



## ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

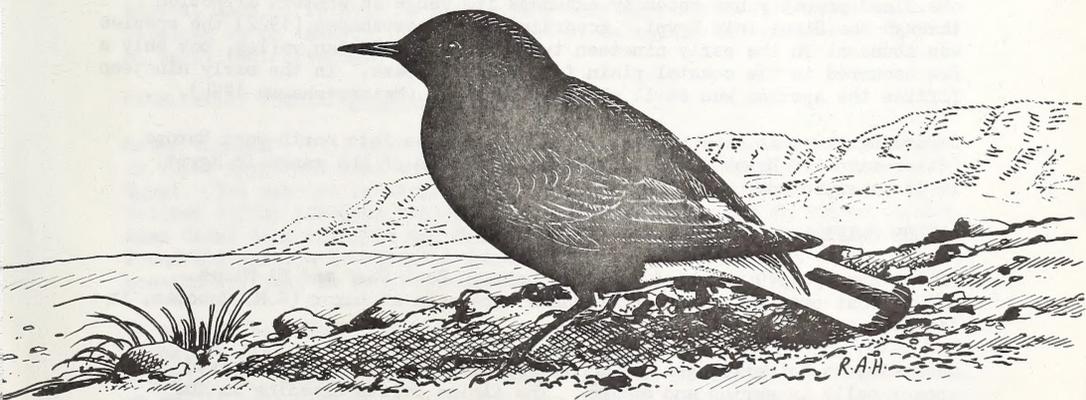
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This issue of the Bulletin sees a new 'Recent Literature' section which will appear annually and the Editors will welcome any comments from members on this and other features that could be incorporated into the Bulletin in the future. Members will be receiving a number of inserts with this issue, including our new car sticker and a free sample greetings card. Those of you who have received your first two copies of Sandgrouse will be pleased to know that the third volume is well under way and will appear later this year.



SOME INTERESTING ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS FROM EGYPT - P L Meininger & W C Mullie

From 1 January to 12 February 1979 and from 20 December 1979 to 27 January 1980 a Netherlands Ornithological Expedition visited Egypt with the objective to gather information on the significance of the Egyptian wetlands for wintering waterbirds. Participants of the first expedition were Jan van der Kamp, Bernard Spaans and the authors. Participants of the second expedition were the authors.

In this paper some interesting records of other birds than waterbirds are mentioned. Other results of the expeditions are published elsewhere (Meininger et al 1979, Meininger and Mullie 1979, Meininger et al 1980, Meininger and Mullie 1981).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

This species was recorded for the first time in Egypt on 12 November 1979, when 26 birds were seen near Suez. At the same place Collared Doves were present since then, their numbers varying between 25 and 50 (Sherif M Baha el Din, pers. comm.). We saw 25 birds near Suez on 4 January 1980. Many of these birds were displaying and it seems likely that a small resident population has been established here.

We also saw Collared Doves on three different sites on the northcoast of the Sinai-peninsula: on 5 and 6 January 1980 we counted a total of 21 birds at El Arish, on 7 January we saw five birds in a small palm oasis 14 km west of El Arish and on 8 January one bird was seen near Romani, a small village 110 km west of El Arish.

On 2 April 1980 two Collared Doves were seen in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, and on 10 April 1980 one more was seen elsewhere in Heliopolis (Sherif M Baha el Din, in litt.).

The Collared Dove is an abundant resident breeder in Israel (Meininger, pers. obs.) and probably has recently extended its range in western direction through the Sinai into Egypt. According to Meinertzhagen (1922) the species was abundant in the early nineteen twenties in the Jordan valley, but only a few occurred in the coastal plain from Haifa to Gaza. In the early nineteen fifties the species was still absent from Sinai (Meinertzhagen 1954).

Regarding the well known expansion of the species into north-west Europe (Stresemann and Nowak 1958), a further extension of the range in Egypt is to be expected.

ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*

On 18 January 1979 one bird was seen between Beni Suef and El Minya. Around that same date many individuals were seen at Luxor (S.M. Goodman, in litt.).

