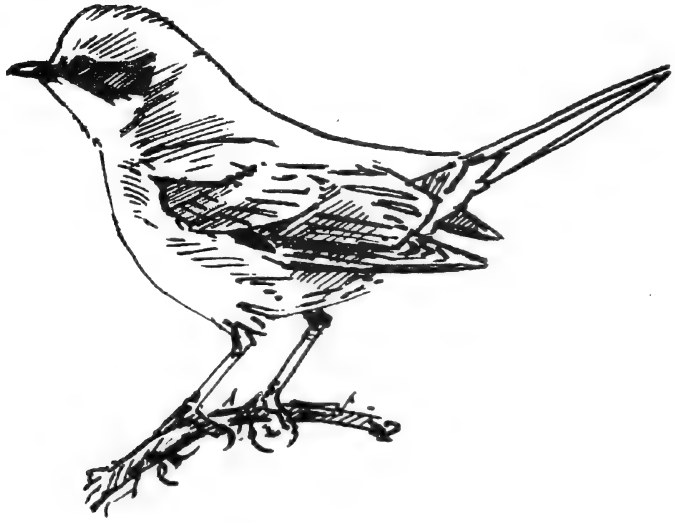


Breeding system of Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata macqueenii*: preliminary observations.

Frédéric Launay and Ronald Loughland

The Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* inhabits open or shrub-covered arid plains from the Canary Islands and North Africa eastwards through the Middle East and the former Soviet Union (Cramp & Simmons 1983, Dement'ev & Gladkov 1951, Johnsgard 1991). Its status has always been the subject of controversy, largely due to the extreme difficulties of counting birds in their natural environment. Nevertheless, it appears that Central Asia may retain the largest breeding population of Houbaras (of the subspecies *macqueenii*) . The species' stronghold possibly lies in the Kyzyl Kum region of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and the northern Kara Kum region of Turkmenistan. The vast expanse of the Kyzyl Kum desert is one of the least exploited pastoral regions of the former Soviet Union and covers at least 250,000km^2 (Johnsgard 1991).

The most basic biological needs of this species are unknown e.g. its social and sexual behaviour, habitat requirements and interactions with other species. Whilst efforts are being made to breed Houbaras in captivity (in Fuerteventura, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan) very little field research on the species' behaviour has been attempted and its social structure and sexual system remains largely unknown. Previous studies on birds in a semi-natural environment have provided valuable information on the former, but until now these have failed to demonstrate the breeding system of the Houbara Bustard (Launay 1989).

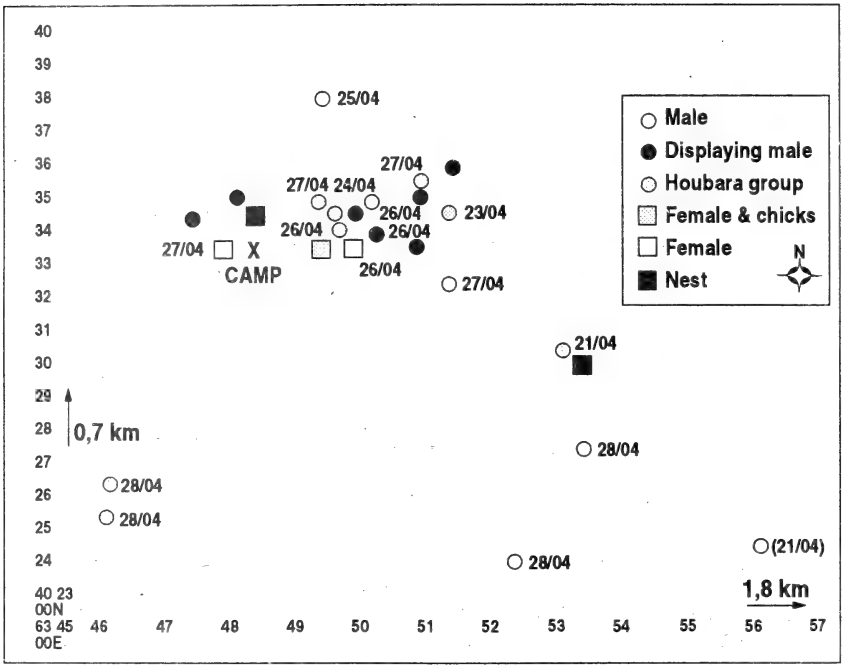
A pilot study of the species' social and sexual system was undertaken in the Uch Kuduk region of Uzbekistan (40°35'N, 63°49'E) between April and June 1994. Birds breed annually in this area; arriving over a ten day period at the end of February with the males commencing display soon after arrival. The bird density varied between 0.5 and 0.6 birds per km^2. Map 1 illustrates the relative position of displaying males, males, females, groups of birds and nests. Six displaying males were observed on the study site. These males displayed daily, always at the same location. The distance between two displaying males

ranged from 1.05 to 3.14 km (average 2.35 km). Two types of display were observed: firstly in small circles, always at the same location, and alternating with long periods when the males stood still, with the neck feathers erected. The second type was a running display over hundreds of meters. The spatial distribution of the males, the two types of displays and the fact that aggressive behaviour between males was common at the beginning of the breeding season becoming rarer as the study period wore on (E. Mukhina pers.comm.) suggests that males establish territories soon after arriving on the breeding grounds. The latter display may be performed by non-territorial males or by males attempting to establish a territory.

Observations of females were rare (70% of all observations were of males). One incubating female, two single females and two females with three chicks were observed (map 1). Two nests, 7.49km apart, were found (map 1). The distance between one of the nests and the nearest displaying males was 0.74km. In Kazakhstan (Tau Kum region) the distance between a nest and the nearest displaying male was 1.48km. Nests are thought to be located in the same area every year (B. Gubin pers.comm.) and are usually found from late March or early April onwards in Uzbekistan. Females finish laying at the end of May although females with chicks are present for another two to three months. At the end of the egg laying period males also cease displaying and start to form small parties before migrating. In Turkmenistan it is thought that breeding birds depart by May, whilst the young birds remain. Small groups (three to eight individuals, mostly males) also occurred on the breeding ground. These groups were usually seen only once. During the breeding season some birds may be constantly on the move. It is not yet known if such groups are composed of juveniles, non-breeding adults, or both. The same pattern was also observed in Kazakhstan.

The mating system of the Houbara Bustard is still unknown. Some authors Cramp & Simmons (1983) have suggested that the species is probably monogamous, but others consider the Houbara mating system to be polygynous or promiscuous (Collins 1984, Ponomareva 1983, Launay & Paillat 1990). It is possible that the mating system could be partly density-dependent, as suggested by our observations in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In areas of low density breeding occurs in different places each year with each male displaying alone (Atumaradov pers. comm.). At high densities, groups of males (the same number from year to year) display on traditional display

Map 1: Schematic map of a Houbara breeding ground in Uzbekistan (Dates indicates a single occurence)



grounds (B. Gubin & E. Mukhina pers. comm.). From the information presented here a polygynous or promiscuous mating system seems the more likely but further data are needed to determine this.

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Anecdotal reports on the status of Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata macqueenii* in Syria

D A Roshier

Introduction

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*, of the race *macqueenii* is a long distance migrant over much of its range. It breeds in the former Soviet Union, migrating to Pakistan, India and the Middle East in winter (Cramp and Simmons 1983). Small resident and/or nomadic populations also exist in the Middle East: in Israel, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. Very little information has been published on the status of any of these latter populations and the reasons for their decline. The marked reduction in numbers throughout its range has been attributed to excessive hunting (Cramp and Simmons 1983). During a recent trip to Syria I was able to talk to sheep herders and bedu about the occurrence of Houbara in their area. They were also asked why they thought Houbara numbers had declined.

Collar (1980) records that Houbara occurred in Syria "throughout the Aleppo/Esiye/Raqqah area...in spring 1943." Kumerloeve (1968) stated that the species occurred east of Dayr-Az-Zor. A dramatic decline has become noticeable in the last fifty years (Baumgart, Kasparek & Stephan 1995). The last documented sighting of a Houbara in Syria was by MacFarlane (1978) in May 1976 at Khan Abu Shamat. However the Houbara is thought to survive in a small number of areas; all present and past localities are documented in Evans (1994). I travelled north-east from Aleppo through marginal cropping country to Manbij, then east across the Euphrates River to the steppe of northern Syria, thence south to Rassafah via Al-Raqqah (Raqqah) before returning to Aleppo, a total distance of approximately 500 km.

The species is known among locals as "houbari", as opposed to "hubrum", which is the name accorded to Great Bustard *Otis tarda* which arrives in northern Syria each spring from Turkey. Despite the comment by Collar *et al.* (1994) that the Great Bustard was "probably extinct" in Syria it is apparently still quite common in this region,

often being seen in cultivated areas. Unfortunately the situation is not as favourable for the Houbara as villagers and herdsmen all related the same story of a drastic decline in numbers since the region became permanently inhabited. The following notes from the interviews give some insight into the reasons for the decline of the species in Syria, its habits in this region and the attitudes of local people to wildlife (interviewees comments are paraphrased and given in quotation marks).

Sheep herder, Al Bab area, 36 km north-east of Aleppo
"Not seen in this area since I was a youth [estimated age was 65]...the problem is lack of water". Apparently it is a common complaint amongst farmers and herders that it does not rain as much now as in previous years. "The birds arrived in winter and were seen in one's and two's throughout the season. No idea where they went in summer. Birds were not hunted. I don't care what they do in the Gulf, these birds are nice to look at".

Sheep herder, Al Bab area, 39 km north-east of Aleppo
"Birds arrived in winter. Climate has now become too arid (for Houbara). No birds have been seen in the area since habitation increased over 15 years ago. The birds were seen three or four at a time and stayed in the raddish fields. They were hunted by people from Damascus".

Sheep herder, 118 km east-north-east of Aleppo
"Saw a few four to five years ago in the steppe north of Al-Raqqah. They lay eggs at this time of year (May). The birds were resident all year and seen in small groups. They ate grass and grain from the fields. The numbers decreased because too many people moved into the area".

Kurdish villager, 143 km east-north-east of Aleppo
"Saw one a long time ago north of Al-Raqqah. The wildlife has disappeared since people moved into the area".

Sheep herder, north of Al-Raqqah
"Never seen a bustard".

Villager on road to Rassafah, south of Al-Raqqah
"Last saw a Houbara 15 years ago. The birds were resident in the area and bred there. The birds ate an unnamed herb (*Chenopodacaea*). Birds have disappeared due to the increase in habitation. The locals did not hunt the bird, but there have been foreigners hunting in the area".

Bedu family, 5 km north of Rassafah
"Saw one on the steppe to the south four to five years ago. The birds were numerous 40 to 50 years ago. Grazing forced most of them out and hunting

removed the rest. The same thing happened to the gazelle. The last one seen here was 12 years ago. The birds were resident and ate grass, seeds and grain".

Discussion

Large areas of the steppe regions of Syria have only been permanently settled since the 1950s (B.Wedeman pers.comm.). Prior to this bedu pastoralists were the principal land users. The advent of motor vehicles and mechanised farming has brought an influx of people onto these marginal lands and the establishment of crops (predominantly barley). Subsequent cultivation and grazing have caused severe soil degradation and areas that once supported crops no longer do so (G. Gintzberger pers.comm.). The natural vegetation of many areas has been reduced to a sparse cover of annual grasses (*Hordeum* sp. and *Schimus barbatus*) and weeds (mainly thistles).

Whilst habitat destruction is probably the main cause of the decline in Houbara numbers in Syria, hunting has become an increasing problem, especially as hunters have become more mobile, aggravating the decline. Many Syrians are keen hunters and a variety of birds are sought as quarry, including Houbara. Omar, a Syrian hunter for much of his life has shot two Houbara. One was in the Safar area, south-east of Damascus in 1958, where they commonly occurred in a rocky area between the lava fields and steppe. The other he shot in the Bir Al-Kasab area, 60-70 km east of Damascus, in late August 1962. According to Omar, the last Houbara was seen in this latter area in 1973. Gazelle were also observed in this area until 1957. Omar stated that, according to bedu, Houbara in the latter area migrate to Saudi Arabia during the winter months. Despite a life-long passion for hunting he has now elected to stop as, in his opinion, most Syrians are indiscriminate in their hunting practices.

Another trip was made to the steppe around Palmyra, central Syria, where further enquiries were made as to the species' status. Although there appear to be few, if any, Houbara in the area, I was able to visit the Al Talila Nature Reserve, a 20,000 ha wildlife reserve, 30 km south-east of Palmya. A deep trench surrounds the area, which has not been grazed for three years (A. Assa'ad pers.comm.). Vegetation in the reserve is significantly taller than in outside areas although in the section visited it is dominated by *Anabasis* sp., an unpalatable shrub. One of the aims of establishing the reserve was to attract

Houbara to the area from nearby populations in unprotected areas in southern Syria and Jordan. The status of these populations is unknown. The border region between Syria and Iraq is a military zone and apparently one of the better areas for steppe wildlife in this region. There have been no recent, confirmed sightings of Houbara in the reserve, however the presence of falconers in an area south of the reserve suggests that Houbara, their main quarry, may still occur.

While it is probable that the Houbara Bustard still occurs in Syria, its numbers are presumed to be very small. The combined effects of habitat destruction and hunting have reduced numbers dramatically during the past 40 years. That some Syrians now recognise the extent of the decline and are taking steps to remedy the situation provides some hope for the future.

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Status of Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* in Egypt

Mindy & Sherif Baha el Din

There have been a number of recent reports of Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* from Egypt, but no formal description has been published. Goodman & Meininger (1989) did not admit the species to the Egyptian list, since the only evidence for its occurrence was an unsubstantiated statement by Hovel (1987) that "Upcher's Warbler is a scarce passage visitor to Sinai".

