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OSME

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THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Photo above: Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*, Harod valley, Israel, 7 June 2013. © *Amir Ben Dov*

Cover photo: Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, 30 November 2013. © *Phil Roberts*

Turkey Bird Report 2007–2011

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(COMPILERS)

This report, covering the years 2007–2011, has been produced jointly by GMK, MÖ, ME and AA together with Kerem Ali Boyla, and is the third such to be co-edited by an Anglo-Turkish team, following the last two reports (*Sandgrouse* 25: 8–31, 30: 166–189). The increase in the number of in-country birdwatchers submitting records to the report, noted in the last two compilations, has been maintained, as has the number of records of rarities being documented photographically. This is the first such report to contain a selection of such photos; many others can be found on the Trakus website www.trakus.org. In contrast, reports from visiting foreign birdwatchers, although frequently posted on the internet, are now rarely submitted, yet these latter are still welcome.

Highlights of the present report include the first records in Turkey of the following eight species: Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*, Shikra *Accipiter badius*, Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*, Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*, Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*, Buff-bellied Pipit *A. rubescens japonicus*, Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha* (record dating from 1998) and Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*, while the first records of the following taxa, currently treated by us as subspecies, were also made (or came to light) during the period: *Sterna hirundo longipennis* (Common Tern), *Motacilla flava leucocephala* (White-headed [Yellow] Wagtail), *M. citreola calcarata* ([Black-backed] Citrine Wagtail), *Oenanthe lugens warriae* (Basalt Wheatear) and *Lanius excubitor pallidirostris* (Steppe Grey Shrike). Nevertheless, the status of the last-named is somewhat controversial: it having been variously treated as a subspecies of an expanded *L. excubitor* (as we conservatively elect to do here), of a more restricted *L. meridionalis*, or as a species in its own right, while even other treatments appear defensible (Olsson *et al* 2009). In addition, the reports of Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* presented here, documented photographically, represent the first unambiguous records in Turkey. Furthermore, additional reports of the

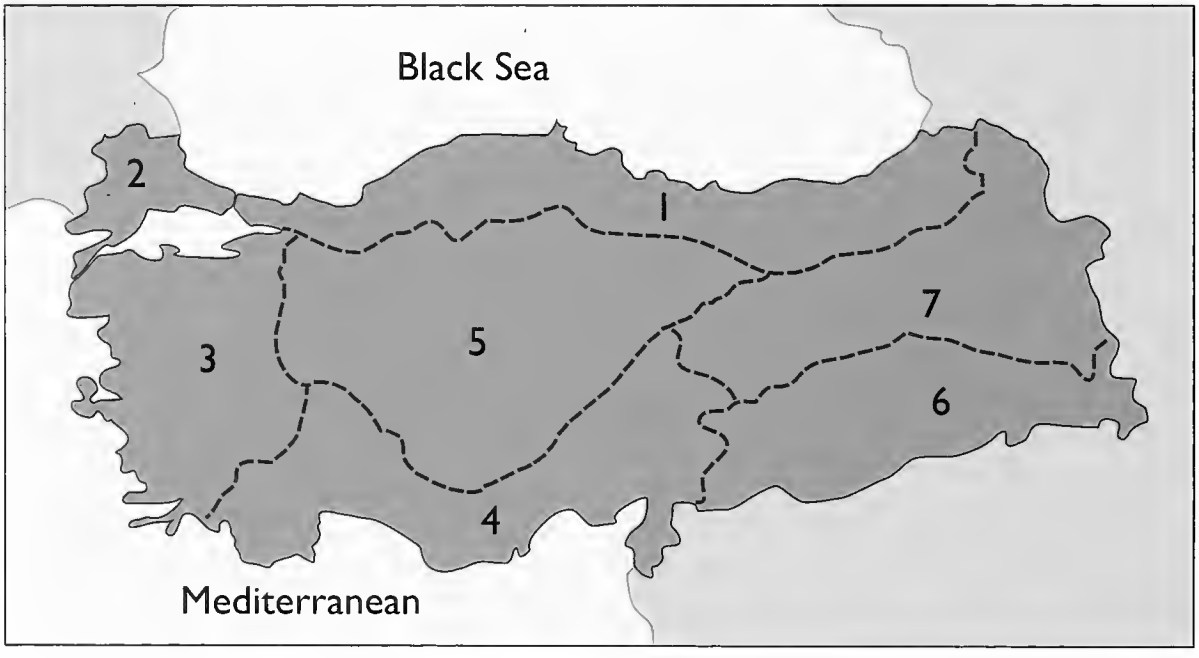

Figure 1. Map of Turkey showing the seven regions used in the Turkey Bird Report. 1. Black Sea Coastlands, 2. Thrace, 3. Western Anatolia, 4. Southern Coastlands, 5. Central Plateau, 6. South-East, 7. East.

following species—Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis* and Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*—were also received, but insufficient documentation is available to advocate their acceptance onto Turkey's bird list. The following additional records of special interest are presented here: the largest numbers of Bewick's Swans *Cygnus columbianus* in Turkey (and the Middle East), many additional records of Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*, the 5–8th records of European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*, the second to fourth records of Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*, at least two records of Corncrake *Crex crex* apparently breeding, the third to sixth records of Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, the second to fourth records of Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, the second to fourth records of Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*, confirmation of a comparatively sizeable population of Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* in Southern Coastlands, the first definitive breeding record of Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*, the second records of Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*, Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana* and Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*, the seventh record of Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax*, the third to fifth records of Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, the first modern-day (post 1966) records of Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* and the second record of Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*.

Publication of a comprehensive avifauna (Kirwan *et al* 2008a) around the same time as the last of these reports provides a sound basis for this and future reports. We do not intend to use the Turkey Bird Report to update all facets of the book, but we note papers like that of Brehme (2011) that have provided new extreme dates for migrants, among other records, *eg* for Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* and Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*. In addition, Hering & Buckley (2013) provided details of the first confirmed records of breeding by White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* and Özkan (2011) that of the first nesting record of Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, among many other novel breeding data from the montane region of Thrace.

Figure 1 shows the regions of Turkey as employed in this report. Records supported by photographic evidence are indicated by 'photo'. The following species, formerly of frequent appearance in these reports, do not appear in this compilation for a variety of reasons, as follows: Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (range and status not subject to recent refinement), Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (winter distribution well known; no summer records during the period), White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* (range and status well understood), Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* (status well understood, but breeding records should be documented appropriately), Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (range well known), Steppe Eagle *A. nipalensis* (breeding and winter records should be documented), Greater Spotted Eagle *A. clanga* (status well understood), Great Bustard *Otis tarda* (range now largely restricted to central and especially eastern areas, see Karakaş & Akarsu 2009), Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* (regular passage migrant, especially in autumn, through the eastern third of the country, rarer further west), Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* (status well understood), Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* (status well known), Cyprus Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe cypriaca* (many records during the period from typical south-coast localities), Pied Wheatear *O. pleschanka* (status now largely elucidated, but definite breeding records should be documented), Red-tailed Wheatear *O. xanthoprymna* (breeding status well known, winter records should be documented), Iraq Babbler *Turdoides altirostris* (restricted to the Birecik region, where numbers appear to be increasing and spreading along the Euphrates) and Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* (confined to one small area of İstanbul, where up to ten birds were seen during the period).

The next report will cover the period 2012–2016 and records are now requested. Photographs for inclusion would be especially welcome. Contributors may either publish their pictures at www.trakus.org or www.ebird.org, and submit their sightings to www.

kusbank.org or www.ebird.org. These online data tools are actively managed and revised by the authors. Observers can also send photographs with records or list those species for which they are available so that they may be requested at a later date. Material should be sent to any one of the editors or preferably by e-mail: gmkirwan@aol.com.

Caucasian Black Grouse *Tetrao mlokosiewiczi*

Locally scarce or not uncommon resident at subalpine elevations in the Pontic mountains, eastern Black Sea Coastlands. Apparently most common on, and perhaps primarily restricted to the northern slopes of the north ridge (which receives most precipitation). Distribution centred on slopes with substantial dwarf *Rhododendron* scrub cover below alpine herb zone (Atkinson *et al* 1995). Western limits of range remain unclear (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). Many new sites recently discovered through targeted fieldwork (Isfendiyaroglu *et al* 2007) and computer modelling has also been used (Gottschalk *et al* 2007) in an attempt to more accurately delimit the species' range and potential population in Turkey, which is impacted, and perhaps threatened, by habitat dereliction and cover reduction through grazing. There is insufficient historical information to assess whether the population is stable. Records away from well-known sites of Sivrikaya and Cam Gecidi are presented.