According to Meinertzhagen (1930) the species had only been observed occasionally in spring and autumn. The Alpine Swifts breeding in the Western Palearctic region all winter in Africa south of the Sahara, though the exact wintering areas are unknown (Moreau 1972). In north-west Africa the first spring migrants are seen in the beginning of March (Glutz von Blotzheim and Bauer 1980).

SWALLOW Hirundo rustica

The Egyptian subspecies H. r. savingii was abundant in all visited areas. According to Meinertzhagen (1930) the subspecies H. r. rustica is occasionally observed in midwinter. In the two winters we recorded a total of 24 of the latter: 21 January 1979 four between Idfu and Isna, 28 January 1979 two Lake Idku, 31 January 1979 eight Baltim, 11 February 1979 one Ismailiya, 2 January 1980 three Faiyum, 14 January 1980 one Baltim, 15 January 1980 two Baltim, 20 January 1980 one in the desert between Safaga and Qena and 22 January 1980 two Lake Nasser.

HOUSE MARTIN Delichon urbica

On 8 February 1979 we saw one bird on Lake Manzala between Dumyat and El Matariya. Meinertzhagen (1930) says that this species is absent in winter, early arrivals appearing about mid February.

RED-TAILED WHEATEAR Oenanthe xanthopyrna

Meinertzhagen (1930) mentions only a few records of this species in Egypt: 5 March 1928 in western Sinai and 23 February 1928 a pair at Quseir. Moreover there are three specimens in the British Museum labelled "Egypt" and dated February and March.

We saw and photographed a male on the pyramids of Giza on 9 January 1979 and three males on the same place on 22 December 1979.

BLACK WHEATEAR Oenanthe leucura

On 2 January 1979 Ben Dielissen (in litt.) saw and filmed a male near Na'ama (Sinai). The black band at the end of the tail and the absence of white at the end of the outer tail feathers was seen clearly. On 3 and 4 January 1980 Ben Dielissen saw again a male Black Wheatear at exactly the same place.

This species is a resident in southern France, Spain, Portugal and North-Africa, east to Tripoli in Libya. The only Egyptian record was a pair obtained on 28 January 1928 20 km west of Salum, in the extreme north-west of Egypt (Meinertzhagen 1930).

NILE VALLEY SUNBIRD Anthreptes metallicus

Meinertzhagen (1930) mentions the Nile Valley Sunbird as a rare resident in Upper Egypt and says that it is probably only a straggler to Lower Egypt. The species is at present a regular winter resident in Cairo from October to May (Greaves 1945) and has also been observed in winter in the Suez Canal Zone (Simmons and Hurrell 1951). Greaves and Tregenza (1937) found the species breeding as far north as Qena, and are not excluding the possibility that it is also breeding in small numbers in the Cairo district.

We saw the Nile Valley Sunbird in Upper Egypt at Aswan (19 January 1979 20 birds, 21 January 1980 18 birds) and at Luxor (21 and 22 January 1979 13 birds). In the Faiyum oasis, where the species had never been seen before, we saw it both winters in a garden near the village of Shakshouk: 11 January 1979 and 31 December 1979 two birds.

It was also frequently observed in Giza, where two or three birds were always present in flowering trees in the zoological gardens. At this place the species might breed as well, as displaying birds and a female carrying nest material were seen in March 1980 (Sherif M. Baha el Din, in litt.).

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

On 10 January 1980 we saw from a short distance two birds flying in eastern direction along the seashore near Port Said. According to Meinertzhagen (1930) the Raven occurs only in the coastal belt from Salum (Libyan border) to Burg el Arab (edge of the Nile Delta), where it is resident.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

One bird was seen at El Arish on 5 January 1980. Meinertzhagen (1930) mentions only eleven records from the Nile Delta, and no records from Sinai. Hubbard and Seymour (1968) mention the capture of a female at Port Said on 20 November 1966.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

This species possibly breeds in the extreme north of Sinai between El Arish and Rafa, and is not uncommon in winter throughout northern Sinai. In the Suez Canal area and in many parts of the Nile Delta they have been occasionally observed from November to March. (Meinertzhagen 1930).

Ben Dielissen (in litt.) saw two birds on 1 January 1980 near Nuweiba and six birds at Ofira on 3 January 1980 (Red Sea coast of Sinai). We saw six birds at El Arish on 6 January 1980 and eight birds on 19 January at Hurghada.