Recent observations however indicate that Hovel's comment was correct. There are now seven records of the species from Egypt, all but two from Sinai. The first record was of one observed at the Sheraton Hotel, Hurghada on 10 August 1987 (A.Grieve pers. comm.). Subsequently an individual was found in Wadi Rishat, south of Qusaima, north Sinai on 4 May 1990 (S. Baha el Din in Anon. 1990) and three were at Sharm el Sheikh, south Sinai on 24 August 1991 (H. Kahl in Anon. 1991). The fourth, fifth and sixth records were all by the authors: one at Wadi Geraffi, near Ras El Naqab, north Sinai on 8 April 1992, another at Qusaima on 25 April 1992 and one at St Katherine airport, south Sinai on 7 August 1992. The most recent record was one at Bulaq, Kharga Oasis in the Western Desert on 20 March 1993 (A. Riad pers. comm.). The following is a description of the bird at Wadi Geraffi on 8 April 1992. It was observed for over 45 minutes as it foraged in bushes of *Lygos raetum* along the wadi. Comparisons were made between this individual, a Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* and a Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* which were feeding in the same area. Subsequently a number of field guides and identification papers were consulted, particularly Hollom *et al.* (1988), Harrap (1990) and Fry (1990).

Size and structure A large *hippolais;* much larger than Bonelli's Warbler and marginally bigger than Lesser Whitethroat, with a steep forehead and crown peaking just behind the eye. Stocky structure similar to a *sylvia,* but overall appearance was typically *hippolais* in character, especially the elongated head and bill. Tail fairly long, longer than in Olivaceous Warbler *H. pallida.*

Plumage Distinct whitish supercilium and thin dark eyestripe. Upperparts grey with a visible pale wing panel. Tail feathers darker grey in comparison to the rest of the upperparts. Whilst difficult to discern, the white outertail feathers were noted on several occasions. Underparts whitish, except for the underside of the tail, which was grey.

Bare parts Relatively long, thick bill: upper mandible grey, lower mandible flesh coloured. Eye dark with a distinct pale eye ring. Legs grey with some flesh tones.

Behaviour An active feeder, although appearing relatively sluggish in comparison to the other two warblers nearby. It exhibited the characteristic tail wagging movement of Upcher's Warbler (Fry 1990). This tail movement was very different from that of Olivaceous Warbler, which is less conspicuous and more of a flicking motion.

Voice Call frequently repeated, similar to Olivaceous, and not unlike that of Lesser Whitethroat, but louder.

Upcher's Warblers passing through Egypt are presumably from Near Eastern populations breeding in Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey; and wintering in east Africa. In Israel the species is also recorded as a passage migrant: in early autumn between July-August and in late spring from the end of April to early May (Paz 1987). It is also regularly recorded on migration in eastern Arabia, but this probably constitutes birds from breeding populations further east. It is to be expected that some Upcher's Warblers migrate through Egypt, given the country's strategic location on Western Palearctic migration routes. In the past the species has probably been overlooked due to a lack of observers and difficulties with identification.

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The Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* in Jordan

Coppelia Hays

Introduction

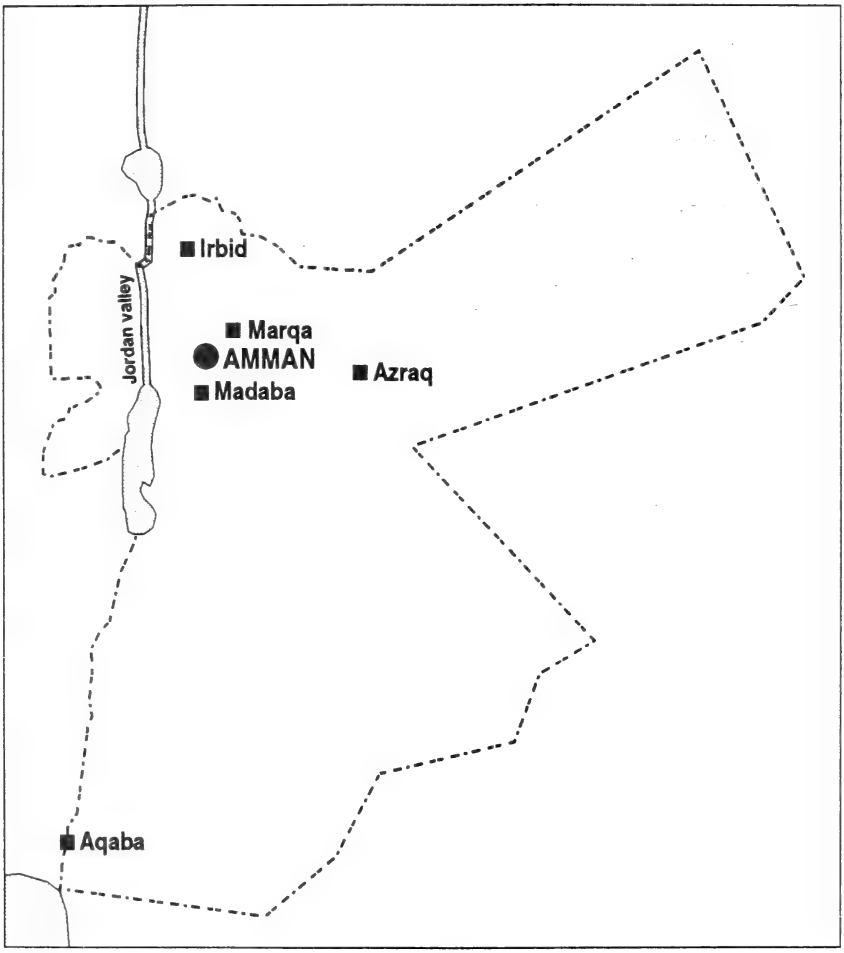
The Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* is the only psittacine regularly recorded in Jordan (there is a recent record of Alexandrine Parakeet *P. eupatria* from Amman, F. Khoury in litt.). A feral population has only recently become established: the first record was of two at Aqaba in October 1979 (Wittenberg 1988). This paper is based on incidental observations collected between 1987 and 1989, whilst resident in Jordan.

Status and distribution

The original distribution of this species is through central and north-eastern Africa, and in Asia from Afghanistan, Teheran, Iran (Kinzelbach 1986) and western Pakistan east through India and Nepal to central Burma and Sri Lanka (Forshaw 1978). It has been introduced in many countries where it has readily adapted. In Arabia it now occurs principally in the coastal urban areas of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (Bundy & Warr 1980), northern Oman (Walker 1981) and locally in Yemen (Brooks *et al.* 1987) and western Saudi Arabia (Hollom *et al.* 1988, Stagg 1984). In Israel a stable feral population has become established (Paz 1989, Wittenberg 1988). Escapes have also been recorded in Damascus, Syria, but the species is apparently now extirpated in Iraq, at least north of Basra (Wittenberg 1988). It was reported twice in Turkey prior to 1992 (Kasparek 1992) but since then has become well established in Ankara, with smaller populations in Burdur, Gaziantep, Istanbul and Izmir (G.Magnin and M.Yarar pers.comm.).

The species is resident and widely distributed in Jordan, having been recorded from Amman, Marqa, Madaba, Azraq, Irbid, Aqaba, Shaumari and the Jordan Valley (figure 1). Records from Azraq and Shaumari apparently relate to local introductions or wandering birds (Andrews 1995). It is found in areas with substantial tree cover and agricultural areas adjacent to human settlements. The country's main agricultural sector is in the Jordan Valley. Ring-necked Parakeets have, thus far, only been recorded from the southern part of this val-

Figure 1: Location of sightings for Ring-necked parakeets (Psittacula krameri) in Jordan from 1987 to 1989.



ley. In Amman it is common in residential areas where there are trees, being most frequently seen at the top of cypress *Cupressus semperivens, pinus* and eucalyptus trees. It is also seen perched on tall TV antennas. There are no confirmed breeding records from Jordan, although Wittenberg (1988) records that Amman newspapers described the species as breeding within the city in 1987.

The Ring-necked Parakeet is an introduced exotic. The subspecies in Jordan is *P.k.borealis*. The existing feral population most probably originates from escaped captive birds. It has been imported in large numbers for the commercial pet trade (see below). Currently it is present in relatively small numbers.

Table 1: Trade records of Ring-necked Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) imported into Jordan for the live pet trade during 1987 and 1988.

Year	Quantity	Country of Origin
1987	3000	United Arab Emirates and Pakistan
1987	3000	Pakistan
1987	2000	Pakistan
1987	5000	Pakistan
1988	3000	Pakistan
1988	500	Pakistan
1988	2500	Pakistan
1988	250	Pakistan
1988	3000	Pakistan
Total	**22250**	

Notes on biology

The Ring-necked Parakeet is gregarious being most often seen in small flocks. Average flock size in Amman was between three and ten individuals. The species roosts communally, when larger numbers occasionally congregate. The largest group I encountered consisted of 65 birds roosting in a cypress tree at Jebel Amman on 27 November 1989. In Amman I have often seen it feed on cypress cones, as well as the fruit of *Melia azedarach*, a fruit also found in the species' stomach contents in the Punjab (Forshaw 1978). Although the species is a native of subtropical regions it has survived Amman's cold winters, where temperatures can sometimes reach below 0^{0} C.

International Trade

Its bright green plumage makes the Ring-necked Parakeet an attractive species to keepers of cagebirds. A total of 22,250 birds were imported into Jordan during 1987 and 1988. All importations, with the exception of one, were from Pakistan, where the species is native. In the other case, that of the United Arab Emirates, the species was introduced in 1976 and has subsequently multiplied successfully. In fact its numbers increased so dramatically that in 1986 it was declared

a pest and hundreds were shot (Ramadan-Jaradi 1988). In Jordan some birds have already been killed. A flock which descended on fruit trees in Madaba were shot by farmers.

Conclusions

Although the species has only recently become established in Jordan it is important to monitor its numbers and establish whether it breeds. It may become necessary to prevent it reaching pest proportions especially in the Jordan Valley; the country's agricultural heartland. Moreover, if this exotic establishes a successful breeding population, it could pose a serious threat to native bird populations, as the feral Ring-necked Parakeets could potentially compete with native bird species for food and other resources.

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Some comments on the distribution of the Rook *Corvus frugilegus* in Turkey

Guy Kirwan

Kasparek (1989) summarised the breeding status and distribution of the Rook *Corvus frugilegus* in Turkey: 60-65 colonies were identified in eastern Anatolia (where the majority of sites are located), central Anatolia and Thrace. Although sightings during the breeding season come from most parts of the country, the species is not, as yet, known to breed in any of the other regions of Turkey. During the summer's of 1992 and 1993 I was able to travel widely in both central and eastern Anatolia. Particular attention was paid to locating and counting the number of nests in rookeries. This note seeks to update information presented in Kasparek (1989); both in respect of documenting new colonies (indicated thus *) and those already known. In order to facilitate comparison with the earlier paper records are presented according to province.

Afyon
Afyon (38° 45′N 30° 32′E): 2 colonies with 111 nests in the town, 20 Apr 1992.
Degirmendere (38° 38′N 30° 47′E): c.30 occupied nests, 7 May 1992.

Agri
Agri (39° 43′N 43° 02′E): at least 1200 nests, perhaps not all occupied, 26 May 1993; a further 18 occupied nests, 5 km west of the town, 26 May 1993.
Eleskirt (39° 48′N 42° 41′E): at least 70 nests, 26 May 1993.
(*)Gecitveren (39° 39′N 43° 20′E): colony of 12 occupied nests near the village, 26 May 1993.
(*)Guvence (39° 45′N 42° 50′E): c.120 occupied nests, 26 May 1993.
(*)Tasliçay (39° 38′N 43° 23′E): colony of 435 nests, perhaps not all occupied, 26 May 1993.

Bitlis
(*)Ahlat (38° 45′N 42° 29′E): 126 occupied nests in the village, 18 May 1993.

Erzurum
Askale (39° 55′N 40° 42′E): at least 350 nests, mostly occupied, 26 May 1993.
Cobandede (39° 59′N 41° 52′E): 100 nests, perhaps not all occupied, 26 May 1993.

Erzurum (39° 54′N 41° 17′E): two colonies, with 200 nests and 170 nests, apparently all occupied, 26 May 1993.
Horasan (40° 3′N 42° 10′E): c.100 nests, perhaps not all occupied, 26 May 1993.
Pasinler (39° 59′N 41° 41′E): c.230 nests in the town, perhaps not all occupied, 26 May 1993; a further 820 nests along the roadside between Pasinler and Erzurum, perhaps not all occupied, 26 May 1993.
(*)Pirnakapan (39° 58′N 40° 34′E): 10 occupied nests, 26 May 1993.

Konya
Argithani near Ilgin (38° 18′N 31° 43′E): small colony, 23 May 1992.
(*)Between Kadinhani and Ilgin (38° 15′N 32° 14′E): c.30 nests, 3 May 1992.
Doganhisar (38° 39′N 31° 41′E): small colony, 23 May 1992.

Van
Bendimahi (38° 56′N 43° 41′E): colony with 229 occupied nests, 22 May 1993.
Erçek (38° 39′N 43° 39′E): large colony with 495 nests, possibly not all occupied, 23 May 1993.
Muradiye (38° 59′N 43° 46′E): colony with c.100 occupied nests, 24 May 1993.
Van (38° 30′N 43° 23′E): four colonies; one by ferry terminal with c.58 occupied nests, 19 May 1993; one by the castle with 119 nests, 21 May 1993; another in the town with 144 occupied nests, 19-20 May 1993; (*)a small colony with seven occupied nests at Bes Yöl, 20 May 1993.
(*)Yumakli (38° 56′N 43° 47′E): colony with c.70 nests, perhaps not all occupied, 24 May 1993.

A total of 27 colonies in six provinces were identified during the fieldwork of which eight were not mentioned by Kasparek (1989). Furthermore accurate counting of other colonies meant that a clearer idea of the number of nests contained therein was reached. Observers are urged to make counts of Rook colonies that they find, and in particular search for new colonies in regions of Turkey where no nesting sites have yet been identified.