Black Sea Coastlands: Posof: 22 May 08 (R Gül *et al*); 9 May 09 (E Çağlayan); 26 May 09 (F Akarsu). Ovit Dağı, Rize, 24 Apr 09 (K Karşıl). Araklı, Trabzon: 5, 26 Jun 09 (K Kahraman); 8 May 10 (H Kahraman).

Caspian Snowcock *Tetraogallus caspius*

Not uncommon but localised resident in montane areas (generally above 2400 m asl in summer) in eastern third of Turkey, west to main Taurus, but precise limits there unclear (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). Only records away from regularly visited Sivrikaya (Black Sea Coastlands) and Demirkazık/Aladağlar (Southern Coastlands) areas are presented.

Black Sea Coastlands: Şavşat, Artvin, 2, 16 Jun 08 (E Çağlayan).

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

First recorded as recently as 1983 but now apparently regular winter visitor, usually in very small numbers, principally to western two-thirds of Turkey. Five counts exceeding 100 during the period under review are exceptional. Records from all regions, but just one each in South-East and East (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: 106, 22 Feb 08 (İ Çelikoba); 2, 31 Jan 10 (K Kahraman); 4, 1 Feb 10 (A Atahan *et al*). 4, Karasu, Sakarya, 8 Feb 10 (S Bekir *et al*).

Thrace: Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul: 3, 14 Jan 07 (B Bilgen); 3, 4–9 Feb 07 (Ö Sözer *et al*; photo); 9, 6 Jan 08 (KA Boyla *et al*). Meriç delta: 11 Feb 07 (ÜN Başaran *et al*); 25, 26 Jan 08 (B Akyıldırım, E Bacak *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223); 11 Dec 08 (R Gül); 432, 30 Jan 11 (O Mülayim *et al*); 6, 10 Dec 11 (B Muhtar). İğneada, 19 Jan 09 (Ö Necipoğlu *et al*; photo).

Western Anatolia: Denizli, 18 Jan–6 Feb 10 (Ü Özgür; photo).

Southern Coastlands: Göksu delta: 20, 7–9 Jan 07 (M Ullman *et al*; *Birding World* 20: 12); 21, 20 Jan 07 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19); 21 Dec 07 (R Gül). Burdur Gölü: 4, 26 Jan 08 (T Yılmaz; photo); 7, 4 Mar 09 (Ö Gürgey, T Yılmaz; photo); 22 Jan 11 (L Aktay *et al*).

Central Plateau: Hirfanlı Barajı: 102, 20 Jan 08 (B Demirci); 140, 9 Feb 08 (B Demirci *et al*); 30, 20 Dec 08 (G & H Welch); 114, 25 Jan 09 (B Demirci *et al*; photo). Sarıyar Barajı: 52, 27 Jan 08 (G Gençoğlu); 12, 2 Jan 11 (H Welch); 7, 20 Nov 11 (C Özcan). Kapulukaya Barajı,

Kirikkale, 4 Feb 08 (B Demirci; photo). 12, Mogan Gölü, 21 Dec 08 (G & H Welch, B Demirci *et al*). 2, Balıkdamı, 27 Dec 08 (G & H Welch).

East: Van Gölü, 10 Dec 10 (S Karaca photo). Second record from East.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

Vagrant. No records during the period, but more details concerning the movements of a bird (the eighth record in Turkey) that was tracked using satellite telemetry from its breeding grounds in north-central Siberia to the Middle East, and which briefly passed through eastern Turkey in late autumn 2006 (see Kirwan *et al* 2008b), have been published recently (Romanov & Pospelov 2010).

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

Rare winter visitor to western two-thirds of Turkey, with fewer than 70 records since 1966, exceptionally in very large numbers.

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 26 Jan 10 (M Erturhan; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186). 5, Sarıkum, Sinop, 16 Feb 10 (F Karahan; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186).

Thrace: Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul: 3, 6 Jan 08 (S Kendir; photo) with 2 still present, 10 Jan 08 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223); 4, 27 Jan 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu).

Western Anatolia: Gediz delta, 17 Feb 08 (Z Kurnuç; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186).

Central Plateau: Ankara Ovası, 8 Mar 08 (B Demirci; photo).

East: 5, Kuyucuk Gölü, Kars, 28 Apr 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223); exceptionally late.

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

Local breeder in moderate numbers in lowland wetlands of Southern Coastlands, and in tiny numbers at some wetlands on Central Plateau and in East, where seemingly almost extinct. Mainly a summer visitor but has overwintered. Status uncertain in peripheral localities. During period considered here, almost restricted to single location.

Southern Coastlands: Göksu delta: 3, 14 May 07 (KM Olsen *et al*); 17 May 07 (G Magnin); 5 Jul 07 (S Bekir); 16, 23 Sep 07 (E Opperman); 10 including 8 chicks, 12 May 08 (M Langman *et al*); 7, 17 Apr 09 (R Gül); 5, 11 May 09 (M Langman *et al*); 3, 12–28 May 09; 10+ including 2 chicks, 7 Jun 09 (P Alfrey, D Spittle); 3, 1 Jul 09 (U Yörükoğlu); 6, 15 Apr 10 (R Gül); 2, 23 Apr 10 (S Özgünlü); 10 May 10 (M Langman *et al*); 20 Jun 10 (Ö Necipoğlu); 9 May 11 (M Langman *et al*); 4, 10 May 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu); 2, 26 May 11 (KA Boyla); 2, 1 Sep 11; 8, 4 Sep 11 (G Güven).

East: near Edremit, Van Gölü, 2 Jul 08 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 99).

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Uncommon winter visitor, principally to coasts, in western two-thirds of the country. Rarely inland, but recorded twice in East in spring. Status recently reviewed by Karakaş (2008). However, records from South-East and East require documentation, in order to more effectively establish this species' presence in those regions, and those records listed from South-East and East here should be regarded as unproven for now.

Black Sea Coastlands: 7, Rize harbour, 5 Jan 08 (Ü Öztürk; Karakaş 2008). 6, Yeşilırmak delta, 19 Jan 08 (N Yavuz *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223, where erroneously stated to have involved seven birds). Sarıkum, Sinop: 6, 16 Apr 95 (Karakaş 2008), has not previously been mentioned in these reports; 3, 20 Jan 09; 20 Mar 09 (F Karahan). Filyos delta, Zonguldak: 2, 1 Feb 09 (A Atahan *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 31: 219); 26 Jan 10 (M Erturhan). 21, Bartın, 1 Mar 09 (V

Çukadar, M Uyan). Kızılırmak delta: 28 Nov 93; 17 Feb 02 (Karakaş 2008), have not previously been mentioned in these reports; 5, 15 Mar 09 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 219). Karasu, Sakarya, 4 (3 females, 1 male), 31 Jan 10 (M Bozdoğan *et al*); 2, 24 Nov 11 (B Bilgen).

Thrace: Meriç delta, 26 Jan 08 (B Akyıldırım, E Bacak *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223). Several, İğneada, Feb 09 (A Karataş). Hersek lagoon, Yalova: 4, 9 Jan 10 (F Bülbül); up to 2, 30 Jan–6 Feb 10 (T Gözükara, AS Gökçe). Up to 6, Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul, 24–30 Jan 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo). Kıyıköy, Vize, 30 Jan 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu).

South-East: Female, Kabaklı Barajı, 30 Nov 06 (Karakaş 2008), has not previously been mentioned in these reports. Cınar-Göksu Barajı: 5, 5 Nov 98; 7, 22 Apr 99 (Karakaş 2008; note correction to numbers and dates in Kirwan *et al* 2003). Bismil: male, 11 Mar 03; 2 males, 1 female, 5 Jan 04; 2 males, 3 females, 19 Jan 04 (Karakaş 2008), have not previously been mentioned in these reports.