Another interesting observation is that of well established breeding populations of the House Crow *Corvus splendens* in several seashore communities along the Red Sea Coast and the Suez Canal. Details of this is given elsewhere (Meininger et al 1980).

It is clear marked changes in the Egyptian avifauna has occurred since Meinertzhagen's time, changes which are only now becoming known.

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OBSERVATIONS FROM LAKE MANYAS - Selim Somcag

Although many people have heard about the Bird Paradise National Park situated at the north-eastern corner of Lake Manyas, very few ornithologists realise that there is another breeding colony of comparable importance at the south-western tip of the lake. This colony, called Kabakadasi, lies on a part of the shore where a small river, Kocacay, joins the lake. This area is covered with willow woods and reeds offering a variety of food sources. Kabakadasi is smaller than the National Park and regularly contains important breeding populations of waterbirds. The following observations were made when E Somcag, H Erdegirmenci, B.Sirinoglu and I visited the area in June 1980.

On 15th and 16th June we counted 476 White Pelicans Pelicanus onecrotalus, 220 Pygmy Cormorants, Phalacrocorax pygmeus, 32 Spoonbills Platalea leucorodia, 29 Glossy Ibises Plegadis falcinellus, 17 Night Herons Nycticorax nycticorax, 16 Grey Herons Ardea cinerea, 4 Purple Herons Ardea purpurea, 1 Squacco Heron Ardeola ralloides and 8 Little Egrets Egretta garzetta. A pair of Spur-winged Plovers Vanellus spinosus were breeding with 8 black-winged Stilts Himantopus himantopus present, a colony of 75 Herring Gulls Larus argentatus and 10 Common Terns Sterna hirundo fishing over the river. Other birds seen included a Water Pipit Anthus spinoletta spinoletta, Reed Warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus, Savi's Warblers Locustella luscinioides, Black-headed Buntings Emberiza melanocephala and Corn Buntings Miliaria calandra.

On 17th and 18th June we visited the Bird Paradise National Park where we recorded White Storks Ciconia ciconia feeding in the fields, 6 Water Rails Rallus aquaticus, Turtle Doves Streptopelia turtur, 2 Scops Owls Otus scops heard calling at night, Roller Coracias garrulus, Syrian Woodpecker, Dendrocopos syriacus drumming, Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe, Nightingale Luscinia megarhynchos, Spanish Sparrow Passer hispaniolensis and Golden Oriole Oriolus oriolus. As it was not possible to view many of the breeding birds from the observation tower we hired a boat from a local fisherman and counted 16 Dalmatian Pelicans Pelecanus crispus, 54 Cormorants Phalacrocorax carbo, 332 Pygmy Cormorants, 84 Grey Herons, 6 Purple Herons, 254 Little Egrets, 363 Spoonbills, 253 Glossy Ibises, 54 Night Herons, 52 Squacco Herons and 2 Bitterns Botaurus stellatus.

#### AUTUMN MIGRATION OVER THE BOSPHORUS - Selim Somcağ

The following observations were made during the period 31st August to 4th October 1980 with the help of B. Valk and L. Schilteroord.

A total of 73,626 White Storks Ciconia ciconia were recorded, even though most of them had already passed through in late August, and 5,898 Black Storks Ciconia nigra were also seen. We counted 10,823 Buzzards Buteo buteo, with a peak of 1,927 on the 24th September and 8,940 Lesser Spotted Eagles Aquila pomarina with a peak of 1,507, also on 24th September. Only 3 Spotted Eagles Aquila clanga were positively identified. 5 Imperial Eagles Aquila heliaca were seen and on 6th September a White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla. 1,986 Honey Buzzards Pernis apivorus, 6,045 Levant Sparrowhawks Accipiter brevipes, 88 Sparrowhawks Accipiter nisus, 856 Short-toed Eagles Circus gallicus, 168 Booted Eagles Hieraetus pennatus, 211 Black Kites Milvus migrans and 136 Egyptian Vultures Neophron percnopterus were observed. Other raptors identified included 7 Marsh Harriers Circus aeruginosus, 6 Hen Harriers Circus cyaneus, 1 Montagu's Harrier Circus pygargus and 17 unidentified Harriers. 9 Griffon Vultures Gyps fulvus, 5 Long-legged Buzzards Buteo rufinus, 2 Red Kites Milvus milvus, 3 Goshawks Accipiter gentilis, 6 Kestrels Falco tinnunculus, 6 Lesser Kestrels Falco naumanni, 7 Red-footed Falcons Falco vespertinus, 7 Hobbies Falco subbuteo and 18 unidentified falcons complete the list of raptors. Interference from local Hobbies made an accurate assessment difficult.