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Partially albinistic Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* in eastern Turkey

Guy Kirwan

Neither BWP (Cramp & Simmons 1977) or HBW (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992) record albinism in the Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*. At the Bendimahi Delta, Van province, eastern Turkey on 22 May 1993, together with Mick Davies, I observed a partially albinistic individual of this species. It was watched at close quarters for nearly thirty minutes. Although exhibiting the normal colour pattern of a summer plumaged bird on the head and neck: wholly glossy black with golden-yellow filaments emanating from behind the eye; the rest of its plumage was almost entirely pure white, with the exception of the tail and tertials which were both stained buffish. This individual was apparently unpaired, although many of the other Black-necked Grebes at this locality, and at other sites visited during the same period, were obviously paired. I have observed many hundreds of this species, especially in Turkey but have never encountered any other albinistic birds and can find no reference to such an individual in the literature. Bauer and Glutz von Blotzheim (1966) Koop (1994) and Verroken and Verroken (1987) have placed on record a red-necked mutant of this species, in which the lower half of the foreneck and breast were chestnut-red, as in Slavonian Grebe *P.auritus*.

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New information on the birds of the Western Desert of Egypt

Ahmed M Riad

Introduction

Egypt's Western Desert comprises about two-thirds of the country's total area yet is rarely visited by ornithologists, principally due to the harsh environment, its remoteness and lack of good roads. There is a paucity of information concerning the fauna of the Western Desert in general, compared to other areas of Egypt such as the Nile Valley, the Red Sea coastline and Sinai. Between 20-27 March 1993 I visited the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Baharya in the Western Desert. A second trip from 1-3 June 1993 visited Siwa Oasis. In addition I made several trips in 1992 and 1993 to the desert c.120 km south of Al Alameen (approximately 100 km west of Alexandria), reaching as far as the north-eastern part of the Qattara Depression. My point of reference for the birds of the Western Desert is Goodman & Meininger (1989) which included all available bird records from this region. The recent expansion of several species from the Nile Valley to some of these oases is recorded here. Species mentioned here are necessarily selective but are considered to be of especial significance. My trips have also revealed that the Dakhla Oasis is the most interesting ornithologically and that the Farafra and Siwa Oases are the most dissapointing. All observations are by the author.

Systematic List

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Several at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993 were the third record for the oasis.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* One at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993 was the first record for the oasis. The only previous record from the Western Desert was of two or three birds south-east of Al Moghra on 13 April 1977 (Goodman & Ames 1983)

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Two pairs at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993. The first record from the Western Desert oases, indicating further expansion of the species away from the Nile Valley and Delta regions. The species is now also found on the new farms along the Cairo-Alexandria desert highway, in Wadi Natrun and along the north coast as far west as Al Hammam (60 km west of Alexandria).

Lanner *Falco biarmicus* One 20 km south of Baharya Oasis 25 March 1993 with two at Baharya Oasis 26 March 1993. Although Lanners can be found in many localities in the Western Desert they are scarce.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* Two at a nest, 80 km south of Al Alameen in the Western Desert 26 September 1992. The first record for the area although it has been seen several times since.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Over 400 at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993. Black-winged Stilts were found in all suitable areas in the oasis. It seems possible that it may breed here, although the species is a fairly common passage migrant and only a rare breeder in Egypt.

White-tailed Plover *Vanellus leucurus* Six at Dakhla Oasis 23-24 March 1993 with fifteen at the same locality in March 1995 (Riad 1995). The first records for the Western Desert (Goodman & Meininger 1989).

Spur-winged Plover *Vanellus spinosus* Common at Kharga and Dakhla Oases 20-24 March 1993. The only previous records were three at Dakhla 3 October 1980 and one at Kharga 23 April 1981 (Goodman *et al.* 1986). It appears well established in these two areas.

Sociable Plover *Vanellus gregarius* One at Dakhla Oasis 23 March 1993. Increasingly rare; the last record in Egypt was in 1984 (Goodman & Meininger 1989).

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Two at Kharga Oasis 20 March 1993 and two at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993. The first records for the Western Desert oases but possibly a breeding resident.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Common at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993 and fairly common at Baharya Oasis 25-26 March 1993. Birds in Dakhla were singing and displaying, suggesting breeding.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* Abundant in suitable habitat in Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993. There are a few previous records from the area, all of singletons (Goodman *et al.* 1986). It is now a common resident in the oasis.

Fan-tailed Warbler *Cisticola juncidis* Several at Bulaq, Kharga Oasis 20 March 1993. The species was reported from the oasis in 1980 and 1981 (Goodman *et al.* 1986). It should be noted that, even though suitable habitat exists in Dakhla Oasis, on my most recent trip there I did not record the species.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* One at Bulaq, Kharga Oasis 20 March 1993. The first record for the Western Desert; there are six previous records for Egypt, the majority from Sinai (Baha el Din & Baha el Din 1995).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* Common at Baharya Oasis 25-26 March 1993 and one at Dakhla Oasis 23 March 1993. These records represent the first for Dakhla and the second for Baharya. The only previous record from the latter (in 1983) was, at the time, the only known occurrence from the Western Desert oases.

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* Recorded in the area from c.60 km south of Al Alameen to the Qattara Depression (80 km south of Al Alameen) 26 September 1992. Since then it has been recorded on several occasions, throughout the year, from the same area. Probably a breeding resident. Several were seen between 40-70 km south Marsa Matruh, on the Matruh-Siwa road 2 June 1993. Mourning Wheatears were previously rarely recorded west of the Nile; these records confirm their occurrence at several localities in the northern part of the Western Desert.

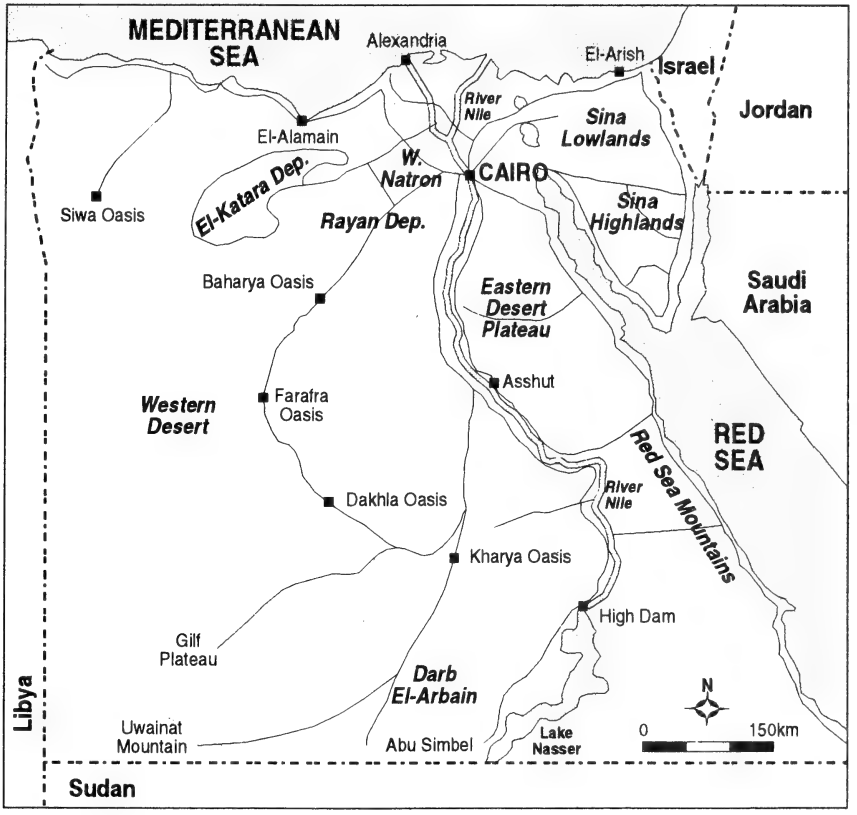
Blackbird *Turdus merula* One at Kharga Oasis 21 March 1993, common at Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993, fairly common at Baharya Oasis 25-26 March 1993 and several at Siwa Oasis 2-3 June 1993. These records represent the first records for the Western Desert oases. Blackbirds are also found in the new farms along the Cairo-Alexandria highway and in Wadi Natrun. A pair had also taken up residence in a garden 77 km west of Alexandria on the north coast.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* Small flocks at Baharya Oasis 22-26 March 1993. A rare winter visitor to the oases.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* Very common throughout Dakhla Oasis 22-24 March 1993. Nests were found in the oasis; the first confirmed breeding record in Egypt (Riad 1995). House Sparrows *P.domesticus* were not found in this oasis; though they had been recorded previously in Dakhla (Goodman *et al.* 1986).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Tom and Anne Moore for allowing me to accompany them on their trip to the four southern oases. Special thanks to Sherif and Mindy Baha el Din who were of constant assistance and have always supplied much encouragement.



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First record of Seebohm's Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi* in Egypt

Ahmed M Riad

Sahl Zayat is a vegetated wadi midway between the Kharga and Dakhla oases in the Western Desert of Egypt. On 16 March 1995 there were many migrants in this area: Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*, Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*, Yellow *Motacilla flava* and White Wagtails *M.alba* and several species of wheatear *Oenanthe sp.* were among those present. A solitary wheatear on the edge of a rock caught my attention. I noted that it exhibited the same general wing colouration and pattern as Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, but the face was sooty black with a well defined white supercilium. Since a Black-eared Wheatear *O.hispanica* of the black-throated form was present, comparison was easy. The bird appeared identical to the *seebohmi* race of Northern Wheatear, which breeds in Algeria and Morocco and migrates southwards as far as Mauretania, Senegal and Mali. This record represents the first for Egypt, although there are records from the Libyan desert (Cramp 1988).

Description

Seebohm's Wheatear

Northern Wheatear

In many respects identical to male Northern Wheatear; greyish crown, mantle and back with blackish wings contrasting with white rump, black and white tail pattern and a clear buffish breast. Striking white supercilium contrasts with forehead colour. The sooty black throat was reminiscent of Desert Wheatear *O.deserti*, but the general colouration and the tail pattern was quite different (Desert Wheatear has a wholly black tail). In contrast to Black-eared Wheatear, which has a clear-cut distinction between the black throat and wings, Seebohm's exhibits a narrow blackish line linking its black throat and wing. In addition, the Seebohm's had a striking supercilium.

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The first breeding record of Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* in Egypt

Ahmed M Riad

During a previous visit (20-26 March 1993) to Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Baharya Oases in Egypt's Western Desert, I noted that House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* were fairly common in the Kharga and Baharya Oases, whilst large numbers of Spanish Sparrows *P.hispaniolensis* were found throughout the Dakla Oasis. There were a number of nests and birds were also seen gathering nesting material, displaying, courting and mating. The Farafra Oasis held no sparrows at all.

On a recent trip to the four oases (14-20 March 1995) my earlier observations were confirmed. Spanish Sparrow was numerous in Dakhla Oasis, where hundreds of nests were found chiefly in casuarina, eucalyptus, ficus and acacia with some trees having more than 30 nests. Birds breeding in acacia were gathering nesting material from other tree species. Interestingly no House Sparrows were seen. Spanish Sparrows nest in various types of tree, but not usually in houses. This constitutes the first definite breeding record of the species in Egypt (see Goodman & Meininger 1989). The reason why this particular oasis was chosen for breeeding and why there is now such a marked absence of House Sparrows remains intangible and requires further investigation.

The same visit also confirmed other earlier records, particularly the expansion of breeding birds into the Dakhla Oasis: Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (Dakhla and Farafra), Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (abundant), Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (common), Clamorous Reed Warbler *A. stentoreus* (very common at Dakhla and Farafra), Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* (abundant), Blackbird *Turdus merula* (very common), White-tailed Plover *Vanellus leucurus* (winter visitor, maximum 15 Dakhla) and the unexpected Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* (one pair Dakhla).

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The Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* in Bulgaria

Dimitar N Nankinov

Previously the Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* plausibly bred in Bulgaria. The species is mentioned by many authors who discussed Bulgarian bird distribution and status (Klein 1909, Boetticher 1927, Patev 1950a, Patev 1950b, Peshev & Boev 1962, Boev 1984, 1986). The few recent records of the species are given below:

A pair in Garvan marsh on 9 June 1979 (Michev 1979, Michev 1985, Michev & Simeonov 1985).
One with a mixed flock of Garganey *Anas querquedula*, Mallard *A. platyrchynos* and Shoveler *A. clypeata* in the northern part of Atanasovsko Lake on 28 March 1982 (Nankinov 1992).
P.Yankov recorded a lone bird at Atanasovsko Lake on 7 November 1985 (Green 1992).
A single was observed by G.Tucker and P.Yankov at Arkutino Lake on 16 May 1991 (*Neophron* 1:34, 1994).
M.Waterhouse recorded a single at Atanasovsko Lake at the beginning of December 1993 (*Neophron* 1:34, 1994).

The species has been observed in Bulgaria throughout the year. Unfortunately most of the, once vast, Bulgarian wetlands have been drained. Marbled Teals recorded in Bulgaria in recent years presumably originate from Turkey. The species periodically migrates northwestwards, reaching the Balkans and even central Europe. In order to (re-)establish the Marbled Teal in Bulgaria the following measures are required: conservation of existing wetlands; education of hunters, who fail to distinguish Marbled Teal from other duck species which they shoot, and an artificial rearing programme. Areas apparently suitable for introduction are: Kalimok Marsh, Lake Srebarna, Malak Preslavets marsh, reed islands in the Danube, marshes at Durankulak, Shabla, Alepu, Arkutino, lakes around Burgas (Atanasovsko, Vaya and Mandrensko) and perhaps elsewhere. The reintroduction of the Marbled Teal is quite feasible. The Institute of Zoology already possesses a Biological Experimental Base, designed specifically for rearing rare species. At present financial difficulties obstruct attempts to reintroduce the Marbled Teal. Hopefully in the near future these problems can be solved.