East: 3, Erciş, Van Gölü, 28 Mar 10 (A Ertan). 3, Çakırbey Köyü, Van Gölü, 28 Mar 10 (A Ertan).

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Previously considered a vagrant (Kirwan *et al* 2008), but perhaps best regarded as a scarce and local visitor to northern coasts. Tenth to 24th records in Turkey, although some duplication might be involved. All records have been since 1975, when the species first bred on the Ukrainian Black sea coast; the population reached over 1000 pairs in the mid 1990s and was still increasing and expanding in 2000 (*Dutch Birding* 23: 354). Photos appear to confirm that the subspecies involved in Turkey is nominate *mollissima*.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: male, 21 Apr 07 (photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19); male, 18–19 Aug 07 (photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 17, 19; Kirwan *et al* 2008a); 2 females, 25 Aug 08 (N Yavuz *et al*; photo); 2, 17 Aug–20 Sep 09 (H Firat; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101); 26 Feb 10 (A Atahan *et al*). İzmit bay, 6 Oct 07 (B Bilgen, E Yoğurtçuoğlu; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19; erroneously listed as 7 Oct in Kirwan *et al* 2008a). Karasu, Sakarya: 3 (1 male, 2 females), 20 Jan 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223); 2 Mar 08 (B Bilgen); 8 (4 males, 4 females), 31 Jan 10 (S Kendir). Riva, İstanbul: 2 males, 31 Jan–30 May 09 (O Mülayim *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 31: 219); male, 10 Jan–14 Jun 10 (KA Boyla, E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo); 19 Nov 10 (B Bilgen); male, 16 Jan 11 (O Mülayim); male, 3–6 Feb 11 (A Karataş *et al*; photo); 8 May 11 (C Gezgin); male, 19 Sep 11 (KA Boyla, GM Kirwan *et al*); 19 Nov 11 (B Bilgen).

Thrace: İğneada: female, 27 Jan 10 (Ö Necipoğlu; photo); 2 (female and first-year male), 10–11 Feb 10 (M Bozdoğan *et al*; photo). Female, Karaburun, İstanbul, 19 Dec 11 (A Shuttleworth).

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Vagrant, apparently now annual. The 11–17th records in Turkey. Recorded four times in spring/summer on Van Gölü (East); all other records in winter between mid Nov and late Mar (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Black Sea Coastlands: 2 females, Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 24 Mar 08 (T Tozsin *et al*; photo).

Thrace: İğneada: female, 18 Nov 07 (S Bekir *et al*; photo); adult female, 17–19 Jan 08 (B Bilgen *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223, where date erroneously stated to be 16 Jan). Kıyıköy, Vize: male, 13 Feb 08 (S Kendir, Ö Necipoğlu; photo); first-year male, 10–26 Dec 08 (S Kendir *et al*; photo); first-year male, 18 Jan–14 Mar 09 (Ö Necipoğlu *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). Meriç delta, 28 Mar 09 (Ö Necipoğlu *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 219).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Uncommon and slightly irregular winter visitor, mainly to northern Turkey, especially Black Sea Coastlands and Thrace, with more occasional records in Western Anatolia and Southern Coastlands.

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos delta, Zonguldak: female, 18–31 Jan 09 (M Erturhan; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 219, where listed only for first date); 2, 1 Feb 09 (A Atahan); 9–28 Mar 09; 4 Apr 09 (M Erturhan). Male and female, Karasu, Sakarya, 31 Jan 10 (M Bozdoğan *et al*). 6, Kızılırmak delta, 22 Feb 08 (N Yavuz *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223, where erroneously stated to have involved 7 birds).

Thrace: Terkos Gölü, 7 Feb 10 (M Bozdoğan *et al*). 2, Sultanahmet, İstanbul, 29 May 11 (J Lyles); exceptionally late.

Western Anatolia: 2, Gediz delta, 10 Feb 08 (O Gül *et al*). 30, off Köyceğiz, Dalyan, 29 Oct 10 (J Lyles).

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Very local summer visitor, occasionally in large numbers, to East. Perhaps mainly a non-breeder, but known to nest on four high-altitude lakes. Otherwise a winter visitor, in small to moderate numbers, to Black sea coast and sea of Marmara. Recorded inland on Central Plateau and in Southern Coastlands in winter, and in summer in Black Sea Coastlands (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). *In lieu* of rapid declines in this species' populations, which have led BirdLife International to consider it endangered, we have elected to list all records known to us in the period.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: 16 Nov 08 (KA Boyla; photo); 2, 1 Aug 09 (K Erciyas *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101); 2, 28 Aug 09 (K Erciyas). 4, Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 16 Mar 11 (KA Boyla).

Thrace: Terkos Gölü: 2, 22 Feb 09 (O Mülayim *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 31: 219); 2, 1 Mar 09 (H Yeniceli). İğneada: 31 Jan 10 (M Özen *et al*); female, 10–11 Feb 10 (M Boğazdan *et al*; photo); female, 26 Mar 10 (Ö Necipoğlu; photo).

East: 4, Aygır Gölü, Kars, 22 Jun 08 (F Akarsu; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). 2, Aralık marshes, 13 Jan 08 (Ö Cırık *et al*).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Rare winter visitor in very small numbers to wetlands in the western two-thirds of Turkey. Has been recorded in spring and early summer in East, but no evidence of breeding.

Black Sea Coastlands: female, Uzungöl, Trabzon, 5 Feb 2010 (M Fidan; photo).

Thrace: Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul: 17 Jan 10 (N Aktan); 28 Jan 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu); male, 8 Feb 10 (A Karatas); 20 Feb 10 (M Özen; photo). 6 (3 males, 3 females), Meriç delta, 30 Jan 11 (O Mülayim *et al*).

Western Anatolia: 2, Büyük Menderes delta, 29 Jan 11 (O Gül *et al*).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Previously considered a very rare winter visitor to Black sea, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. Recent observations suggest it is regular but uncommon in winter along central and eastern Black sea coast (Hales 1996, Welch & Welch 1998). Has occurred inland in summer in East.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: 2, 22 Feb 08 (İ Çelikoba; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223, where erroneously stated to have involved 65 birds); 24, 23 Feb 08 (İ Çelikoba). Kurupelit, Samsun:

2, 13 Jan 09 (K Erciyas; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220); 31 Dec 09 (K Erciyas *et al*). Sinop: 30 Jan–27 Feb 09; 12 Mar 09; 19 Jan 10 (S Bilgin). Filyos delta, Zonguldak 6–9 Mar 09 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 220). Abana, Kastamonu, 28 Mar 09 (N Aktan). Akçakoca, Düzce, 1–2 Jan 10 (M Erturhan, T Tozsin; photo). Sakarya delta, 8 Feb 10 (S Bekir *et al*). Sarıkum Gölü, Sinop, 5 Mar 11 (S Bekir *et al*).

Thrace: İğneada: 16 Jan 08 (A Ertan); 30–31 Jan 10 (M Özen *et al*; photo). Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul, 5–8 Dec 09 (F Can *et al*; photo). Terkos Gölü, Karaburun, 26 Dec 09 (E Bacak *et al*).

Western Anatolia: Tuzla, Balıkesir, 31 Dec 07–2 Jan 08 (Ö Necipoğlu; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223, where listed only for 1 Jan 08). İzmir bay, 9 Feb 09 (Ö Kulaçoğlu; photo).

Southern Coastlands: Tuzla, Çukurova deltas, 22 Feb 10 (F Toper). Konyaaltı, Antalya 18 Apr 10 (M Mert).

East: Todurge Gölü, near Erzincan, 16 Jul 2003 (B Granit, R Mizrachi, I Tsurim; photo) has not previously been mentioned in these reports. Second inland record.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Very scarce winter visitor, with *c*25 records, mainly in the northwest of the country. A published record from Bafa Gölü in Jan 07 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 100) represents an unprecedented count in Turkey but is unacceptable without documentation. A record from South-East, in Apr 1999, mentioned in Kirwan *et al* (2008a), is unacceptable without documentation.

Thrace: Sarıyer, İstanbul, 6 Jan 09 (G Fisher). 2, Maltepe, İstanbul, 19 Dec 10 (F Toper).