Other migrating species recorded were 298 Grey Herons Ardea cinerea, 1 Purple Heron Ardea purpurea, 2 White Pelicans Pelecanus onecrotalus, 13 Cranes Grus grus, 206 Bee-eaters Merops apiaster, and in early October 2,135 Wood Pigeons Columba palumbus.

SNAILS IN THE LARDER OF A GREAT GREY SHRIKE - K Mienis

There are at least two good reasons why we know more about the Great Grey Shrike, Lanius excubitor Linnaeus, 1758, than about any other shrike. First of all its distribution is very large: North America (from Canada to Mexico), Europe, North Africa and large parts of Asia, and secondly, this shrike has the interesting habit of impaling its victims on thorns or spines (Holyoak, 1978). Both factors have lead to the publication of a large number of observations, containing a wealth of information concerning its food preference.

In Israel the Great Grey Shrike is commonly encountered in most of the country and insects (locusts and large beetles of the families Tenebrionidae and Carabidae), reptiles (skinks, lizards, geckos and small snakes), small rodents (Microtus guentheri, Meriones crassus and Jaculus jaculus) and birds (Inbar, 1976) have been recorded as prey species.

Recently Dr David Furth found, however, an animal species in a larder of Lanius excubitor which have not been recorded before in Israel or abroad. In February 1979 he found several landsnails impaled on the thorns of Rhus trispinosa in the valley of Wadi Qilt, near Ein el Qilt, between Jerusalem and Jericho. All the shells belonged to the Common field snail, Helix engaddensis, which is commonly encountered in Wadi Qilt especially after some rain. All the shells contained still the dried in remains of the snails, a sign that the shrike(s) did not eat them. The same larder contained also several insects, small birds and a gecko.

According to my data this seems to be the first case of "predation" on snails by the Great Grey Shrike. It is, however, doubtful whether it is really feeding on snails. More likely its passion for hunting is so large that even in periods it does not require food, it continues catching and impaling all small moving animals. In the Negev desert a Great Grey Shrike has been seen impaling in this way 15 lizards on the thorns of an acacia within one hour. It is therefore more likely that Lanius excubitor is catching snails in order to still its hunting instinct, rather than for food.

I would be very pleased to hear of any other record of snails encountered in larders of shrikes in general and of those in the Middle East in particular.

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WATER EXTRACTION AT AZRAQ - P.J. CONDER

Between 5th and 10th April 1981 I visited the Asraq Wetland Reserve in the Jordanian part of the Syrian Desert. Because of its exceptional interest and the desert areas around it has been studied by many groups of scientists. (For a short bibliography see Conder, 1981, Sandgrouse, 2:32). Recommendations have been made by various international agencies for procedures to safeguard its integrity. The Mountfort expeditions in the mid 1960's recommended that establishment of the Azraq Desert Reserve which include the marsh and the mudflat area. King Hussein made a declaration of intent to establish the Park but other events such as new highways to Riyadh, Damascus, Baghdad and the Gulf States through Azraq, as well as new towns, a new military airfield at Shishan, etc have shelved that idea. The Mountfort expeditions also recommended that an international biological station should be established, and Dr Bryan Nelson was its director until ousted by the Iraqis and since then the concept has been utterly inert. The Jordanian appended the Azraq Wetland Reserve to their ratification of the 'Ramsar' convention, and later declared 22km<sup>2</sup> of desert around Shaumari as the Azraq Desert Reserve in which they hoped to breed the Arabian Oryx Oryx leucorox in captivity for eventual return to the wild.