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Raptor migration in north-east Turkey, autumn 1994

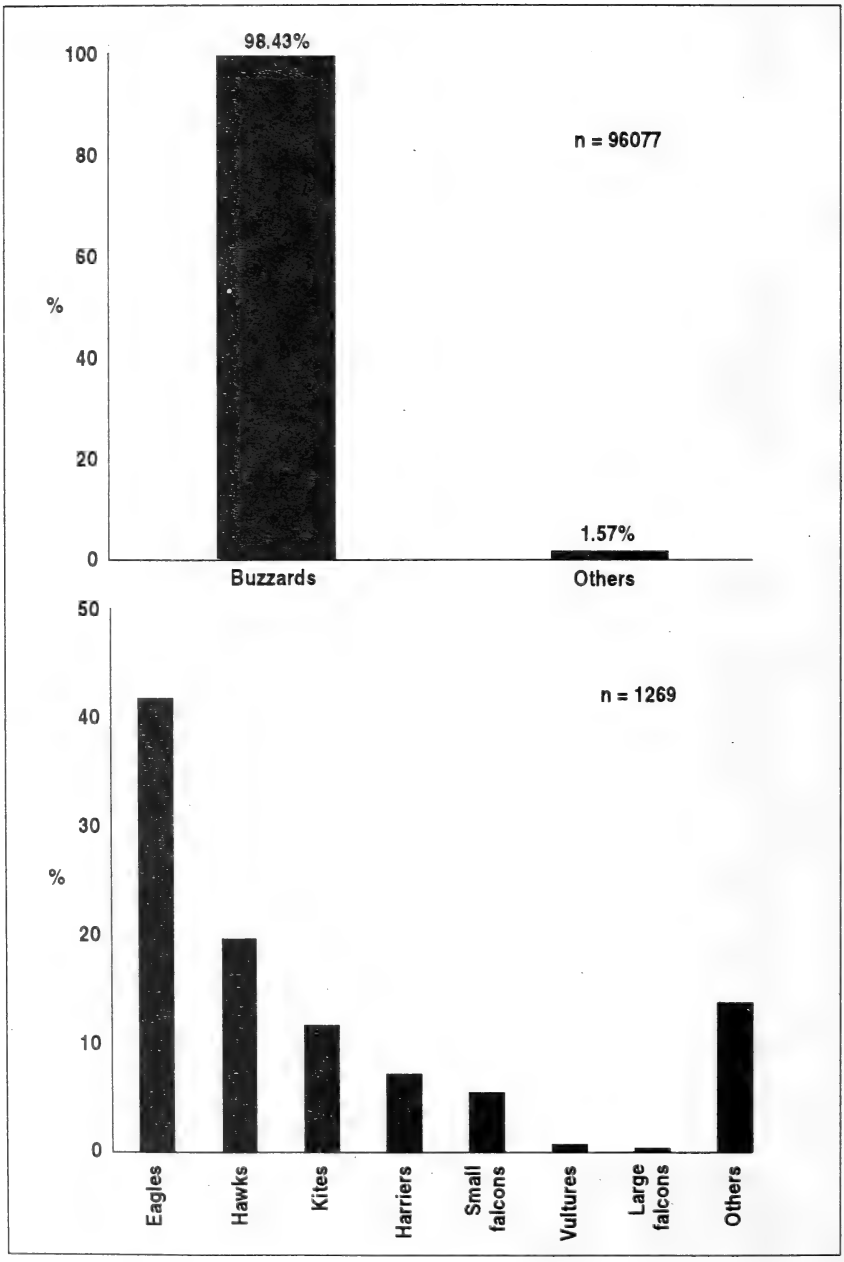
Vojtech Mrlìk, Miroslav Bobek, Frantisek Pojer, Jaroslav Skopek & Jirì Formánek

Between 24 September and 5 October 1994 we counted migrating raptors in the vicinity of Borçka, north-east Turkey. Published observations from this locality are available only from 1976 (17 August-10 October), 1977 (11-25 October), 1978 (18-27 September), 1980 (20 September-2 October) and 1990 (16-28 September) (Andrews *et al.* 1977, Beaman 1977, Kok & Ongenae 1994). Our short census provides supplementary and more recent information about this little studied flyway. The migration route usually follows the deep north-south canyon of the Coruh river. The habitat is partially described in Andrews et al. (1977) and Bijlsma (1987). The Coruh valley at Borçka is more than 1000m deep. The river canyon is immediately enclosed by the steep slopes of the Pontic mountains which reach over 2000m here and are covered by woods, pasture lands and plantations of hazel. There are many small villages in the area. Domestic livestock graze the pastures: chiefly cattle with smaller numbers of horses, donkeys, sheep and goats. It is difficult to locate the best spots for censusing migrating raptors and other soaring birds. Our group counted at points south-east and north-east above Borçka at: a) Ibrikli Esentepe (the ridge 1000m above the river); b) Alkaköy (1200m) and c) the slope north of Artvin (600m).

Our results are presented in comparison with those of the two earliest of the previous surveys (see table 1). Approximately 100,000 migrating raptors of 24 species were observed during the study (figures 1 & 2). The number of migrating raptors reached its peak on 26 September when 23,124 birds passed. Two conspicuous waves of birds were evident on most days: between 0800 and 1000 and again between 1400 and 1600, although the latter peak was usually less pronounced (see figures 3 & 4). Compared to the most recent published data from this region in autumn 1990 our research revealed the following:

a) higher totals of Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*, Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* and Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, but lower totals of eg. Honey Buzzard *Pernis*

Bird of prey migration, Turkey 1994



Bird of prey migration, Turkey 1994

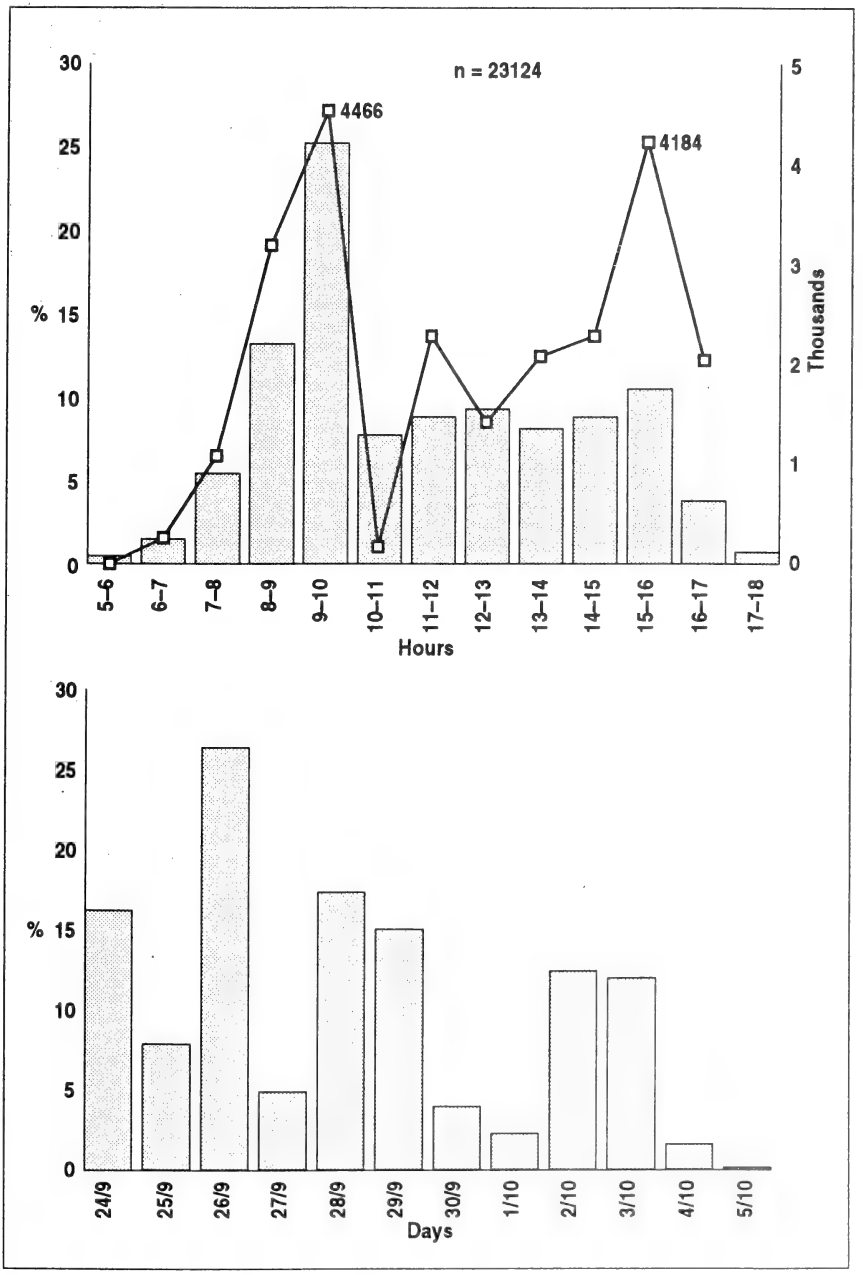


Table 1:

Author	Mrlík *et al.*	Andrews *et al.*	Beaman
Observation days	24.09.–5.10.	17.08.–10.10.	11.–25.10.
Year	1994	1976	1977
Number of days	12	55	15
Species			
But. but. vulpinus	94,736	205,000	5,182
But. rufinus	2	5	9
Per. apivorus	172	+	26
Aqu. chrysaetos	4	3	4
Aqu. nipalensis	137	271	434
Aqu. pomarina	119	736	16
Aqu. clanga	29	21	11
Aqu. species	216	505	-
Hie. fasciatus	8	-	-
Hie. pennatus	13	473	-
Cir. gallicus	44	243	21
Neo. percnopterus	8	5	-
Gyp. fulvus	7	2	30
Mil. migrans	155	5,775	10
Cir. aeruginosus	55	385	7
Cir. pygargus	3	124	-
Cir. macrourus	27	133	22
Cir. species	7	716	-
Acc. gentilis	1	15	53
Acc. nisus	248	688	1,057
Acc. brevipes	7	290	-
Fal. peregrinus	3	8	+
Large Falcon species	1	-	-
Fal. subbuteo	9	189	-
Fal. vespertinus	4	23	-
Fal. tinnuculus	35	30	450
Fal. naumanni	8	47	-
Small Falcon species	19	433	-
Pan. haliaetus	-	24	-
Hel. albicilla	-	1	-
Aqu. heliaca	-	3	27
Cir. cyaneus	-	8	41
Fal. cherrug	-	12	+
Fal. columbarius	-	-	21
Acc. species	-	159	-
Per. apivorus/But. buteo	-	20,561	-
Total	**96,077**	**236,888**	**7,606**
Number of birds of prey per day	8,006	4,307	507
Number of species	24	28	19

apivorus and Sparrowhawk *Accipter nisus*.

b) eight Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*, of which there are only two previous published records (Kok & Onengae 1994).
c) other soaring migrants included 30 Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* and 2 White Stork *C. ciconia*.

Among other species recorded the following were particularly noteworthy: Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (migrant), Scops Owl *Otus scops* (migrant), Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*, Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* (migrant), Roller *Coracias garrulus* (migrant), Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*, Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus minor*, Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*, Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* and Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*.

Acknowledgements

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Aktas Gölü: a new pelican breeding site on the Turkish-Georgian border

by Murat Yarar

On 14 and 15 July 1995 with the permission of the General Staff in Ankara I visited Aktas Gölü, Ardahan province, on the Turkish border with Georgia. Aktas Gölü (or Hozapin lake) is a shallow, lava wall lake of volcanic origin situated in a closed basin at an altitude of 1794 metres (Environmental Foundation of Turkey 1993). The lake covers 2700 ha, of which 1400 ha lie within Turkey. There are 12 unhabited islands, all on the Turkish side, partially reed-fringed. There are also some reedbeds along the shoreline, elsewhere the lake is bordered by grassland and fields. There are several other lakes in the vicinity, the largest of which is Çildir Gölü, 15 km to the south. Several others are within Georgian territory e.g. Hanceli, Sargamo and Paravani lakes.

Since the lake is situated in a restricted border area under military control, it is relatively undisturbed. There are only three villages on the Turkish side, with one directly beside the lake.

From an ornithological point of view the lake is poorly known. The site is not included in the inventory of Important Bird Areas (Ertan *et al.* 1989). The late Nihat Turan mentions breeding pelicans (not identified to species), Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*, Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* and Common Crane *Grus grus* at the lake, whereas White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* is mentioned as occurring there (in Environmental Foundation of Turkey 1993). All these observations probably date from the 1960s and 1970s. The only foreign birdwatchers known to have visited the area are van der Ven and Gheyselinck. Their observations from autumn 1980 and 1981 include numerous Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*, White Pelican, Ruddy Shelduck, various ducks *Anas* sp. and Velvet Scoter (120 birds).

Four hours were spent in the evening and afternoon of 14 and 15 July at the lake, birdwatching solely from the lakeshore. The most outstanding observation was the discovery of breeding Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* with White Pelicans on two of the islands.

White Pelican A total of 75 individuals was present, mainly at the breeding colony on one of the islands. A single chick was observed, but many adults were sitting on nests. The breeding population was conservatively estimated at 50 pairs. White Pelican is regularly observed at Çildir Gölü during the breeding season, these presumably involve birds from the Aktas colony. The only other colonies currently known in Turkey are at Seyfe Gölü and Eregli Marshes.

Dalmatian Pelican 35 birds were present on two islands. Five appeared to have nests on the same island as the White Pelican colony. The total number breeding was estimated at 20 pairs. Other known colonies of this globally threatened species in Turkey are at Manyas Gölü, Büyük Menderes and Kizilirmak Deltas, Çamalti Tuzlasi and most probably at Aksehir Gölü.

Velvet Scoter A total of 725 individuals including many immatures was seen. The site probably holds the largest breeding population of Velvet Scoter in Turkey. Three other breeding localities are known at: Nemrut Dagi crater lake (Tatvan), Balik Gölü and Çildir Gölü.

Other significant bird species recorded at or around the lake included: Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, Pochard *Aythya ferina*, Tufted Duck *A.fuligula*, Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, Common Crane and Armenian Gull *Larus (argenatatus) armenicus*.

The lake is obviously of outstanding ornithological importance; the pelican colony is apparently the highest known above sea level in the Palearctic (A. Crivelli pers. comm.). There is no doubt that under current conditions there is no immediate threat posed to the area and its birds, but negotiations between Georgia and Turkey to open the border at Aktas have recently started. This may result in dramatically increased human activity around the lake, if appropriate measures are not taken beforehand. DHKD has therefore approached the relevant authorities with the proposal to declare the area as a National Park.

Acknowledgements

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and undertaken by DHKD within the framework of BirdLife International's European IBA programme.

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Murat Yarar, c/o DHKD, P.K. 18, 80810, Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey.