Central Plateau: Sarıyer Barajı, 27 Jan 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223).

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Vagrant. Fifth to eighth records for Turkey, and the first for nearly 20 years (1992). Previous records are all from Mar–Apr (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Western Anatolia: 2, Tekağaç Burnu, Aydın, 6 Aug 10 (Ö Necipoğlu; photo). Kuşadası, Aydın, 15 Aug 10 (R Onmuş). 3, Foça Yarımadası, 3 Oct 10 (K Kırlangıç). Gokova bay, off Köyceğiz, 12 May 11 (J Lyles).

Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*

Hypothetical. Second claimed record, involving one following a flock of Yelkouan Shearwaters *P. yelkouan* observed from a ferry at quite close range. We consider that fuller details and preferably photos are needed to fully document this species' occurrence in Turkey.

Western Anatolia: Bozcaada, 10 Jul 09 (M Özen).

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Irregular visitor offshore along Mediterranean coast in winter and spring, with occasional records in autumn. Recently recorded in the Black sea in winter. Perhaps still under-recorded. Almost all records involve immatures.

Thrace: 2, Kadıköy, İstanbul, 7 May 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223).

Southern Coastlands: Karataş, Tarsus delta: 19 Jan 07; 4, 21 Jan 07; 3, 30 Jan 07; 2, 1 Feb 07 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*); 10 Sep 07 (Ö Üner); 24 Jan 10 (R Gül); 22 Feb 10 (F Toper). 11, Kazanlı, Mersin, 31 Dec 07 (M Erturhan, M Özen). Milleyha, Samandağ: 3, 17 Nov 07; 29 Dec 07; 2, 1 Jan 08; 3 Jan 08; 6 Jan 08; 9 Jan 08; 23 Feb 08; 31 Mar 08; 11 Dec 08; 1–6 Jan 11; 2,

Plate 1. Immature Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*, Göksu delta, Southern Coastlands, Turkey, 10 May 2011. © *Ayhan Öztürk*

Plate 2. Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*, Gediz delta, Western Anatolia, Turkey, 30 April 2011. © *Zafer Kurnuç*

23 Apr 11 (A & M Atahan *et al*). 2, Çevlik, Hatay, 1 Jan 08 (M Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223). 4, Lara beach, Antalya, 28 Mar 09 (M Özen, Ö Sözüer). Göksu delta: 22 Feb 10 (S Karabiyik); 4, 29 Mar 10 (M Bozdoğan, E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*).

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*
Vagrant. First record for Turkey and northernmost ever.

Southern Coastlands: 2 immatures, Göksu delta, 10 May 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo; Plate 1; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
First record, but status uncertain. Presumably same bird photographed on two different dates at same place, quite close to most popular zoo in the region. Local villagers had seen the bird previously. However, the zoo managers confirmed that none of their three birds had escaped, and no other zoos or wildlife parks in Turkey are known to hold the species.

Western Anatolia: Darıca, Kocaeli: 11 Aug 10 (M Zenginer); 21 Aug 10 (A Daban).

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*
Vagrant. Second to fourth records for Turkey, with all of those at Gediz delta treated as the same individual based on photos; the first was in Apr 2006 on Central Plateau (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Western Anatolia: Gediz delta: 30–31 Jan 09 (Ö Döndüren *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220, where listed only for first date); 7 Jan–6 Feb 10 (O Bulut *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186, where listed only for 24 Jan); 8 Jan–30 Apr 11 (Z Kurnuç *et al*; photo; Plate 2; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208, where listed only for last date).

Central Plateau: Kulu Gölü: 3 Jun 09 (B Kabor, Z Berenyi; photo); 22–27 Apr 11 (S Olofson *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
Previously considered only a vagrant, with 12 records prior to the period under review (Shirihai *et al* 2000, Kirwan *et al* 2003), but speculation that the species is about to colonise southeast Turkey (Karakaş 2012) appears set to be fulfilled, with the first breeding record in spring 2013. Most, if not all, recent records have involved the subspecies *E. c. vociferus*.

The species has also recently colonised parts of Iraq (Salim 2002) and Iran (Scott & Adhami 2006, Sehhatisabet *et al* 2006), has started to breed in northern Israel (Perlman & Israeli 2013) and is apparently extending its range in Arabia.

Thrace: Toygartepe, İstanbul, 24 Sep 09 (H Balıkçı; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101).

Western Anatolia: Kücükdere, near Denizli, 16 Feb 11 (C Schubert; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208). Only second record for region, following that in 1968 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Southern Coastlands: 2, Antalya Yamansız, 12 Apr 1998 (Erdoğan *et al* 2002 *in* Karakaş 2012), has not previously been mentioned in these reports. Göksu delta, 25 Dec 10–1 Jan 11 (M Demirtaş *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90; 208). Subaşı, Antakya, 12–14 Dec 11 (M Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

South-East: Between Diyarbakır and Bingöl, 18 Apr 09 (Karakaş 2012). Between Bismil and Silvan, 13 May 09 (R Mungan; Karakaş 2012). 2, Nizip and Karkamış, 6–15 Nov 10 (F İzler *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90). Kızıltepe, Mardin, 18 Dec 10 (S Ağırcan; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90). Bismil, 26 Feb 11 (D Cirano; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208). Adıyaman airport, 23 Apr 11 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 208). Şanlıurfa, 27 Apr 11 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 208). Bozova, Urfa, 19 May 11 (E Yogurtcuoglu; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208). 2, Harran, 12 Aug 11 (B Bilgen *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105). Correction: record (from Diyarbakır) previously attributed to 6 May 99 (Kirwan *et al* 2003, Kirwan *et al* 2008a) was in fact made on 28 Mar 98 (Karakaş 2012).

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Apparently a rare passage migrant and winter visitor throughout Turkey. Recorded in summer in north and east but no evidence of breeding. Confusion has often occurred with pale (especially immature) Black Kites *M. migrans* and undoubtedly many published records from Turkey are erroneous.

Plate 3. Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Esenboğa airport, Ankara, Central Plateau, Turkey, 2 May 2011. © *Emin Yoğurtçuoğlu*

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta, 27 Apr 07 (N Yavuz *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19). Borçka, 29 Sep 07 (B Willaert).

Thrace: Iğneada, 29 Oct 07 (A Ertan). Edirne, Keşan, 6 Sep 07 (Ö Üner)

Southern Coastlands: Hacılar Köyü, Burdur, 5 Feb 11 (S Özgünlü, G Sinan; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Central Plateau: Esenboğa airport, Ankara, 2 May 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu; photo; Plate 3; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

East: Tuzluca, Iğdır, 10 Apr 07 (Y Şaşmaz *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19). Kuyucuk Gölü, 10 Sep 08 (S Bilgin, D Hegedüs).

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

Vagrant. First record. Smith (2012) also mentioned that falconers in the Hopa area claimed to have trapped another individual of this species *c*40 years ago.

Black Sea Coastlands: *c*4 km east of Hopa, Artvin, early Sep 06 (Smith 2012; photo).

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare winter visitor in small (but perhaps increasing) numbers to Black Sea Coastlands, Thrace, Western Anatolia and Central Plateau. Recently recorded in Southern Coastlands and even more recently in East; only records from the last two regions are presented here.

Southern Coastlands: Isparta, 14 Apr 07 (O Gül). Burdur Gölü, 2 Mar 10 (Ö Sözüer *et al*).

East: Tuzluca, Iğdır, 4 Apr 07 (Y Şaşmaz *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19). Erzurum, 16 Mar 11 (E Bayraktar).

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

Rare and local resident in Western Anatolia, Southern Coastlands, South-East and adjacent areas of Central Plateau. Recently recorded in East. Past confusion between this species and other raptors, especially immature Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, has generated many possibly erroneous published records. Records excepting those from well-known site at Halfeti (South-East) are presented.