The gloomy news now is that even more water is being extracted from Azraq. For some years water had been pumped from Ain Qasiyeh, one of the two main springs which fed the marsh, and pumped to Azraq North whose water was being pumped to Irbid. Warnings had been given by visiting scientists that any further extraction would seriously affect the marsh. Since 1979, when I drew up the Management Plans on behalf of IUCN/WWF Joint Projects and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan, the remaining spring Ain Soda has been fenced off and water is being pumped to Amman and Irbid. The RSCN has protested but with no effect and, (in early April) as forecast, the marsh was virtually dry, with relatively few birds; a few areas with shallow water were densely packed with birds. I did not have time, since I was leading a tour, to look into Nelson's suggestion that there might be other springs in the marsh or to note anything other than the most obvious elements of this serious situation.

The marsh was dry in spite of a very heavy rainfall since August 1980; so much rain had fallen that the 60-70km of the mudflat was flooded for the first time since 1976, and we saw the extraordinary juxtaposition of dry marsh and, only 100m away in places, a vast shallow lake with Shelduck, Ruff, Glossy Ibis, Great Sand Plover and so on along the edges.

Prophets of doom are never very popular, but I can only see further deterioration of what was once a magnificent marshland area and an important resting and breeding place for a wide variety of birds. If springs can be found in other parts of the marsh perhaps something can be rescued, but I cannot see any chance in the foreseeable future of the Jordanian Government stopping water extraction in view of the enormous shortage in the country as a whole.

Even though Shaumari is mainly for mammals, I am sure that OSME members will be glad to know that the 18th arabian oryx calf to be born under the breeding programme arrived on 7th April 1981.

ADDITIONAL BREEDING RECORDS OF LITTLE SWIFT (APUS AFFINIS) AND CRETZSCHMAR'S BUNTING (EMBERIZA CAESIA) IN TURKEY - M van den Berg and R Damhuis

On 6th July 1979, we observed some small swifts which showed the characteristic white rump, short square tail and dark underparts of the Little Swift, east of Gaziantep. On searching the cliffs around which these birds were flying we discovered four nests. These were built on the open parts of the rocks and attached to each other. Only a few breeding sites for this species have been recorded in the South Coastlands and South-eastern Turkey.

On 10th July 1979 we were walking in the mountains near Tatvan when we observed a bunting which reminded us of a female Cretzschmar's Bunting, unfortunately the bird was shy and we did not see it properly. On 11th July at a different site near Tatvan we observed a male Cretzschmar's Bunting, the brown throat and moustachial stripe in combination with the blue-grey head and upper breast separated it from Ortolan Emberiza hortulana and Grey-headed Bunting Emberiza buchanani. We later saw the male feeding young but did not observe a female. These observations near Tatvan mean a considerable eastward expansion of the breeding range of this species.

NOTES FROM EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA - R Raby

Wadi Al-Miyah is an area of well vegetated sandy desert with regular escarpments, a chain of small sabkah evaporation pans and scattered settlements and oases, situated south of Nuayriyah. In recent years I have discovered four regularly occurring species, previously of migrant and vagrant status, present in this region.

Little Owl Athene noctua was found commonly on all suitable rocky escarpments and abandoned villages. I observed mating and 90% of my records were of pairs. There is only one previous record of this species for the region.

Caspian Plover Charadrius asiaticus is a common winter visitor from November to March, feeding on small pools between Al Hussay and Al Qulayyib, and following heavy rains birds could be found on evaporation pans in the area. They have only been recorded as a passage migrant in the past.

Finsch's Wheatear Oenanthe finschii was observed regularly on the edges of small evaporation pans in the west of the area. It has been noted only as a winter vagrant before, possibly due to confusion with Mourning Wheatear Oenanthe monancha.

Grey Hypercolius Hypercolius ampelinus was found for three successive winters from November to mid-February in palm groves in the north-east corner of Nata Oasis. Previously only recorded as a vagrant.

Also in the Eastern Province I recorded a winter male Brambling Fringilla montifringilla on 1st and 2nd December 1980, 30kms east of Nuayriyah. This species has not been recorded in the Eastern Province before and is a rare winter visitor to nearby Kuwait.