News and Information

July 1995 *Compiled by Simon Albrecht*

The aim of this section is to inform readers about events in the OSME region. It relies on members and others supplying relevant news and information. If you have any any information concerning birds, conservation or development isssues 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 acknowledged here.

SOCOTRA CORMORANT

The Socotra Cormorant - Phalacorocrax nigrogularis is endemic to Arabia with all but one known colony in the Arabian Gulf. There are possibly now only 11 extant colonies compared with an historical minimum of 28.

Despite a world population of between 500,000 and 1 million individuals there are grave fears for the conservation of the species due to the small number of colonies, continuing persecution and the loss of breeding sites due to development. Starting in the winter breeding season of 1994/5, an international effort is being made by Gulf states to census those remaining colonies and to monitor breeding performance. (Source: Network News 3 (1).)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Survey of western Abu Dhabi islands - Vastly more seabirds than were expected were found on the western Abu Dhabi islands in the summer of 1994 by the National Avian Research Centre based in Abu Dhabi. Results included: Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus* (over 40,000 pairs), White-cheeked Tern *S. repressa* (over 21,000 pairs), Lesser Crested Tern *S. benghalensis* (24,500 pairs) and Swift Tern *S. bergii* (1,256 pairs). In addition new breeding sites for Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* were found and a new Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii* colony was discovered.

The outstanding islands were Quarneyn, Ushsh, Ghasha, Muhaiyimat and Dayina which were all internationally important for their seabird colonies. However several islands which had been important for seabirds in the past were found to be completely abandoned. Known losses include 15-20,000 pairs of Socotra Cormorant.

While the data arrived too late for inclusion in the *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East*, they are to be included in the forthcoming *Directory of Wetlands in the Middle East*. It has been suggested that most of Abu Dhabi's islands and coast be proposed as a World Heritage site. (Source: Network News 3 (1).)

PALESTINE

Children for the Protection of Nature - a new organisation in Palestine has started an adventurous programme aimed at strengthening the relationship, appreciation and bond between children and their homeland in Gaza and the West Bank. Their magazine *Shaqee'q al-nuoma'n (Anemone corinaria)* has been widely distributed to schools. Their 1995 Action Plan includes running teachers' training workshops and field trips, and the organisation of awareness campaigns. Included are campaigns on the preservation of the woodland Wadi Al Duff in Hebron and highlighting the water pollution problems on the Gaza Strip. (Source: Network News 3 (1).)

JORDAN

Dana Reserve - Jordan's Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) have carried out a series of surveys in the 250km2 reserve of Dana in southern Jordan. The area includes limestone and sandstone mountains and stony desert. The surveys have found the largest known population of the Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus* (probably over 800 pairs) and a healthy population of Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* (probably over 20 pairs) in the reserve. Other resident birds include Sinai Rosefinch *Carpodacus synoicus*, Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*, Hume's Tawny Owl *Strix butleri*, Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*, Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*, Dunn's Lark *Eremalauda dunni* and Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*. It is also on the Israeli-Jordan Rift Valley migration route for birds of prey.

It is hoped that a management plan for Dana being prepared by RSCN will be completed this autumn.

Badia Desert - RSCN, together with Durham University, U.K., have received funding from the Darwin Initiative for a biodiversity study of the Badia Desert in eastern Jordan. The study will concentrate particularly on the area of Burqu' which is one of the few permanent water bodies in the Jordan desert. During a brief spring survey of the area a significant concentration of Bimaculated Larks *Melancorypha bimaculata* were found in the area, the first time the species has been recorded breeding in Jordan. (Source: Network News 3 (1&2).)

Red Sea to Dead Sea canal - proposals to refill the Dead Sea with water from the Red Sea via a canal generating electricity and bringing water to the desert are examined in a paper in *New Scientist* (21 July 1995). Water resources, exploitation and management in the whole area including the impacts on the Azraq oasis are discussed.

YEMEN

A conservation workshop was held in Sana'a in mid March on Yemen's biodiversity. It was hosted by the Environmental Protection Council (EPC) and chaired by Mr Al-Hamdani, EPC's chairman. The workshop was well attended by officials from various ministries who heard presentations on Yemen's Important Bird Areas, the conservation of endemic birds, threats to birds caused by land-use changes, and a programme for the conservation of the Leopard *Panthera pardus*. Particular attention was drawn to the need for conservation of the highland terrace ecosystem, which has 12 endemic birds, and the island of Socotra, which has six endemics. (Source: Network News 3 (2).)

Socotra - a recent article in the *New Scientist* (29 July 1995) highlights the challenge between development and conserving the island's unique flora.

OMAN

Convention on Biological Diversity - Congratulations to the Omani Government, who have now signed and ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. There are now three Arab countries in the region that have ratified the Convention (the others are Lebanon and Jordan). (Source: Network News 3 (2).)

Rhinoceros horn - Oman banned the import of rhinoceros horn as from 18 October 1994 and plans to prohibit the sale of rhino horn in due course. This is a very welcome move particularly in view of the cultural importance of dagger handles. Currently Oman is not a party to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and has no other legislation to control trade in CITES-listed species. However Oman is examining the possibility of joining CITES. (Source: Oryx 29:2 from Traffic Bull. 15 (1).)

Oryx reintroduction complete - Seven Oryx *Oryx leuceryx* from the USA are to be released in Oman to join the estimated 288 currently living in the wild. These are the last captive born Oryx that it is planned to release. (Source: Oryx 29 (3).)

SAUDI ARABIA

Reintroduction of Ostrich - Saudi Arabia's National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD) has started a programme to reintroduce the Ostrich *Struthio camelus* into the former range of the subspecies *syriacus*. Seven from Sudan (*S. c. camelus*) were released in the Mahazat As Sayd Protected Area in western Saudi Arabia in June 1994. They are being monitored to see if they will survive and breed without supplementary food and water. (Source: Oryx 29 (3) from Re-introduction News No.9)

Fauna of Saudi Arabia - Volume 14, containing 400 pages and covering marine fishes, scorpions and Branchiopoda amongst others, will be available shortly (price 159 Swiss Francs), whilst Volume 15 is in active preparation. Orders

and enquiries should be addressed to: Karger Libri AG, P.O. Box, CH-4009 Basel, Switzerland.

EGYPT

Lake Nasser, which was created as a result of the completion of the Nile High Dam in 1969, is one of the largest freshwater bodies in Africa. However, largely due to its inaccessibility, it has remained almost unknown to ornithologists. A recent week-long visit, conducted as part of the BirdLife Important Bird Area (IBA) programme, managed to survey about 25% of the lake. Over 55,000 waterbirds were counted including 19,000 Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, 9,500 Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, 6,000 Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* and 1,157 White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*. This is likely to be but a fraction of the number the lake actually holds and it is probable that Lake Nasser is absorbing birds that used to winter in other Egyptian wetlands that are now shrinking. The lake clearly qualifies for listing in the Egyptian Important Bird Areas inventory due to be published in the autumn. (Source: World Birdwatch 17 (2).)

MEDMARAVIS

Alghero Convention (1995) on Coastal and Marine Biodiversity in the Mediterranean - In the previous Bulletin we reported that the conference produced the above convention. The Alghero Convention (1995) urges all Mediterranean countries to give special consideration to island ecosystems, accord full protection status to all marine mammals, establish an enlarged network of terrestrial and marine protected areas, and give protective status to every remaining niche of biodiversity outside protected areas.

The Convention has 10 annexes proposing a set of biodiversity criteria and also proposes biological criteria for, among others, the Black Sea region and the eastern Mediterranean.

Medmaravis hopes to produce a declaration booklet in several languages which will be sent to various authorities and institutions as well as to Medmaravis members. Further information from Medmaravis, BP 2 - 83470 Saint Maxim, France. Fax: (33) 94 59 47 38. (Source: Medmaravis News 17.)

Medcoast 1995 October 24-27 - The Second International Conference on the Mediterranean Coastal Environment is being organised by the Medcoast Permanent Secretariat at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey an the Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya, in Barcelona, Spain. The main topics include conservation issues, biodiversity, endangered species, habitat protection, specially protected areas, and coastal and marine parks. A two-day short course on "Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean" will be organised on 22-23 October, prior to the conference. For further information write to: Miss M. Ruiz, Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya, Gran capita s/n, modul D-1, 08034 Barcelona, Spain.

TURKEY

Rising water levels on Lake Van (over 2.5 metres) in the past two years have brought about the destruction of at least four Important Bird Areas - Bendimahi Delta, Çelebibag marshes, Göründü (Horkum) Gölü and Edremit marshes. Both Ahlat and Van marshes have been reduced in size and many smaller areas of marshland completely inundated as a result. Due to the uncertain political situation in eastern Turkey it is not presently possible to adequately assess the full effects of this currently unexplained phenonomen.

OSME News

A chance to get things done!

In the membership survey many of you made suggestions for improving OSME - so Council is going to make it possible for *you* to make some of them happen! OSME has urgent need of people who have the time to take on self-contained priority projects for the Society. These could include setting up a flier mailing, getting a new T shirt designed and printed, writing an article for *Sandgrouse* on a birding site in the region which you know well, organising a joint meeting between OSME and your local bird group, taking copies of OSME publications and membership forms out to a country in the region on your next visit... the possibilities are many and by making greater use of our widely spread membership we can achieve far more than Council can ever do on its own. All projects will be coordinated by Council so there will always be help at hand! With this system we hope to be able to make use of all our active members - even those who live in the remotest of locations, can't attend meetings or would like to assist but feel they cannot make a long term commitment. If you'd like to know more, please contact the Chairman, Geoff Welch. We look forward to hearing from you.

Seventeenth OSME AGM

At this year's AGM, **Phil Hollom** retired from Council after the completion of his 5 year term of service. Phil has a long association with the Society having been both a Vice-President and a Council member, and over the years he has had an impeccable record for attending meetings. Phil's long association with the region and extensive knowledge of its birdlife have meant that his contributions at meetings have always been pertinent and tempered with the benefit of a long term perspective of ornithology in the Middle East. This has been particularly valuable in curbing some of the more adventurous suggestions put forward by some of us 'Young Turks'! The other major contribution Phil has brought to meetings has been a sense of decorum - his gentlemanly presence always ensuring things never got out of hand.

I am extremely grateful to Phil for all of the time and effort he has put into assisting OSME over the years and find it very reassuring to know that we can call on him for a few wise words of advice should the need arise in the future.

The other changes on Council which took place this year were the premature retirement of John Armitage, Mike Jennings, Hew Prendergast and Rob Morris due to pressure of work or, in Rob's case, an overseas posting. To all I extend my sincere thanks for their work on behalf of OSME. On the plus side, we welcome Pete Davidson who will be developing the Turkey Officer role into that of a wider Regional Information Officer, and Tony Morris who has taken on the key role of Secretary.

Geoff Welch, Chairman of Council
telephone: (0)1728 648298; fax: (0)1728 648529 or write c/o The Lodge.

1995 Summer Meeting.

Due to arrive in London...at...10....43.. On the day after the first rail strike of the summer the guard's announcement seemed rather hesitant but in the event I did arrive in good time at the new venue - the pleasantly appropriate School of Oriental and African Studies.

Richard Porter opened with a succinct account of recent conservation news from the OSME region. Several countries have important projects in various stages of development and there appear to be many moves in the right direction. The importance of baseline conservation studies being published in the local languages, especially Arabic, was stressed as was the necessity for gentle yet firm encouragement for countries to not merely sign international agreements but to ratify and begin to implement them. The hope was fervently expressed that countries such as Iran will soon be easier for birdwatchers to visit.

Steve Parr thanked OSME for a modest grant which helped support his Lesser Kestrel survey in Turkey. I enjoyed the slides of the Turkish landscape and being familiar only with this species on migration was surprised to see slides of its nest sites beneath roof-tiles and down chimneys of remote rural villages. The assistance of Turkish students seemed essential to the successful implementation of this project.

The business of the AGM was efficiently dealt with (particularly the Statement of Accounts!) and was succeeded by a tasty pseudo-ethnic luch with the finest glass of hot, sweet tea I'd tasted since I left Egypt a year ago. The selection of Middle Eastern bird books for sale, some just published, proved, alas irresistible.

OSME's multi-talented Chairman, Geoff Welch, then electrified the audience from its siesta with a 20 slide mystery bird quiz. Shrieks of incredulity at a raptor that turned out to be a Marsh Harrier were exceeded only by a Little Green Bee-eater which was identified by one as 'an out-of-range Rufous-sided Towhee' and described by another as 'photographed from the Moon'. Fortunately Geoff did not enquire as to our personal scores. Baz Huges brought us back down to earth with an erudite and dispassionate account of the problems facing the White-headed Duck. Never before had I seen so many maps of the British Isles in an OSME lecture but these were necessary since the spread of the Ruddy Duck through the Western Palearctic from its English base now impinges directly on the future of its threatened relative. This is a pity because when I used to count Ruddy Ducks in north Shropshire I always found them rather cute - as ducks go.

Robin Chittenden rounded off the afternoon perfectly with a photographic meander through Egypt which brought back many memories. There were some excellently crisp shots of wheatears in particular.

Due to hard work and careful preparation by a group of Council members this Summer Meeting at a new venue and with a fresh schedule proved a most enjoyable and stimulating day. I am already planning my next visit to the region!

Derek J. Evans

The OSME Summer Meeting and Eighteenth AGM will again be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Russel Square, London on Saturday 20th July, starting at 11.30am (subject to confirmation). Make a date in your diary now!

Turkey Bird Report 1987-91: an apology to contributors

As a result of technical difficulties in *Sandgrouse* production a series of names of contributors was omitted from the most recent Turkey Bird Report (*Sandgrouse* 16 part 2, 1994). The editors, Guy M. Kirwan and Rodney P. Martins, would like to sincerely apologise to those whose names were omitted, the reasons for this were entirely beyond their control.

The omitted observers are: M.A.S.Beaman (1991), U.Özesmi (1990-91), D.Page (1989), G.Paulson (1988 & 90), J.M.Pearson (1988), C.Petersen (1989), M.C.Powell (1987), M.Raes (1988), M.Renner (1991), D.Richardson (1989), R.A.Richardson (1989), D.Ridgely (1989), M.H.Rodgers (1987), M.van Ronzelen (1987), D.Ross (1990), J.A.Rowlands (1989), M.Roxby (1990), D.A.Rushforth (1988), G.Sandve (1989-90), A.Sezer (1991), K.Shaw (1988), B.Shipley (1990), G.Shorrock (1989), D.Showler (1988), R.Simonsson (1987), J.Skinner (1989), R.Slack (1989), S.P.Smethurst (1989) and J.Wolstencroft (1991).