Western Anatolia: Güllük delta: 3–20 Jan 07; 18 Feb 07; 17 Dec 07 (BW Stoneman). 2, Ortakent, 10 Jan 07. Gediz delta: 4 Nov 07; 17 Jan 08 (Ö Döndüren). Çiğli, 21 Dec 08 (O Bilge). Bafa Gölü: 20 Mar 08; 26 Mar 08 (J Pels); 13 Sep 09; 1 Nov 09 (U Yörükoğlu). Köyceğiz, Dalyan: 18 Oct 09; 15 Nov 09 (J Lyles). Mudanya, 5 Feb 10 (F Arıcı). Azap Gölü: 7 Feb 10; 27 Oct 10 (BW Stoneman). Priene, 3 May 10 (L Gardella).

Southern Coastlands: Amanos Dağları, 15 Sep 11 (A Atahan *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

South-East: Second-calendar-year, Narince, Adıyaman, 23 May 07 (KM Olsen *et al*).

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

Precise status remains uncertain, but we list only those records that amplify our current knowledge of the species' occurrence in Turkey. Widely recorded on passage throughout; probably more common than records suggest. May breed very locally in small numbers.

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 19 Nov 08 (M Erturhan). Kızılırmak delta, 15 Mar 09 (N Yavuz *et al*). Unusually late and early records, respectively.

Western Anatolia: Kumkale delta, Çanakkale, 6 Mar 11 (İ Sevim). Earliest-ever record. **Southern Coastlands:** 2, Milleyha, Samandağ, Hatay, 22 Nov 08 (A Atahan *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). Second-latest record in autumn.

East: Aras ringing station, Kars, 12 Apr–18 May 07 (Y Şaşmaz *et al*). Ömekköy, Hakkâri, 30 May 11 (S Cavaillès). Records suggestive of breeding (see Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Status uncertain. Rarely but widely recorded on passage throughout and probably more common than records suggest. Recorded in winter from Western Anatolia. Presumed to breed very locally in small numbers.

Thrace: Meriç delta, 14 Aug 08 (O Mülayim *et al*). Juvenile, Mert Gölü, İğneada, 31 Jul 09 (Özkan 2011; photo).

Western Anatolia: Güllük delta, Muğla, 26 Apr 07 (BW Stoneman; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19). Kumkale delta, Çanakkale: 2, 10 Mar 11; 9 Apr 11; 7 May 11 (E Şengül).

Southern Coastlands: Boğazkent, Antalya, 9 Mar 08 (H Karaardıç); juvenile, 26 Aug 11 (B Ercumen). 20 km east of Alanya, 27 Apr 09 (D Robel, GP Schulze).

Central Plateau: Mogan Gölü, 18–19 Apr 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo).

East: Aralık marshes, Iğdır, 12 Sep 07 (Y Şaşmaz *et al*).

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Status uncertain. Breeding proven twice in extreme northeast (Green 1997, Kirwan *et al* 2003) and suspected further west in Black Sea Coastlands and in East (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). During the period, singing males were heard during breeding period at two different localities in Black Sea Coastlands. Rarely but widely recorded on passage throughout; probably more common than records suggest. Two winter records during period.

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos delta, Zonguldak: 19 May 08 (J Tavares; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223); 17 Oct 08 (M Erturhan). Sinop, 29 Sep 08 (F Şahin; photo). 10, Abana, Kastamonu, 29 Sep 08 (N Aktan). Kızılırmak delta, 27 Sep 08 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 100); 5 Oct 08 (E Eser *et al*). Sivrikaya, 17 May 09 (Z Berenyi). Samsun, 15 Aug 09 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 101). Yeniçağa Gölü: 19 May 10 (E Yogurtçuoğlu); up to 15 singing males, May–Jul 2011 (R Gül, E Yogurtçuoğlu). Of, Trabzon, 8 Sep 10 (B Bilgen). 2, Kastamonu, 29 May 11 (E Yogurtçuoğlu).

Thrace: Iğneada: 25 Sep 07, 13 Jan 10 (A Ertan); latter is second-ever winter record in Turkey (see Central Plateau). Terkos Gölü, 28 Sep 08 (S Bilgin *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Western Anatolia: Dobruca, Bursa, 22 Sep 10 (F Arıcı). Ayvalık, 5 Nov 11 (M Soydaş; photo). Latter is latest-ever record in autumn in Turkey.

Southern Coastlands: Antakya, 9 May 09 (M Atahan *et al*). Subaşı, Hatay, 29 Apr 10 (O Gül). Antalya, 2 Sep 10 (B Göçmen; photo).

Central Plateau: Mogan Gölü, 5 Oct 08 (K Öge; photo). Akkaya Barajı, Niğde, 22 Dec 08 (*per* F Akarsu). Latter is first winter record in Turkey (see also Thrace).

South-East: Karkamış, 10 Oct 09 (A Atahan *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101).

East: Aras ringing station, Iğdır: 20 Apr 07; 25 Apr 07; trapped and ringed, 9 Sep 07; trapped and ringed, 7 Oct 07 (Y Şaşmaz; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19). 5, Posof, 28 May 09 (C Şekercioğlu; photo).

Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*

Rare and very local summer visitor to East, with two winter records (both recent). On passage occurs in larger numbers on Central Plateau and in East, occasionally west to sea of Marmara. Records (all of migrants) away from well-known breeding site in Bulanık area are presented.

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos delta, Zongulak: 3, 17 Mar 09; 41, 31 Aug 10 (M Erturhan). 4, Kızılırmak delta, 23 May 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223).

Central Plateau: Ankara Ovası: 10, 16 Aug 08 (R Gül; photo); 48, 21 Mar 09 (C Ateş; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220). 4, Hirfanlı Barajı, 12 Apr 09 (B Demirci). Kulu Gölü: 4–5 Jun 10 (E Vardar, A Erdal *et al*; photo); 9, 7 Sep 10 (G Güven). 6, Tersakan Gölü, Konya, 10 Apr 11 (B Bilgen). 2, Sultan marshes, 16–20 Apr 11 (M Ünlü *et al*; photo).

East: Erçek Gölü, 6 Apr 08 (Ş Esin). Arpaçay Barajı, Kars, 1 Jan 10 (KH Yılmaz; photo); second winter record in Turkey. 6, Idil, 26 Apr 11 (O Nilsson, M Tholin). 4, Kuyucuk Gölü, Kars, 22–23 May 11 (D Occhiato; *Birding World* 24: 238).

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*

Status uncertain. A rare and localised resident or summer visitor on Central Plateau (where two small breeding populations discovered in 1998) and perhaps adjacent parts of Southern Coastlands, as well as probably still in East. Apparently a passage migrant to Black Sea Coastlands in autumn, where regularly recorded. Recorded in late autumn in East and spring in South-East (where it is reported to winter), and recently recorded in

Western Anatolia and Southern Coastlands in winter. For review of historical and recent status and distribution in Turkey, see Kasparek (1989).

Black Sea Coastlands: 2 İzmit bay, 15 Apr 2008 (B Bilgen). Female/non-breeding male, Riva, İstanbul, 9 Nov 09 (Ö Furtun *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101). Female/non-breeding male, Sürmene, Trabzon, 15 Nov 09 (K Kahraman *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101). Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 26 Jan 10; 7 Nov 11 (M Erturhan; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186, 34: 105). Kızılırmak delta, 2 Feb 10 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 186). Female/non-breeding male, Ordu, 10 Nov 10 (A Karataş; photo). Female/non-breeding male, Rize, 26 Oct 10 (M Genç; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90).

Southern Coastlands: Göksu delta, 7 Feb 10 (Z Beşikçi; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186).

Central Plateau: Sarıyar Barajı, 1 Sep 09 (F Akarsu).

East: Muş Ovası including Bulanık: male, 21 May 08 (M Özbek; photo); 22 May 08 (Ş Esin); male, 23 May 09 (A Özturk; photo); 5, 6 Jun 09 (C Şekercioğlu).

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*

Generally scarce and local but increasingly recorded summer visitor (breeding confirmed) to South-East and parts of Southern Coastlands. Recorded in autumn in East, and very large numbers recorded at this season in South-East.