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#### RECENT EGYPTIAN REPORTS

Sherif Baha el Din has written with some interesting and unusual reports from near his home in Cairo and along the Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts. In the vicinity of Cairo he has recorded Caspian Plover Charadrius asiaticus on passage in April 1980 and has also found Senegal Thick-knee Burhinus senegalensis breeding on rooftops there. The Red Avadavat Amandava amandava appears to be quite common in the Cairo area nowadays and it was noted with fledged young in November 1980. This oriental species was introduced into Cairo many years ago but nothing much has been heard of it until now. The Collared Dove Streptopelia decaocto was seen for the first time in Egypt (by Sherif) at Suez on 13th November 1979, when quite a number were present. He recorded the species for the first time in Cairo on 2nd April 1980 and it has now been seen in several other places in the country. The closely related African Collared Dove Streptopelia roseogrisea is a resident of the Jebel Elba region in the south-east of Egypt. Other notable records from Suez have been Terek Sandpiper Xenus cinereus and Roseate Tern Sterna dougallii in May and Lesser Sand Plover Charadrius mongolus and Steppe Eagle Aquila rapax in June last year. On the Red Sea coast Sherif reports Little Green Heron Butorides striatus (Aug 1979), Sooty Falcon Falco concolor (June 1980) and Sooty Gull Larus hemprichii (also June 1980) all at Hurghada (27°N). The Indian House Crow Corvus splendens has occurred on the Red Sea at Ras Gharib (28°N) and Safaga (26°N) in August 1979 and June 1980 respectively, Meininger et al (1980). His most recent reports from the Red sea include a flock of 44 Shelduck Tadorna tadorna on 11th December 1980 at Suez (this is the first occurrence on the Red Sea coast of Egypt known to Sherif); an Egyptian Goose Alopochen aegyptiacus appeared at Hurghada on 30th January this year and 20 Swift Terns Sterna bergii were seen there in late January and early February - a species not previously thought to winter in the north of the Red Sea. On the Mediterranean coast the cliff

nest of a Raven Corvus corax was found in September 1979, 25km west of Matruh. Sherif took part in a raptor count in October 1980 at Suez with Peter Meininger, the results are interesting (over 10,000 raptors in 7 days) and will be published in Sandgrouse.

#### RECENT ISRAEL REPORTS

Visiting ornithologists to Israel have recorded some interesting species this spring including Shy Albatross Diomedea cauta, Wedge-tailed Shearwater Puffinus pacificus and Black Bushchat Cercotrichas podobe which are new for the Western Palearctic, and an inland record of Red-billed Tropicbird Phaethon aethereus at the Dead Sea.

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

#### LANDSNAILS AS FOOD OF BIRDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I am currently working on a review of the predators of landsnails living in the Middle East. Among these predators are many birds for example storks, sand partridges, bustards, plovers, stone curlews, cream-coloured coursers, gulls, little owls, Smyrna kingfishers, bulbuls, shrikes, rock and all other thrushes, starlings and all the crows. Records in the literature are scarce and most data in the hands of birdwatchers do not reach malacologists. Therefore I would be very pleased if I could receive any data concerning predation on landsnails carried out by birds in the Middle East. I would appreciate also receiving any snails or snail remains (a piece of shell of 2-3 mm is often already enough to enable a rough identification) encountered in crops, gizzards, pellets and faeces. Records used in future articles will be fully acknowledged. Material and information can be sent to Henk K Mienis, Zoological Museum, Mollusc Collection, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Those unable to send mail to Israel can write to me at: M Mienis, Corn. Haringhuizenlaan 37, 1679 XR - Midwoud, Holland.

Henk K Mienis

#### BIRDS OF EGYPT

In collaboration with the Egyptian Wildlife Service, The Holy Lane Conservation Fund and the Ornithological Society of the Middle East (OSME) we are collecting all data on the birds of Egypt (including the Sinai peninsula). The aim is to compile an up to date "Checklist of the Birds of Egypt" in the future.

We would appreciate receiving any unpublished records or other suitable material for inclusion in the work.

Ornithologists intending to visit Egypt are requested to contact us, so that we can send them standard forms for the "Atlas of Breeding Birds" survey.

The material collected will also be used for summarizing data on the status of birds in Egypt for "Birds of the Western Palearctic". Contributions will be fully acknowledged.