Guy M. Kirwan & Rodney P. Martins, 6 Connaught Road, Norwich NR2 3BP, Norfolk, U.K.

Recently Received

Oldfield, C. & J. (1994) *A Birdwatcher's Guide to Qatar*. Published by the authors, Doha.
111 pages with illustrations throughout. Available from OSME sales £6.50 including post and packing.
Divided into three sections this is the perfect complement to birding in this underwatched Gulf State. There are sections covering a month by month account of the birds to be seen, the key birding sites, with access details and sketch maps and finally a tabulated checklist of all species currently recorded in Qatar.

Requests for Information

Wanted - a home for *Sandgrouse*

OSME has back copies of *Sandgrouse* for which it is seeking good homes with individuals or organisations in the region where they can provide a useful source of reference and encouragement for future ornithologists work.

OSME itself is compiling a list of suitable recipients but if you know of anyone in the region who would benefit from receiving a selection of *Sandgrouse* or if you would be prepared to take a pack out when next visiting the region, please contact Gary Allport, Chairman Conservation & Research Committe, OSME, c/o The Lodge.

Your Help Urgently Needed.

DHKD continues with its work to produce an updated version of the Turkey Important Bird Areas inventory. During the last five years much support has been received from foreign birdwatchers who submitted their observations on standardised recording forms to DHKD, or designed their itinerary according to the needs of the project. There are still some sites for which there is a shortage of recent bird information. We would like to close these gaps with your help.

DHKD would be grateful to any birdwatcher who can send us observations from the following sites from the period 1989-1995: Ilgaz mountains (IBA No 012), Yeniçaga Gölü (017), Yesilirmak Delta (018), Eber Gölü (022), Karapinar plain (025), Tödürge Gölü (031), Tuzla Gölü, Kayseri (033), Güllük marshes (037), Karamik marshes (039), Küçük Menderes Delta (040), Köycegiz-Dalyan (055) and any site from southeastern and eastern Turkey (IBAs 060 to 078). Data from sites in the east which are not described in the current IBA inventory are also welcomed.

Most welcome is the data presented on the Special Recording Forms which can be obtained from Guy Kirwan, 6 Connaught Road, Norwich NR2 3BP, United Kingdom. Send your notes, forms or reports to: Murat Yarar, DHKD Bird and Wetland Section, P.K. 18, 80810, Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey.

Your help will be fully acknowledged in the forthcoming revised IBA publication. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Gernant Magnin and Murat Yarar

New Middle East Checklist.

A new checklist covering the entire Middle Eastern region from Egypt in the west, Socotra in the south and Aghanistan and Iran in the north and east is currently in an advanced state of preparation. Each country receives individual treatment, with codes detailing each species' status. Recent records of vagrants where documented are listed and references for all species supplied. If you have, as yet, unsubmitted or unpublished records of vagrants from any part of the Middle East please contact the authors at the address below as soon as possible. All help will be fully acknowledged, both in the relevant country section and in the book's introduction.

Guy Kirwan & Pete Davidson, 6 Connaught Road, Norwich NR2 3BP, UK

Reviews

Andrews, I.J. (1995) *The birds of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*. Andrews, Musselburgh (U.K.). 185pp. £18.50. Available from Ian J. Andrews, 39 Clayknowes Drive, Musselburgh, Midlothian EH21 6UW, U.K.

This is a very well planned and executed book on the status of Jordan's birds, which fills a long standing gap in the ornithology of the Middle East. As Ian Andrews comments, many of the species range maps published in *BWP* and

other recent tomes contain remarkably Jordan-shaped holes in them. As one of the major countries straddling the ecotone between the Mediterranean and the Saharo-Sindian desert zones, and thus containing many species at the edge of their world ranges, the often obscure distribution and status of birds in Jordan has remained a problem for many a researcher. This book now provides answers to many of these questions.

To place the book in context it is worth summarising the state of previous knowledge. Two other English language books have also been recently published on the birds of Jordan. One (Disi & Bouran 1987) was the first annotated checklist ever compiled for the country, but it contained often inadequate or misleading information on status (see review in *OSME Bulletin* 21:33-34). The other was coffee-table type book designed as a vehicle for the author's photographs, and thus covered only a minority of the species known from Jordan (*Birds of Jordan*, Ramadan Bakig & Horani 1992), with little hard information on status (see review in *OSME Bulletin* 33:31-32). There are two other relevant works in Arabic. *Jordanian Wild Birds* (Disi & Bouran 1990) is a paperback in the ICBP Small Bird Book series, designed to promote interest in birds and birdwatching amongst schoolchildren of the Mediterranean region, covering only a selection of the commoner species and with a standard text and format across all Mediterranean countries. As such the book is not particularly useful or informative for the confirmed birdwatcher in Jordan. The second, *Wild Birds of Jordan* (Shafei 1988) is based on the author's wide experience both in the field and as curator of the Jordan Natural History Museum at Yarmouk University. It bears the stamp of authority that the other books discussed have lacked, and I know that it has certainly proved very useful to Jordanians carrying out bird surveys.

Now we have Ian Andrews' privately published book, based mainly on his wide travels in the country during three years residence between 1989 and 1992, but also incorporating all previously published literature known to him as well as many unpublished observations, most notably those by Jorg Wittenberg. The design, layout and overall 'look' of the book is explicitly modelled on Colin Richardson's superbly user-friendly *Birds of the United Arab Emirates*. There are all the special sections that a birdwatcher on a short holiday or a newcomer to Jordan could want: good country maps, a selection of birdwatching itineraries covering a representative spectrum of habitats and species, with details and sketch maps of routes; a chapter on the different habitats found in Jordan, supported by high quality photographs; a full checklist with tick boxes and a gazetteer of all localities mentioned in the text.

Of course the main body of the book is the species accounts which summarise the distribution, abundance and monthly occurrence pattern of all species recorded in Jordan, often with additional short comments on other interesting subjects such as taxonomy or field identification. The book does not, however, cover the latter specifically or systematically, this being best left to the several

modern field guides that now cover the Near East. Rarities are well covered with dates and localities, though no information in the book is specifically referenced to source publications or observers - something of a problem for the more serious birder or conservationist, but probably the correct decision for a book designed to gain wide popular appeal. If in any doubt, one can always write to the author, since he states that he is willing to continue as a collater of past and future bird data from Jordan, given the lack of any other willing volunteer.

Having already had the opportunity to make extensive field use of the book, I can state that the species accounts are concise yet authoritative and always helpful. Each account has an accompanying diagram showing the monthly pattern of occurrence (for non-vagrant species) and a map of the breeding distribution (where relevant). Many of the species are illustrated by colour photos, the great majority taken by Ian Andrews and Tim Loseby in Jordan itself; these are often of a very high standard. The whole book is further enlivened by John Busby's vibrant sketches of many of the species, habitats and localities - a great visual asset for any bird book. There is a good section on bird conservation in Jordan, describing the problems faced by certain rare or threatened species or habitats.

For bird conservationists in Jordan the hard work put into researching, writing and designing the book should greatly facilitate future fieldwork. As Ian Andrews says, there is still a lot to be discovered about Jordan's avifauna - he often outlines such loose ends which require tying up, species whose status is unclear, localities or habitats that need further exploration and projects that deserve to be carried out (e.g. a survey of Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* colonies, a national breeding bird atlas) - and this publication will surely act as a catalyst along these lines.

To summarise, the book looks and feels great and is a pleasure to own and use. With the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, travel between the two countries by Western tourists has now become fast, straightforward and hassle-free. The many birders visiting Israel will be able to add a whole new dimension to even the shortest of trips, for Jordan assuredly has many unique natural facets compared to Israel. In this sense the book could not have been published at a better time. It deserves all the sales' success that it will surely get.

Mike Evans

Winkler, H., Christie, D.A. & Nurney, D. (1995) *Woodpeckers, Piculets and Wrynecks of the World*. Pica Press, Mountfield, Sussex (U.K.). Hardback. 406 pp, 64 colour plates. £30.

The Picidae, comprising Jynginae, Picumninae and Picinae, total 214 species

worldwide. of these 96 occur in the Neotropics, but there is a representative of at least one of these three families in almost every part of the globe, being absent only from the majority of desert regions, Australasia and many islands, most significantly Madagascar. As a result few forested areas in the world are without a woodpecker, and there is even one species, the Andean Flicker *Colaptes rupicola* that occurs high above the treeline. This book, published by Pica Press, follows a very similar approach to the popular and highly successful series of family guides pulished by Helm. With Christopher Helm involved in both series' it is unsurprising that the two are similar and invite comparison. The usual introductory chapters include sections on relationships and taxonomy, distribution, morphology and mechanics, plumage and moult, food and foraging, ecological and sexual dimorphism, behaviour, reproduction and sociality, and woodpeckers and man. As woodpeckers are such a specialised group these opening sections provide fascinating reading. Gaps in our knowledge are highlighted and areas where future research could usefully be undertaken pointed to. Some of these sections could have been expanded, in particular that on woodpeckers and man could have included a more detailed discussion of the conservation issues facing this group.

The species accounts include sections on identification, distribution, movements, habitat, detailed description, geographical variation, measurements, voice, habits, food, breeding and references. In general they have a slightly broader and more detailed coverage than some of the Helm titles. Hans Winkler is one of the world's foremost authorities on woodpeckers, so it comes as no great surprise to find all the texts for species with which I am familiar accurate and apparently error free. The length of the accounts vary, with the well known species receiving quite detailed coverage, whilst those for the poorly known species are rather brief. Clearly a book of this scope cannot go into exceptional detail, but all the texts appear comprehensive and up to date. For example the number of pairs of White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopus leucotos* breeding in Sweden in 1994 is included. A reasonably comprehensive reference section for each species points to those sources to which the interested reader should next turn. The maps also appear up to date and accurate, with no obvious errors that I could detect. Unlike the Helm series, where colour maps appear opposite the plates, the maps here have been placed with the relevant species text. They are monochrome and use different types of shading to show breeding and non-breeding areas. This approach allowed greater freedom in the sizing and therefore a clearer depiction of the range of some species has resulted. I do however prefer the Helm series' use of colour maps since it facilitates easy interpretation, especially for migrants. Helm's placing of the maps with the plates makes it easier to compare the differing ranges of one or more similar species. However a brief summary of range is included in the text adjacent to the plate.

A scattering of line drawings, mainly depicting woodpeckers in flight, accompany the species accounts, although more could have been usefully included.

The plates are of a very high quality. All species, including a number of distinct races, have been illustrated. Some racial variants have never been painted previously. David Nurney has done an excellent job in accurately depicting all the species with which I am familiar. However some species have a rather lifeless feel, perhaps reflecting a lack of field experience on the artists behalf.

With a seemingly never ending supply of new titles appearing on the market and the inflated prices charged for books these days it is difficult, even for the more affluent among us, to continue finding the funds to keep up to date with each new publication. So, with only 27 species of woodpecker occurring in the Palearctic (and some of those only just!), those birders who do not regularly travel outside the Palearctic will probably not regard this book as an essential purchase. Nonetheless this excellent book is an authoritative piece of work on a fascinating group of birds that will doubtless find its way onto many birders' bookshelves throughout the world. I thoroughly recommend it.

Chris Bradshaw

Baumgart, W., Kasparek, M. & Stephan, B. (1995) *Die Vögel Syriens: eine Übersicht*. Max Kasparek Verlag, Heidelberg, pp 124, price DM 28.

At last! A concise but still relatively detailed introduction (in German) to the ornithology of this fascinating, yet little known Arab republic. This is the second of a series of annotated checklists covering Middle Eastern countries; Turkey has already appeared (see *Bull.*32:41-42) and others are envisaged, covering Jordan and Yemen. It is attractively designed; a scattering of black-and-white photographs of both birds and their habitats helping to relieve the text, and, for travelling birders, will fit very easily in the daypack.

Introductory chapters address issues such as history of ornithological research, geography and climate, general characteristics of the Syrian avifauna, a discussion of status, threats and conservation. The latter includes details of Important Bird Areas.

Of the books' 124 pages, 93 are given over to the systematic list, which describes the status and distribution of the 354 species the authors consider to have been reliably recorded in Syria. Of these 161 have bred (16 only in the past), while a further 33 plausibly do so. Latin, German and English names are given for all species (although *Limosa limosa* is the Black-tailed Godwit, not Black-winged) as are abbreviated status symbols; which are also translated into English in the introduction to the list. Species accounts vary from two lines for vagrants such as Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*, to nearly a page for better known and more obvious species like White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*. For many species details remain scant, thus the authors include many observations which in time may prove unremarkable. Whereas the Turkey list was supported by a number of maps and figures illustrating migration timing,

general distribution and ringing recoveries, the severe lack of such studies in Syria meant that this type of additional data could not be presented. A map showing localities mentioned in the text and a full bibliography complete the work.

In conclusion no visitor to Syria should be without this book. The final word on Syria's ornithology it may not be, but as an introduction and a baseline upon which future works will doubtless be forced to build, this is a creditable achievement.

Guy Kirwan

Meininger, P.L. & Atta, G.A.M. (eds) (1994) *Ornithological studies in Egyptian wetlands 1989-90.* FORE report 94-01, WIWO report 40, Zeist, the Netherlands.

After eight years living in Egypt I assumed that this report would reveal little that I did not already know. How wrong I was! Its 400 pages contain a mass of fascinating new information. Never before have Egypt's wetlands been examined in as much detail as this. The report provides a benchmark by which our success or failure in preserving these areas can be judged.

An overview of the environmental status of the major wetlands makes for depressing reading with more threats than any site can reasonably be expected to withstand. Sewage from the Cairo megalopolis is pumped 150km north to pollute Lake Manzala - a classic 'out-of-sight, out-of-mind' solution, wetlands of international importance are carved up by new roads or filled with rubbish and while some of the bird-catching techniques rather quaintly date back to 2300 B.C., others involve the use of binoculars, mistnets and tape lures!