South-East: Şanlıurfa Bozkırları: 4, 17–20 May 08 (A Atahan *et al*); 29 May 08 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*); 4 Jun 08 (S Bekir *et al*); 40, 29 Jun 08 (A Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100, where incorrectly stated to be 30 Jun); 35, 14 Jul 08 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 100); 5, 19–21 Jul 08; 5, 27 May 09 (A Atahan *et al*); 3, 16 Jul 09 (U Yörükoğlu); 4, 21 Jul 09; 4, 21 Sep 09 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 101). Ceylanpınar: 6, 12 Oct 07 (Biricik 2009); 128, 6 Aug 09 (T Emri, R Vanyi; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101); 2, 27 Sep 10; 19, 28 Sep 10; 4, 30 Sep 10; 38, 1 Oct 10 (M Erturhan). Birecik: 1 May 08 (F Akarsu); 15 May 08 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu); 2, 9 Jul 08 (Ş Esin); 2, 17 May 09 (T Çetin *et al*); 5, 30 May 10 (F İzler); 5 Jul 11 (P Gündoğdu); 10 Sep 11 (Ö Kulaç *et al*). 3, Kızılkuyu, 11 Sep 09 (E Yoğurtcuoğlu). 2, Suruç, 4 Jun 11 (B Bilgen). Harran Ovası: 18, 12 Aug 11; 3, 13 Aug 11; 4, 14 Aug 11 (B Bilgen).

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*

Vagrant. Eleventh and twelfth records for Turkey.

Southern Coastlands: Kaldırım, Çukurova deltas, 8 Apr 10 (R Martin; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186, where stated to have been seen on 19 Apr). Göksu delta, 28 Apr 11 (Z Beşikçi *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Eurasian Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Passage migrant, found locally in considerable numbers on Central Plateau, typically in smaller numbers elsewhere. Has occurred in summer on Central Plateau, but no evidence of breeding, and in early winter on Central Plateau and South-East.

Black Sea Coastlands: Riva, İstanbul: 6, 21 Mar–8 Apr 09 (A Çoban *et al*; photo); 21–22 Mar 10 (A Çoban *et al*; photo); 8 Dec 10 (S Şevkioğlu); 2, 15–29 Mar 11 (S Kızılkaya *et al*; photo); 2, 10–23 Apr 11 (D & T Geçit *et al*; photo). Saltukova, Zonguldak, 16 Sep 09 (photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101). 2, Kızılırmak delta, 29 Sep 09 (Ö Sağlam; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101). Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 23 Oct 10 (M Erturhan *et al*; photo).

Thrace: 2, Kumburgaz, 27 Aug 09 (F Can; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101). 7, Sarıyer, 24 Apr 11 (S Bilgin *et al*).

Southern Coastlands: 2, Anamur, 1–2 Apr 10 (N Tez *et al*; photo).

Central Plateau: Kulu Gölü: 2, 14 Oct 07 (R Gül *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19); 206, 23 Mar 08 (G Welch; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223); 14, 12 Oct 08 (B Demirci, K Özkan *et al*; photo;

Sandgrouse 31: 100); 11, 28 Mar 10 (A Atahan *et al*). Cihanbeyli: 5, 20 Oct 07 (F Akarsu *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19); 9, 29 Oct 07 (R Gül; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19); 70, 17 Apr 10 (B Demirci *et al*); 100, 1 Apr 11; 71, 3 Apr 11 (A Karataş; photo). 2, Ankara Ovası, 27 Dec 08 (O Karacasu). 5, Kadınhanı, 14 Nov 10 (C Bilgin).

South-East: 23, Ceylanpınar, 24 Mar 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223).

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Vagrant. Third to sixth records.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: 1 Oct 09 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 186); 26–28 Sep 11 (N Yavuz *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

Southern Coastlands: Tuzla Gölü, 20 May 11 (R Amiet, P Frara, T Luthi; photo; Plate 4), has been accepted by the Swiss rarities committee.

East: Kuyucuk Gölü, Kars, 8 Oct 11 (S Bekir *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

Plate 4. A Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, Tuzla Gölü, Southern Coastlands, Turkey, 20 May 2011. © *Thomas Luthi*

Sociable Plover *Vanellus gregarius*

Passage migrant and perhaps also winter visitor in large numbers to small area in South-East, where only discovered in early 2007 (*Sandgrouse* 29: 97–98), with significant percentage of global population probably occurring there and in adjacent Syria. Additionally, recorded very rarely in spring in Black Sea Coastlands, Western Anatolia, Southern Coastlands and Central Plateau, and in autumn in eastern Black Sea Coastlands, Western Anatolia and East, with very large numbers (perhaps most of world population) now confirmed to move through eastern third of country. For a historical review of the species' status see Kasparek (1992). No records between 1996 and 2001 inclusive.

South-East: Ceylanpınar: 250, 5 Mar 07; 615, 6 Mar 07; 1017, 7 Mar 07 (S Bekir, K Özkan *et al*); 737, 9 Mar 07; 203; 10 Mar 07; 78, 11 Mar 07; 223, 12 Mar 07; 140, 13 Mar 07 (M Bozdoğan *et al*); 1810, 12 Oct 07; 3200, 13 Oct 07 (Biricik 2009); 871, 12 Mar 08; 820, 13 Mar 08; 201, 14 Mar 08 (M Biricik *et al*); 100, 1 Mar 08 (A Atahan *et al*); 58, 27 Sep 10; 783, 28 Sep 10; 45, 1 Oct 10 (M Erturhan); 652, 14 Oct 10 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 90, where it is erroneously stated that 6612 birds were seen in eastern Turkey during this period). Akçakale: 300, 1 Mar 08; 156, 8 Mar 08; 34, 7 Mar 09; 55, 11 Mar 10 (A Atahan, B Bilgen, Ş Esin *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186). 48, Bismil Ovası, Diyarbakır, 9 Mar 07 (M Biricik *et al*).

East: 105, Malazgirt–Muş,12 Oct 08 (S Bekir; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). Erzurum Ovası: 24, 20 Oct 07 (E Çoban); 4, 25 Sep 09 (O Mülayim); 38, 26 Sep 10 (A Karataş *et al*); 30 Sep 10 (B Öztürk); 20, 1 Oct 10; 22 Sep 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*).

White-tailed Plover *Vanellus leucurus*

Status uncertain. Has bred Southern Coastlands and Central Plateau, but few confirmed breeding records since 1986 and many suitable sites now drained. Occasionally recorded between spring and autumn, usually in very small numbers, from Southern Coastlands, Central Plateau, South-East and East. For review of status and distribution see Kasparek (1992).

Central Plateau: 2, Tuz Gölü, 20 Oct 07 (F Akarsu *et al*).

South-East: Hancağız Barajı, Nizip, 22 Apr 08 (F İzler; photo). Dicle river, Diyarbakır, 1 Apr 11 (S Kaya; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

East: Erzurum Ovası, 28 Apr 08 (C Sevindi; photo). Kuyucuk Gölü, 1 May 08 (F Orbay; photo).

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

Vagrant. First record in Turkey and only the third in the Middle East, following those in Cyprus (December 2009: Roberts 2011) and Oman (November 1987: Eriksen & Sargeant 2000).

Southern Coastlands: 2, Göksü delta, 23 May 2011 (P Kennerley *et al*).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Vagrant. The second to fifth records; the first was in May 2005 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a,b).

Thrace: adult, Gala Gölü, 8–9 Oct 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo; Plate 5; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90).

Southern Coastlands: 2 adults, Yumurtalık, Adana, 6 Oct 08 (S Bekir; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Central Plateau: juvenile, Kozanlı Gökgöl, 20 Sep 08 (G Welch; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). Kulu Gölü, 4 Oct 08 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 108); we lack any information concerning this record and would welcome full details.

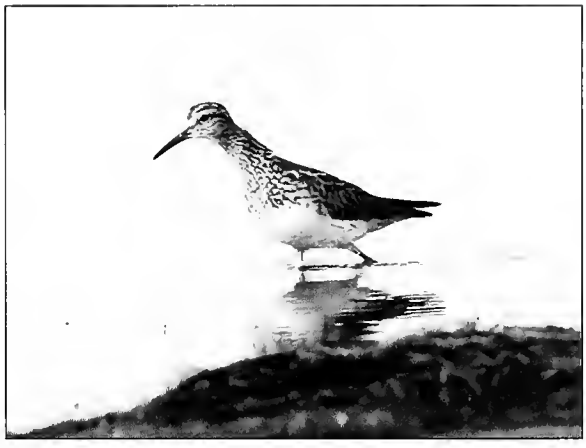

Plate 5. Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, Gala Gölü, Thrace, Turkey, 9 October 2010. © *Ayhan Öztürk*

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

Probably not uncommon passage migrant in wetlands across Turkey, though very few reports from the period. Recorded in winter on Central Plateau and in south. For discussion of status and distribution see Kirwan (1992).