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The Netherlands

P.L. Meininger  
Grevelingenstraat 127  
4335 XE Middelburg  
The Netherlands

#### REVIEW

The Birds of Oman - M Gallagher and M Woodcock, Quartet Books Ltd 1980  
328 pages, 120 col. pl., 12 photos, £37.50

In the wake of the oil boom which has opened up the Middle East to many visiting, or temporarily resident, European ornithologists, we are likely to see the publication of many books on the birds of this region. Virtually the first in the field is The Birds of Oman.

Oman, an independent sultanate in eastern Arabia, lies at the junction of three zoogeographical regions, has its own resident avifauna of particular interest and straddles the migration route between Asia and Africa with its seas attracting appreciable numbers of sea birds.

The book deals with the country's climate and geographical regions and has chapters on its ornithological history, its differing and varied habitats, its breeding birds, migrants and sea birds. The African and Indian connections are described.

The main body of the book is a systematic list of over 380 species. Each species (most of which are illustrated) is given a brief world distribution, a one or two line description of its Oman status and occurrences and three-quarters of the text is taken up by a description of the bird, its biological niche and its calls. It is here my main criticism of the book would fall in that the opportunity appears to have been missed to give the reader a fuller description of the birds' 'Oman' setting and significance. Some of the inclusions in the list are also rather curious; page 242, for instance, includes three thrushes (all illustrated) 'not yet reported in Oman'.

Martin Woodcock's illustrations are generally pleasing and capture the jizz of the bird although for some tastes the plates will appear too clinical. His touch with raptors and some of the warblers is also less than sure.

An appendix at the end of the book contains a checklist of 'admitted' species.

This is a handsome book of coffee-table proportions and will clearly be a necessary possession for any ornithologist visiting, residing or interested in Oman.

The book is published by Quartet Books Ltd of 27/29 Gooch Street, London, W1P 1FD. The price is somewhat high at £37.50.

Don Parr

PHEASANTS IN ASIA 1979 C Savage (ed) World Pheasant Association 1980  
116 pages. £8.50

The World Pheasant Association has published the Proceeding of the First International Pheasant Symposium which was held in Katmandu in November 1979. It is attractively produced with many text figures, drawings and photographs. Papers include status assessments of pheasants in Nepal, Pakistan and the Himalayas and reviews recent fieldwork from those and other countries. Copies of this publication can be obtained from W.P.A., Harraton Square, Church Lane, Exning, Suffolk, price £8.50 (incl.postage).

A Second International Symposium is planned for September 1982 in Kashmir.

Don Parr

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### Accommodation in Turkey

The Hon H.J.H. Tollemache has offered members of OSME the use of his house in Turkey for short holidays. The house is situated near Bodrum, on the beach near Bitez Koy, has two double bedrooms and is available at a small charge. For further details write to the owner at Chicholme House, Robertson, Hawick, Roxburgh, Scotland.

##### ICBP/IWRB Pelican Research Group

The co-ordinator of the ICBP/IWRB Pelican Research Group will receive with pleasure any observation (breeding, wintering, migration) of Pelecanus crispus and Pelecanus onocrotalus (number, date and location) in the Middle East. A special request is made for data on the breeding colonies in Turkey. Since 1975 the co-ordinator was not able to find any published data on these colonies.

Every information will be answered personally.

The Co-ordinator : Dr A.J. Crivelli  
PO Box 6015  
Reynolda Station  
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109  
USA

##### ISRAEL RAPTOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The I.R.I.C. has issued the first of a series of publications concerning birds of prey: The Torgos (Vol. 1. No. 1. December 1980). The issues will be produced three times a year and are written in Hebrew with English summaries attached. The articles are not necessarily confined to matters relating to raptors in Israel and will cover a wide range of interests in a world-wide context.

For further information contact: Yossi Leshem, I.R.I.C., Har Gilo Field Study Centre, Sak Naul, Jerusalem, ISRAEL.