What always amazes is that Egypt, with its burgeoning 60 million human population encroaching relentlessly onto these prime ornithological sites, manages to remain so bird rich.

The report reveals that the total number of waders using Egyptian wetlands in winter and spring may exceed half a million, 53,000 Little Gulls *Larus minutus* winter in the Nile Delta lakes, Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* arrive from three separate breeding localities in Kazakhstan, Iran and France, whilst the second ever spring survey of raptor migration at Suez counted over 68,000 birds of prey.

The comprehensive systematic list of 296 species observed during the survey adds Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors,* Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* and Brown-throated Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola* to the Egyptian list. More importantly it summarises significant changes, both positive and negative, in the status of many duck, wader and raptor species.

The Survey of waterbirds in Egyptian wetlands published by WIWO in 1982 is now unavailable. Any serious student of Middle Eastern ornithology or anyone concerned by the crisis affecting the Mediterranean ecosystem should order their copy of this new report now.

Derek J. Evans

Zoology in the Middle East Volume 11 (1995) edited by Ragnar Kinzelbach and Max Kasparek. Heidelberg. DM 27.

This attractively produced journal will be of value to both amateur naturalists and professional biologists with an interest in the Middle Eastern region. It covers a broad range of animal classes and a variety of topics, and is liberally sprinkled with good quality and informative line drawings and black-and-white photographs; an attribute from which other journals could learn a great deal.

This particular issue (120 pages) contains sixteen short papers and notes on mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, lampreys, insects, molluscs, leeches and catfish parasites. The authors are generally professional biologists based at Middle Eastern universities, although a wider interest in the region's zoology is indicated by a number of papers from aficionados resident outside the region.

Of interest to ornithologists are papers on breeding observations of the birds of the Yemeni Tihamah; the migration of the Common Crane *Grus grus* in southern Turkmenistan; Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea* breeding on Skyros (Greece) and recent records of rare birds in Turkey. These include evidence for a western breeding range extension in the case of Cinereous Bunting, adds to our scant knowledge of Yemen's breeding birds and provides an update to the Turkish bird list.

All papers are clearly and concisely written throughout, with an abstract and keywords to facilitate use for the hurried reader. Any biologist or amateur naturalist heading to the Middle East should consult it.

Tony Stones

De Nobel, W.T. (ed.) (1995) *Birds of the Messolonghi wetlands*. Eastern Mediterranean Wader Project, spring 1990. WIWO Report 53, Zeist, the Netherlands. *f*25.

This report covers the results of a survey in Greece as part of the Eastern Mediterranean Wader project carried out during spring 1990 and coordinated with projects in Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia. The study concentrated on the Messolonghi wetlands in western Greece, with additional fieldwork within the Gulf of Amvrakikos 60km to the north. These areas had both been previously

identified as supporting important wintering and breeding bird populations, but the study illustrated the importance of the sites for migrants, particularly herons and waders, in the spring and also provides up to date information on the breeding bird community of the area.

The report details the habitat types within the area; includes the results of regular bird counts, wader ringing sessions and breeding bird surveys; and provides the results of invertebrate sampling and observations of wader foraging behaviour within the study area. The final chapter summarises the significance of the area for birds and details the anthropogenic threats to the wetlands, including plans for a European Community supported scheme to divert the Acheloos river thus reducing the input of freshwater to the main study area. There follows a set of recommendations for the future protection of the conservation interest of the area. The main report is entirely in English, but a seven page Greek summary is also included.

Adam Rowlands

Around the Region

Records in Around the Region are published for interest only, and their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. To submit records for Sandgrouse, covering mainly the period September 1995 to March 1996, please write to Around the Region, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, U.K.

Compiled by Guy Kirwan

Records refer to 1995 and to single birds unless otherwise stated.

CYPRUS

Unless otherwise stated all records were submitted by *J. Sadler* on behalf of COS (1957) and have been accepted by the Cyprus Records Committe.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
Potamos Liopetri, 15 November 1992. Fifth record.

Dalmation Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*
Akhna Dam, 30 October 1994. Seventh record.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
three adults, Spiro's Pool, 5 December 1994 (cf.Bull.34:33); two adults, Larnaca airport north pool, 18-19, 26 & 28 December 1994. Second and third records.

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*
Spiro's Pool, 22 December 1994. Third

record.

Scaup *Aythya marila*
two males, Akhna Dam, 16 January 1993. Fifth record.

Lanner *Falco biarmicus*
Akna Dam, 16 October 1994. First record for Cyprus.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*
Phassouri reedbeds, 23 April 1993. Accepted as first record for Cyprus.

Greater Sand Plover *Chardrius leschenaultii*
Potamos Liopetri, 9 & 18-19 March 1994; Ayia Thekla, 30 July 1994. First records for Cyprus of the race *crassirostris*.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*
Cape Clea, 5 March. First record for Cyprus.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
Polis beach, 27 April. *O & G Roberts.*

Little Swift *Apus affinis*
Kiti Dam, 1 April. Second record.

Dupont's Lark *Chersophilus duponti*
Phassouri reedbed, 8 April 1994. First record for Cyprus.

White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*
Cape Greco, 25 April 1993; male, Ayia Napa, 29 April 1994; male, Paphos Lighthouse, 29 April 1994. Third to fifth records.

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*
Paphos Lighthouse, 9-10 April 1993. First record for Cyprus.

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*
Ayios Georgios: 21 April; female, 23 April. Fourth and fifth records.

Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*
Amathus beach, 16 November 1994. Fourth record.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
Paphos lighthouse, 5 May 1995. *O & G Roberts.* Only two previous records so far accepted.

Pale Rock Sparrow *Petronia brachydactyla*
Paphos Lighthouse: 22 & 26 April 1994; 7, 6 March and 4,20 March 1995. First to third records for Cyprus.

Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*
three, south of Kathikas, 13 March 1994; Akhna Dam, 4 December 1994. Third and fourth records.

EGYPT

Unless otherwise stated all records were submitted by *Mindy & Sherif Baha el Din.*

Long-tailed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*
2, Abu Simbel, 21 & 23 November 1994. *D Murdoch.*

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Alexandria Harbour, 26-27 February. *D A Ewbank.* On island 10 km off Ras El Hikma, 3 March. Perhaps further indication that the species breeds in this area (cf.Bull.34:33).

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*
Adult, Gezira Tawila, 10-11 June 1994. First summer record for Egyptian Red Sea coast. *R Hoath, D Russell.*

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
Zaranik, north Sinai, 12 October 1994. Rare visitor. *A Grieve.*

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*
Salhiya, near Ismaila, 30 December 1994. Only second winter record. *M Baha el Din.*

Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
between Sharm el-Sheikh and Naama Bay, 7 January. Scarce winter visitor. *D & S Robel.*

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
Lake Qarun, Faiyoum, 3 December 1994. First winter record. *R Hoath, D Russell.*

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*
Cairo, 2 February. Rare in winter.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*
Lake Maryut, 18 January. Scarce in winter. *D A Ewbank.*

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*
Port Said: 16 December 1994; 2, 28-29 January; 2, 7-9 February. Rare winter visitor. *M & S Baha el Din, A Riad.*

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

immature flew west, Ras El Hikma, Marsa Matruh, 2 October 1994; immature flew west, Zaranik, north Sinai, 6 October 1994. *A Grieve*. 2, Port Said, 20 February. *M & S Baha el Din*. Rare and irregular in recent years.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*
2 subadults, Gezira North Geisum, 12 June 1994. First summer record for Egyptian Red Sea coast. *R Hoath, D Russell*.

Audouin's Gull *Larus audounii*
3 immatures, Montazeh, Alexandria, 25 December 1994. Rare winter visitor. *A Riad*.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*
77 km west of Alexandria, 2 March. Third record for Egypt.

Common Gull *Larus canus*
Port Said, 16 December 1994. Rare winter visitor. *A Riad*.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
Ras Abu Galum, Sinai, 3 January. A rare winter visitor. *D & S Robel*.

African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*
7, Abu Simbel, 21 November 1994; 2, Shallal, Aswan, 25 November 1994. *D Murdoch*. Abu Simbel, 10 April.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*
2, Sharm el Sheikh, south Sinai, 14 October 1994. Rare in Sinai. *A Grieve*.

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*
Zaranik, north Sinai, 17 October 1994. Very rare autumn visitor. *A Grieve*.

Dupont's Lark *Chersophilus duponti*
8, 48 km south of Marsa Matruh, 27 September-2 October 1994. *A Grieve*. Many, south and west of Marsa Matruh, 12-14 June.

Thick-billed Lark *Ramphocoris clotbey*
15, 48 km south of Marsa Matruh, 28 September 1994. *A Grieve*. Two, south of Marsa Matruh, 12 June, with three there, 14 June. Last recorded in 1969.

Temminck's Horned Lark *Eremophila biphola*
2, Abu Sir, 25 km south of Cairo, 27 February 1994; one there, 11 January. Possible southerly range extension. *R Hoath*.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*
north of Wadi Hagul, between Cairo and Suez, 30 March. First record for Egypt and the Western Palearctic. *A. Rosier*.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*
Sharm el-Sheikh: 30 December 1994, 11 January; 4, Naama Bay, 6 January. Scarce winter visitor, only three previous records from southern Sinai. *D & S Robel*.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
male, Sheikh Zweid, north Sinai, 30 March. Scarce passage migrant.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*
5 pairs, including a pair feeding young, near Abu Simbel, Lake Nasser, 2 May 1994. The first confirmed breeding in the Western Palearctic (see Baha el Din 1994); Abu Simbel, 23 November 1994. *D Murdoch*.

Cyprus Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe cypriaca*
Zaranik, north Sinai, 17 October 1994. Rare visitor. *A Grieve*.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*
Sharm el-Sheikh, 11 January. Eighth record and first in winter (cf. Baha el Din & Baha el Din 1995). *D & S Robel*.

Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax*
Male, Sharm el-Sheikh refuse dump, 9 Janury; male, between Sharm el-Sheikh and sewage farm, 10 Janury. Vagrant. *D & S Robel*.

Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*
2, Wadi Hagul, 4 March. Rare winter visitor.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*
1-3, Sidi Abd el Rahman, 30 September-3 October 1994; El Arish, north Sinai, 7 October 1994. Scarce passage migrant. *A Grieve*.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
male, 50 km west of Quseir, 13 April. Second record since 1984.

Pale Rock Sparrow *Carpospiza brachydactyla*
2, Bir Beida, 13 April.

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea*
female, 10 km east of El Arish, 30 March.

Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus*
Pair, Orabi Farm, 25 km east of Cairo, 17-19 October 1994. Rare winter visitor. *A Riad.*

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*
Montazeh Gardens, Alexandria, 25 December. Scarce winter visitor. *A Riad.*

ISRAEL

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*
Tel Aviv port, January. Third record. *per H Shirihai.*

Mascarene Shearwater *Puffinus atrodorsalis*
Record previously attributed to Little Shearwater *P. assimilis* at Eilat on 18 and 21 June 1992 (cf.Bull. 29:39 and Shirihai & Sinclair 1994) now considered referrable to this newly described taxon (Shirihai, Sinclair & Colston 1995) which is apparently locally abundant in the western Indian Ocean.

Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*
3, flying north over Arava Valley, 8 April. Formerly very scarce passage migrant. First recent record since demise of Birecik, Turkey population in 1989. *per H Shirihai.*

Black-headed Plover *Hoplopterus tectus*
Eilat, 11 April. One previous record from Jordan is the only other record for the Middle East. *H V Bellerby, K O Pierce.*

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichythaetus*
at least 2000, Bet She'an valley, last week of December 1994. Exceptionally high numbers. *per H Shirihai.*

Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
Eilat, 27 April. Second record, only previous occurrence was one trapped at Eilat in September 1984. *F Jiguet* (see photograph in *Birding World* 8(7):252).

Small Skylark *Alauda gulgula*
5 overwintered Eilat. *per H Shirihai.*

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
two overwintered Eilat. *per H Shirihai.*

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus japponicus*
one wintered Bet She'an valley in January-February. One reported, Shizafon, 60km north of Eilat, March. Up to 10 now regularly winter at Eilat. *per H Shirihai.*

Black Bush Robin *Cercothricas podobe*
Eilat: 23-26 March at least; 24-25 April. *E Dansette, K Mullarney/Sunbirder, H Shirihai.*

Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthoprymna*
at least two overwintered at Eilat; also, male, Wadi Schlomo, Eilat, 10-13 March; second-year male, Eilat, 17-21 March at least. *K Mullarney/Sunbirder, per H Shirihai.*

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*
two of dark morph, km 76 Arava Valley, 23 December 1994. First record of the so-called 'Basalt Wheatear' from Israel. *per H Shirihai.*

Menetries Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*
male, between Eilat and Ovda, 3 April. Very scarce passage migrant. V Bellerby, K O Pierce.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*
female, Newe Yam ponds, south of Haifa, 6 December 1994. First record for Israel. H Hovel.