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: 31 May 08 (K Erciyas *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223); 27–28 Apr 11 (M Demir; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208); 11 May 11 (ÖÜ Özkoç; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208, where erroneously stated to be on 13 May); 27 Sep 11 (KA Boyla *et al*). Sazköy, Zonguldak, 4 May 09 (T Tozsin *et al*; photo).

Western Anatolia: Uluabat Gölü, 12 May 07 (Ö Döndüren).

Central Plateau: Mogan Gölü: 9 Aug 09 (H Uzun; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101); 29 Apr 10 (H Welch); 6 Sep 10 (G Güven); 18 Apr 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu). Çöl Gölü, 2 Apr 11 (B Demirci). Akkaya Barajı, Niğde: 16 May 08 (M Langman *et al*); 24 Apr 09 (A Karataş; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220); 13 May 10 (M Langman *et al*).

East: Aras ringing station, Kars: 17–27 Apr 07; 16 May 07 (Y Şaşmaz, Ç Şekercioğlu *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19); 25 Sep 08 (M Özen; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Previously listed as a vagrant, but probably a rare passage migrant, with more than 20 reports from Turkey, though most supported by few or no details, albeit often made by observers experienced with the species in western Europe. Recent increase in records, and thus improved knowledge of status, matched by similar changes in Lebanon (Ramadan-Jaradi *et al* 2008). Observers are requested to provide full details for records of all skua species, except Arctic Skua *S. parasiticus*.

Thrace: Boğazı, İstanbul, 15 Sep 07 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 19). Immature, Karaburun, İstanbul, 31 Dec 10–2 Jan 11 (S Bekir; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Western Anatolia: Kuşadası, 31 May 07 (O Onmuş *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 19).

Southern Coastlands: Kundu, Antalya, 22 Mar 09 (M Özen). Millheya, Hatay, 5 Feb 11 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Vagrant or irregular passage migrant. Ninth to 11th records in Turkey, and the first since 1999 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). Previous records have all been in May–Jun and Sep. The Dec record in 2009 is especially notable.

Thrace: İstanbul Boğazı, 29 Apr 11 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Black Sea Coastlands: 2 subadults, Büyük Camlica, 29 Sep 1979 (L Svensson) was incorrectly dated 23 Sep in Kirwan *et al* (2008a) and wrongly stated to have been over the Bosphorus in both Martins (1989, where dated correctly) and Kirwan *et al* (2008a).

Southern Coastlands: Mersin harbour: 21–22 Dec 09 (M Erturhan *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186); 24 Apr 10 (M Özen *et al*).

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Vagrant. Seventh record for Turkey, although most, including this one, lack documentation. Most previous records are from Southern Coastlands (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Southern Coastlands: Karataş, Tarsus delta, 25 Apr 11 (X Larruy, M Gil, J Bécares, A Burgas, D Carrera & M García Tarrasón).

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Vagrant or scarce winter visitor. Occasionally recorded in late spring and once inland. Most records in the period probably referred to the same long-staying individual.

Thrace: Haydarpaşa harbour and nearby areas, İstanbul: 17 Jan 07 (photo); 20 Feb 08 (İ Çelikoba); 30 Oct 09 (KA Boyla; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101); 29–30 Dec 09 (E Bacak, A Karataş; photo); 4–5 Oct 10 (K Altan, E Yoğurtçuoğlu); 2, 13 Oct 10 (E Üç; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90); 19 Oct 10 (F Toper); 12 Sep 11 (*Sandgrouse* 34: 105); 15 Oct 11 (ÖÜ Özkoç); 5–8 Nov 11 (A Kezer, K Cem; photo).

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos delta, Zonguldak: 2, 5 Jan 09 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 220); 11 Sep 11 (M Erturhan). Kızılırmak delta, 2 Sep 10 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 90).

Black-legged Kittiwake *Larus tridactyla*

Formerly considered vagrant, but post-1996 records suggest it may be an uncommon, but regular, winter visitor in small numbers mainly to Black Sea Coastlands and Thrace. Comparatively few records from other regions. Most records (especially those from Black sea) refer to first-winters.

Thrace: Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul, 21 Jan 07 (C Dalyan, E Kartal *et al*). Rumelfeneri, İstanbul, 9 Nov 08 (S Kendir). Karaburun/Terkos Gölü, İstanbul: first-winter, 14 Dec 08 (KA Boyla *et al*; photo); 12–13 Dec 10 (T Gözükara, B Bilgen; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90); 3 first-winters, 19 Nov–11 Dec 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu *et al*; photo). Kilyos, 9 Nov 08 (İKGT).

Black Sea Coastlands: İzmit bay, 5 Nov 07 (B Bilgen). First-winter, Artvin, 2 Feb 08 (E Kaytan; photo). Kızılırmak delta, 23 Feb 08 (İ Çelikoba *et al*); 3 May 08 (*Sandgrouse* 30: 223). First-winter, Kozlu, Zonguldak, 21 Nov 11 (T Tozsin; photo).

Western Anatolia: 4 adults, off İzmir bay, 4 Feb 08 (F Bengil; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223, where incorrectly stated to be just two birds). Adult, Gediz delta, 3 May 08 (O Gül; photo).

Southern Coastlands: adult and first-winter, Yumurtalık, Çukurova deltas, 11 May 08 (S Oruç; photo). Adult, Lara beach, Antalya, 22 Mar 09 (M Özen; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220).

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

Vagrant. Fourth record, following previous records in Southern Coastlands, in May 1973 and June 2003, and Western Anatolia in March 2004.

Southern Coastlands: Eleri beach, Kemer, east of Antalya, 26 Dec 04 (A-A Weller), has not previously been mentioned in these reports; some descriptive details provided.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo longipennis*

Nominate race is a widespread and common summer visitor and passage migrant throughout the country, albeit less numerous in Black Sea Coastlands, East and South-East, with a handful of winter records. First records of race *longipennis* in Turkey.

Black Sea Coastlands: 3, Bafra, 5 Jun 89 (JR Hough, B Lee, G Shorrock, S Smethurst), has not previously been mentioned in these reports; some descriptive details provided.

Southern Coastlands: Karataş, Çukurova deltas, 3 May 11 (O Nilsson, M Tholin; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208), is documented with photos (see also www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt-llwaoMnA8) and a description.

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata*

Formerly locally numerous resident in South-East, with very rare (and mainly old) records from elsewhere (Western Anatolia, Southern Coastlands, Central Plateau and East), but seemingly has been declining inexorably for at least a decade (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). All records known to us are listed.

South-East: Urfa Ovası: 2, 19 May 08 (A Atahan); 6, 4 Jun 08 (S Bekir); 6, 29 Jun 08 (A Atahan); up to 7, 14–19 Jul 08 (A Atahan; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100); 9 Jun 09 (C Şekercioğlu); 3 Jul 09 (T Çetin); 2, 17 Jul 09 (U Yörükoğlu); 21 Jul 09 (A Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 32: 101); 3, 11 Sep 09 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu); 2, 11 Mar 10 (Ş Esin; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186); 2, 30 Jul 11 (H Meşe). Harran Ovası: 35, 12 Aug 11; 7, 13 Aug 11 (B Bilgen).

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Vagrant; previously considered hypothetical (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). The first and second records.

Western Anatolia: *S. o. meena*, Ayvalık, Balıkesir, 12 Jan–6 Feb 11 (M Kutluk *et al*; photo; Plate 6; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Black Sea Coastlands: Yeşilırmak delta, 7 Feb 11 (N Yavuz; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Plate 6. Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis meena*, Ayvalık, Balıkesir, Western Anatolia, Turkey, January 2011. © *Yasemin Can*

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Vagrant. The second to fourth records, following the first in May 2005 (*Sandgrouse* 27: 164; Kirwan *et al* 2008a), with additional reports received in 2012. Although the species is kept as cagebird in Turkey, the recent records are coincident with expansion observed elsewhere in Middle East.