### SANDGROUSE

Because of the delay in the production of Sandgrouse Vols 1 and 2, some members have, understandably, become a little confused as to what issues they are entitled to. The first volumes of Sandgrouse will be issued as follows-

- Vol 1; Published December 1980: Free to all members who have paid a 1978 and 1979 subscription.
- Vol 2; Published March 1981: Free to all members who have paid the full subscription for 1980 (£3.50)
- Vol 3, To be published late 1981: Free to all members who have paid the full subscription for 1981 (£5.00)

After Volume 3 it is planned to publish one volume each year and those members paying the full subscription for that year will receive it free. Members also receive two issues of the Bulletin free for each years subscription. The Society will prepare special publications from time to time, some of which will be issued free and others will be made available to members at a reduced price.

Additional copies of Sandgrouse Vols. 1 and 2 can be purchased from the Sales Officer at £5.00 each or £9.00 for both issues (post free).

### 1981 SUBSCRIPTIONS

In order to ensure that publication of Sandgrouse Vol 3 is not delayed, members whose 1981 subscriptions are still unpaid should send their remittances without further delay. The new rate is £5.00 plus a £2.00 airmail surcharge if required.

### 1980 ACCOUNTS

Copies of the proposed 1980 Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1980 are enclosed with this bulletin. Please note that to give a more accurate impression of the Society's financial state as at the end of the year, the expected costs of both Sandgrouse 1 and Sandgrouse 2 have been provisioned for, although the invoices for both these journals were not received until 1981.

### GIROBANK TRANSFERS

The Society now has a Girobank account. Anyone wishing to pay their subscription, or any other amount, to the Society through the Giro system should make a note of the number of our Girobank account:- 55 019 4207. Overseas members who are able to credit a UK Giro account through their own national giro system should ensure that any transfers are in Sterling, to the required amount. Alternatively transfers can be made in your own currency but in such cases it is essential that you add 25% to cover Giro and exchange charges.

ADVERTISEMENT

(Advertisements may be placed in this bulletin by OSME members at a charge of £1 per line)

THE BIRDS OF SAUDI ARABIA : A CHECKLIST by MICHAEL JENNINGS. (1981, ISBN 0 9507405 0 0)

Up to date information on the status and distribution of the 413 species which have occurred in Saudi Arabia and notes on a further 42 species which have been mentioned in the literature but which are 'rejected'. Includes much of relevance to nearby regions. Four general maps, 117 breeding distribution maps and habitat notes for most of the 150 or so breeding species. A few line drawings by Dr C.J.F. Coombs, full bibliography, comprehensive gazetteer and an Arabic introduction. 100 pages. Cost £6.00 plus 30p postage (or £1.00 Airmail). Obtainable from the author at 63, Blandford Road, Chiswick, London, W4. (Or credit Giro account 50 851 7206. (Cheques to be made payable to 'M.C. Jennings' not 'OSME').

A List of North Yemen Birds. Michael Jennings has prepared a list of North Yemen birds following a brief examination of published material. It also includes some species seen recently during visits by, for example R.F. Porter and N.R. Phillips. The list which is cyclostyled can be obtained from OSME Sales, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, England. Price 50p including postage and packing.

OSME CAR STICKER

The Society has produced what must be one of the most exclusive car stickers to be found anywhere in the Middle East. The Society emblem appears on a sandy background, A free sticker is enclosed with this bulletin. Be sure to display it prominently on your car, motorcycle or private yacht and turn heads from Thrace to Kabul.

NB. The sticker is the 'atmospheric' type, it is not sticky and neither does it require adhesive. To fix it to any glass surface you should thoroughly clean an area on the inside of the glass, making sure that it is dry and free from grease. Remove the backing paper and press the sticker onto the glass, rubbing it down firmly until all the air bubbles are removed.

OSME GREETINGS CARDS

Enclosed with this bulletin is one of our greetings cards. These cards illustrate Western Reef Herons Egretta gularis, Blackstart Cercomela melanura, Crowned Sandgrouse Pterocles coronatus and Black-eared Wheatear Oenanthe hispanica, and they are available in an assorted pack of ten cards for 60p (incl postage) from the Sales Officer. (Europe £1.00 and outside Europe £1.80 to cover the cost of airmail).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to Rob Hume for the vignettes of Black Wheatear Oenanthe leucura and Great Grey Shrike Lanius excubitor.