JORDAN

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*
Aqaba, 19 April. Fourth record. *I J Andrews/Naturetrek.*

Tropicbird sp. *Phaethon sp.*
2, Aqaba, 14 April. No previous records of tropicbirds from Jordan. *A Schuster.*

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*
Aqaba, 26 January. *J Tafforeau.*

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*
10 flew west, Aqaba, 4 April. *A Schuster.*

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

230, Kafrayn dam, 9 April. Largest ever flock in Jordan. *R.F.Porter.*

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
49, Aqaba sewage works, 19 April. Largest flock ever recorded in Jordan. 4, same place, 8 June. *I J Andrews/Naturetrek, F Khoury.*

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
four pairs, Aqaba sewage works, 19 April. *I J Andrews/Naturetrek.*

Goshawk *Accipter gentilis*
Mobbing Bonelli's Eagle, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 27 February, with perhaps same bird, 10 March . Rare winter visitor, seven previous records, all in spring. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Shikra *Accipter badius*
two probables, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 9 March. No previous records from Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
Dana Wildlife Reserve: pair, 5 April; sub-adult, 25 April. Not known (as yet) to breed in this area. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*
at least 20 pairs, Dana Wildlife Reserve, April. This species urgently requires surveying in Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*
Suwayma resthouse, Dead Sea, 30 March. Unusually early record. *R. v d Vliet.*

Coot *Fulica atra*
six pairs with young, Azraq, 8 June. First confirmed breeding record. *F Khoury.*

Crane *Grus grus*
at least 500, Azraq area, 11 February. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*
Aqaba, 20-21 March. First record for Jordan but actually seen from Eilat (Israel).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
105, including 30 paired birds displaying and building nest scrapes, Bga'aweah. Possibly the only breeding site in Jordan. *R.F.Porter.*

White-tailed Plover *Chettusia leucura*
Azraq: six, 12 April; three pairs with one juvenile, 15 June. *I J Andrews/Naturetrek, F Khoury.*

Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus*
near Safawi, 15 April. *R.F.Porter.*

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
Dana Wildlife Reserve: 2, 27 February; 11-15 March. Third and fourth records for Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*
Pair breeding, Azraq, 15 June. Second breeding record. *F Khoury.*

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*
60, Wadi Rajil, 16 February; 160, between Burqu and Azraq, 22 February. Uncommon winter visitor. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
Amman, 1 April. First record of this escapee. *F Khoury.*

Scops Owl *Otus scops*
5 calling, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 26 February. Early record. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
3 calling males and two females, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 27-28 February. Early record. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*
two, northeast corner of Dead Sea, 9 April. Most northerly record in Jordan. *I J Andrews/Naturetrek.*

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*
total of 20, Wadi Selma/Wadi Hashad/As Safawi area, mid April; 14, Burqu' area, mid April. Pairs singing, displaying and nestbuilding. First evidence of breeding in Jordan. *I J Andrews/Naturetrek, R.F.Porter.*

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*
family parties, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 27 April & 24 May. First breeding records for Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
12, Azraq, 14 June. Possibly breeding. *F Khoury.*

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*
2, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 26 February. First record for Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*
Dana Wildlife Reserve, 26 February. Scarce and local winter visitor. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
10, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 11-17 March. Second record for Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*
33, Azraq, 10 February. Dana Wildlife Reserve, 11-15 March. Uncommon winter visitor. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*
large numbers wintered, Dana Wildlife Reserve, until last third of March e.g. 96, 10 March. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*
10, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 20 March. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*
4, of the dark morph, 50 km east of Al Safawi, 23 February. *M Evans/RSCN,* dark morph, southeast of Mafraq, 4 April. *A Schuster.*

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*
Pair, with female seen carrying food, Wadi al Mhash, 20 May. Breeding not previously recorded in Jordan. *F Khoury.*

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
four, Suwayma resthouse, Dead Sea, 30 March; Azraq, 2 April. Earliest records ever in Jordan. *R v d Vliet.*

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*
breeding at high density, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 21 April onwards. Second known breeding locality in Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Ruppell's Warbler *Sylvia ruepelli*
Qasr Amra, 7 April. Scarce passage migrant. *F Khoury.*

Menetries Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*
Qasr Amra, 7 April. Very rare passage migrant. *F Khoury.*

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*
3, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 1 May. Perhaps breeding (not previously known this far south). *M Evans/RSCN.*

Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*
breeding at high density, Dana Wildlife Reserve, April. Previously unknown to breed this far south. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax*
Male, Azraq, 12 February. Second record for Jordan, first was at Dana Wildlife Reserve (cf.Bull.34:37). *M Evans/RSCN.*

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
two, South Shuna, 9 April. Rare, especially in spring. *I J Andrews/ Naturetrek.*

Pale Rock Sparrow *Carpospiza brachydactyla*
two singing, 10km east of As Safawi, 13 April; total of 11, including pair displaying and pair carrying nesting material, Burqu' and Bga'aweah, mid April. Only one previous breeding record in Jordan. *I J Andrews/ Naturetrek, R.F.Porter.*

Dead Sea Sparrow *Passer moabiticus*
60, near Safi, 23 January. *J Tafforeau.*

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
male, Jarash, 2 April. Late record. *R v d Vliet.*

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
Male, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 8 February. Uncommon winter visitor. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus*
4, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 27 February. Up to 800 pairs were estimated breeding in Dana Wildlife Reserve in mid April, with at least one nest found. First breeding record for Jordan. *M Evans/RSCN.*

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

35, in six flocks, Dana Wildlife Reserve, 27-28 February, with some remaining until 15 March. Scarce winter visitor. *M Evans/RSCN.*

OMAN

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*
Salalah, 16 March. Scarce passage migrant. *G & V Thompson.*

SAUDI ARABIA

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
Yanbu, 2 December 1994. *J-O Hedin, K Rannikko.*

Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*
28,000 breeding pairs, Judaim, October 1994. This count represents twice that of 1993. *P Symens.*

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail: 13 November 1994; 2, 20 November 1994-15 January; 3, 16 January-4 February. *B S Meadows, P Symens.*

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
885, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail, 24 January. Largest flock ever recorded in Arabia. *P Symens.*

Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus*
drake, Riyadh, 8-10 May. Second record for Saudi Arabia. *I Saville.*

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*
Wadi Lakus, near Jebel al Lawz, 8 April 1994; Wadi Ash Shifa, 8 April 1994. *M C Jennings, H S A Yahya.*

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*
Malaki Dam, 15 September 1994. *J-O Hedin.*

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
exhausted juvenile, Raydah escarpment, near Abha, first week of October 1994 was picked up and taken into care at NWRC, Taif, hopefully to be released at Raydah in April; another, Wadi Maraba, 5-10 km north of Raydah escarpment, 11 October 1994. First and second records for Saudi Arabia and third and fourth for the Middle East (cf.Bull.34:33-44). *P Symens et al.*

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*
Riyadh, 14 July. First record for the Central region. *I Saville.*

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*
4-5, Al Sharkiyah agricultural development area, 50 km south-west of Jubail, November 1994-February 1995. *P Symens.* 3, 50 km west of Uray'irah, 13 January. *B S Meadows.* First wintering records from Eastern Province.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthrpoides virgo*
253, Medina airport, 14 September 1994. Additional to records already published from same period (cf.Bull.34:39) *J-O Hedin.*

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
170, Al Sharkiyah agricultural development area, 50 km south-west of Jubail, 21 January; still 28 there on 16 February. *P Symens.*

Pacific Golden *Plover Pluvialis fulva*
2, Wadi Al Lith, 10 November 1994. *J-O Hedin, K Rannikko.*

Sociable Plover *Chettusia gregaria*
Riyadh, 6-7 January. Three other recent records (1980 & 1989) from this area. *I Saville.*

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*
juvenile, Medina airport, 22 September 1994. *J-O Hedin, K Rannikko.*

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*
Medina airport, 22 September 1994; 15 km north of Medina, 22 September 1994. *J-O Hedin, K Rannikko.*

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*
Riyadh, 7 April. Second record for the central region in the last ten years. *I Saville.*

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*
Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail, 21 December 1994-5 January. *P Symens.*

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
12 pairs, Zakhuniyah island, October 1994. First breeding record for Saudi Arabia. *P Symens.*

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*
Riyadh, 1 January-23 April. First record in winter in this area. *I Saville.*

Striated Scops Owl *Otus brucei*
Found dead, Jubail, 18 December 1994; trapped, Deffi Park, Jubail, 9 February. *B S Meadows, P Symens.* First confirmed records from Eastern Province.

Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*
3, Yanbu, 2 October. First record for this locality. *B S Meadows.*

Arabian Woodpecker *Picoides dorae*
Wadi Milhah al Janubi, 70 km north of Medina, 1 October 1994, with male at nesthole there, 25 October 1994. Male, Anqara, 30 km south of Khamis Mushayt, 13 October 1994. *J-O Hedin.*

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*
Holiday Inn, Jubail, 22-25 December 1994. Apparently the first record for Saudi Arabia, the only previous record mentioned in the literature (Bundy & Warr 1980) having been subsequently withdrawn (Bundy et al. 1989). *B S Meadows, P Symens.*

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
Holiday Inn, Yanbu: 30 September 1994; 3 November 1994. First records for western Saudi Arabia. *J-O Hedin, K Rannikko.*

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
up to 6, Deffi Park, Jubail, December 1994-January 1995. *B S Meadows, P Symens.*

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
Male, Deffi Park, Jubail, 19 December 1994. *P Symens.*

Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Male, Deffi Park, Jubail, 22 December 1994. *P Symens.*

Yemen Thrush *Turdus menachensis*
As Soda, 14 October 1994. *J-O Hedin.*

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*
1-3, Deffi Park, Jubail, December 1994-January 1995. *P Symens.* Haii Al-Huwaylat, Jubail: 2, 14 January; 3 February. *B S Meadows.*

Shining Sunbird *Nectarinia habessinica*
two, Wadi Milhah al Janubi, 70 km north of Medina, 7 October 1994. *J-O Hedin.*

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*
20, near Al Hanakiyah, 90 km east of Medina, 28 October 1994, 18 & 25 November 1994. *J-O Hedin.* 700, Abu Hadriyah, 13 January. *B S Meadows.* at least 1000, Al Sharkiyah agricultural development area, 16 February. *P Symens.*

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Jubail, early December 1994-end February, with maxima of 16 at Holiday Inn and 12 at Deffi Park. *B S Meadows, P Symens.*

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
2, Light Industrial Park, Jubail, 22 December 1994. *B S Meadows.* several, Deffi Park, Jubail, December 1994-January 1995, max.6, 4 January. *P Symens.*

Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*
First-winter, Deffi Park, Jubail, 31 December 1994. First record for the Arabian peninsula. *P Symens.*

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*
Jubail, 9 & 18 December 1994. First records for this area. *B S Meadows.*

Desert Finch *Rhodopechys obsoleta*
near Al Hanakiyah: 3-4, 18 November 1994; 11-13, 25 November 1994. *J-O Hedin, K Rannikko.*

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
Light Industrial Park, Jubail, 27 December; same or different bird there 7-28 February at least. First record for the Arabian peninsula. *B S Meadows.*

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalus*
female, Deffi Park, Jubail, 22 December 1994. *P Symens.*

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*
100, Abu Hadriyah, 13 January. 70, Safwa, December 1994-January 1995. *B S Meadows.* at least 300, Al Sharkiyah agricultural development

area, 21 January, with at least 50 singing males there, 16 February. *P Symens.*

SYRIA

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*
Lake Jabbul, 12 November. *G Manners.*

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichythaetus*
correction to record previously listed (OSME Bull.33:41) locality is in Turkey, not Syria as stated. *per G Manners.*

TURKEY

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*
Burdur Gölü, 24 December 1994. Seventh record, first was as recently as 1983. *K.Boyla, A Tireli.*

Smew *Megus albellus*
Male and two females, Apolyont Gölü, 27 May. Third summer record, previously recorded at this season in 1969 and 1987. *G Magnin, M Yarar.*

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*
350, Burdur Gölü, 23 July. First exact count attempted at this locality in July. *M Yarar et al.*

Little Bustard *Tetrao tetrax*
Çamalti Tuzlasi, 5 February. Ninth record since 1966 and only fourth since 1982. *G Aydemir, G Eken & M Yarar.*

Hume's Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus (inornatus) humei*
Topkapi Palace gardens, Istanbul, 28 December 1994. Fourth record for Turkey, but first confirmed *humei. E Ebels.*

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*
10, Uzungöl Trabzoy, July. Only two other recent records, in 1987 and 1992. per *M. Yarar.*

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Records were submitted by *Colin Richardson* on behalf of the UAE Records Committee.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*
Kalba, 30 April; Fujeirah, 11 May. First and second records.

Persian Shearwater *Puffinus lhermeri lucidus*
907, past Ras Dibba, 23 June. Exceptional numbers.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*
Khor Dubai, 7 February. Second record, first was in late February 1990 (Richardson 1990).

Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
up to 12, Khor Dubai, until 15 March.

Little Crake *Porzana parva*
Emirates Golf Course, 29 March. Ninth record (fifth to eighth were at same locality in September 1994, cf.Bull.34:41).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
Al Ghar lake, 15 February. Third record; all in recent years.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
54, Murawah Island, 18 January; 25, Khor al Beidah, 3 March onwards.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*
509, Khor Dubai, 19 January.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*
Fujeirah, 6-19 May. Second record.

Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*
Sweihan, mid May. Second record and first inland.

Common Noddy *Anous stolidu*
probable, Ras Dibba, 16 June.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*
Al Ain, 12 February. Ninth record. Most recent, in September 1994, was also there (cf.Bull.34:42).

Little Swift *Apus affinis*
Al Wathba, 2 March. Seventh record.

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*
80, Al Ain, 26 February. Exceptional numbers.

Bar-tailed Desert Lark *Ammomanes cincturus*
3, Al Wathba, early April. First record since 1993.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewski*
Al Wathba, 23 April. Latest ever record in spring.

Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus*
60, Al Wathba, 1-15 March, with 30 until 4 April.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*
Arzanah Island, 21 January.

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus*
Al Wathba, 15 April; Emirates Golf Course, 16 April. Fifth and sixth records.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
Dibba, 13 February. Second record, first was in January 1987 (Richardson 1990).

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza brunniceps*
male, Emirates Golf Course, 18 April. Two previous records, in 1975 and 1990 are both assumed to relate to escapes.

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea*
Emirates Golf Course: 2, 29 March-1 April; 7 April; Al Jazeerah Khor, 15 April. Twelfth to fourteenth records.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
Hamraniyah, 4-8 March. Ninth record. Most recent were on Das Island in October 1994 (cf.Bull.34:44).

YEMEN

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*
1250, Katib Bay, 16 March. Large numbers. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
Perhaps nesting, Al Luhayya mangroves, 17 & 22 March. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*
4, one on nest, Al Luhayya and offshore islands, mid March. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
500, Ta'izz, 15 March. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

Gabar Goshawk *Melierax gabar*
Al Kadan, mid March. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
21, Tiqfash Island, 20 March. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*
Bar Baryd Island, 21 March. First record for Yemen. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus*
Common, Al Luhayya mangroves and Tiqfash Island, 17-22 March. *R Porter/BirdLife International.*

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Ornithological Society of the Middle East

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