Black Sea Coastlands: female, Sinop, 23 May–2 Jun 08 (S Bilgin; photo).

Central Plateau: sex uncertain, Çukurbağ, Niğde, 13 May 10 (M Langman).

South-East: male, Birecik, 21 Jun 09 (P Gündoğdu, S Sabırlı; photo; Plate 7).

Plate 7. Male Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*, Birecik, South-East, Turkey, 21 June 2009. © *Soner Sabırlı*

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*

Until very recently status was considered to be largely uncertain; the continued presence of a small population in forested lowlands by rivers in Southern Coastlands was reconfirmed in late 2004 (Yöntem 2007) and subsequently (since June 2009) at several different sites by van den Berg *et al* (2010). Additional surveys (by S Bekir) have since confirmed breeding at more than ten localities in the vicinity of Antalya, Mersin and Adana, with more than one pair being regularly seen at Oymapınar Barajı (Albegger 2011).

Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*

Presumably resident in montane coniferous forest over much of the northern half of the country, but just one definite nesting record (in 2010). Full details of a winter record in the Taurus mountains have never been

Plate 8. Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*, Uludağ, Bursa, Western Anatolia, 27 July 2010. © *Emin Yoğurtçuoğlu*

submitted. Potentially, both *A. f. funereus* and *A. f. caucasicus* occur in the country (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). Eleventh to 15th records.

Black Sea Coastlands: heard, Unye, 5 Jun 10 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 90). 5, Bolu, 11 Jun 10 (M Atay; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90). 4, Sivrikaya, Ikizdere, 13 Dec 10 (E Yogurtcuoglu, S Eksioglu; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90, where erroneously listed for 14 December). Arkut Dağı, Gerede: 4, 26 Apr 11; 2, 28 May 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu).

Western Anatolia: Uludağ, Bursa: begging juvenile, 27 Jul 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu; photo; Plate 8; *Sandgrouse* 33: 90); 14 Jul 11 (B Bilgen); 6, 16 Jul 11 (M Özen).

Desert Lark *Ammomanes desertii*

Presumably resident (although the record listed here is the first to be published between Oct and Feb in Turkey) at one locality (Birecik) in South-East, where first discovered in 1983 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). Confusion with Bar-tailed Lark *A. cincturus* in this region (see *Orn. Soc. Bull. Turkey* 13: 4) clouds understanding of the status of *A. deserti*, and it is still possible that the former might also prove to occur very locally in South-East.

South-East: 4, Birecik, 8 Dec 10 (S Ağırcan).

Black Lark *Melanocorypha yeltoniensis*

Vagrant. Second record for Turkey following a specimen collected in October 1914, with two possible records, one historical and the other recent (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Southern Coastlands: just east of Side, 23 May 11 (B Harding) is supported by a description.

(Western) Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Widespread and common summer visitor (*M. f. feldegg*) and passage migrant, in which capacity an additional seven races have been recorded in the country, *flava, thunbergi, lutea, cinereocapilla, beema* and *superciliaris*, of which the four last-named appear to be uncommon or rarer, while *dumbrowskii* (often regarded as an inter-racial hybrid) has been mentioned in the literature but does not seem to have been certainly recorded (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

East: race *leucocephala*, south Van marshes, 25 Apr 11 (O Nilsson, M Tholin; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208; Plate 9). First record of this taxon in Turkey.

Plate 9. Male (Western) Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava leucocepholo*, south Van marshes, East, Turkey, 25 April 2011. © *Oskar Nilsson*

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

Not uncommon summer visitor to eastern Black Sea Coastlands, East and Central Plateau. Apparently increasing and spreading, and breeding expected in other regions in the near future. Widespread and fairly common on passage, although scarcer in western third of the country. Two previous winter records, in 2004 and 2005 (Kirwan *et al* 2008b).

Western Anatolia: male, possibly *M. c. calcarata*, Çalış marsh, Fethiye, 15 Jun 11 (A Davis).

Plate 10. Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola calcarata*, south Van marshes, East, Turkey, 18 May 2011. © *Daniele Occhiato*

South-East: Nizip, Gaziantep: 27 Jan 08 (A Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223; Kirwan *et al* 2008a); 10 Dec 11 (*Sandgrouse* 34: 106). Third and fourth winter records.

East: male, *M. c. calcarata*, south Van marshes, 17–18 May 11 (Occhiato 2011); photo; Plate 10; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208). First record of this taxon in Turkey and the Western Palearctic.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Regular passage migrant in small numbers and probably wintering in southernmost Turkey.

Western Anatolia: Dalyan, Muğla: 3, 6 Apr 2007; 2, 22 Sep 2010 (J Lyles).

Southern Coastlands: Milleyha, Samandağ, Hatay: 29 Dec 07 (A Atahan); up to 5, 22 Nov–20 Dec 08 (M Atahan *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100); 3, 17 Nov 10 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 91); 4, 22 Jan 11 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 208); 2, 5–9 Feb 11 (M Atahan, O Gül; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208); 4, 22 Oct 11; 1 Nov 11; 17 Dec 11 (A & M Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

Vagrant. First and second records for Turkey.

Southern Coastlands: first-winter, trapped and ringed, Titreyengöl, south of Manavgat, 19 Sep 06 (Prünte *et al* 2010), has not previously been mentioned in these reports.

South-East: trapped and ringed, Dicle ringing station, Diyarbakir, 06 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 100), has not previously been mentioned in these reports.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens japonicus*

First record in late 2008 has been followed by regular winter observations of small numbers in southernmost corner of the country. Elsewhere in Middle East, the species is considered a passage and winter visitor to Israel and United Arab Emirates, and a vagrant to Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Syria (Porter & Aspinall 2010).

Southern Coastlands: Milleyha, Samandağ, Hatay: 22 Nov–11 Dec 08 (Atahan & Atahan 2009); 20 Dec 08 (B Bilgen; presumably same); 14 Feb 10 (M Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186); 11 Jan 11; 2, 5 Feb 11 (M Atahan); 12 Feb 11 (A Atahan); 14 Mar 11 (A Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208); 3, 13 Nov 11 (A Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 34: 106); 5, 27 Nov 11 (A & M Atahan). Kırıkhan, 11 Feb 11 (A & M Atahan); 2, 17 Dec 11; 31 Dec 11 (A Atahan).

Olive-backed Pipit

Vagrant. Second record for Turkey, following one in Apr 1992 (Kirwan 1993).

South-East: trapped and ringed, Dicle ringing station, Diyarbakir, 2006 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

A rare and irregular winter visitor, with one extremely unusual and perhaps doubtful record from late May. Still only *c*20 records post-1960, but there was clearly an exceptional influx in early 2011, following that in winter 2005/06 (Kirwan *et al* 2008b).

Black Sea Coastlands: Çaycuma, Zonguldak, 8 Jan 09 (M Erturhan). Asarcık, Samsun (where local people claimed species is observed annually): 7, 1–3 Mar 09 (S Girişen *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220); 4, 27 Feb 11; 21, 28 Feb 11; 36, 4 Mar 11; 22, 5 Mar 11; 57, 7 Mar 11 (*per* E Yogurtçuoğlu; photo; Plate 11; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208, where largest total and date of record incorrect); last-mentioned count is highest-ever number in Turkey. 4, Yeni ömerli, 1 Mar 11 (*per* E Yogurtçuoğlu). Emirmusa: 6, 1 Mar 11; 4, 2 Mar 11; 1, 4 Mar 11 (*per* E Yogurtçuoğlu). 2, Gökköy, 2 Mar 11 (*per* E Yogurtçuoğlu).

Central Plateau: Akyurt, Ankara, 24 Feb 10 (G Güven).

Plate 11. Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*, Asarcık, Samsun, Black Sea Coastlands, Turkey, 5 March 2011. © *Nizamettin Yavuz*

Siberian Accentor *Prunella montanella*
Vagrant. The second record, following the first in Nov 2006 (Bekir 2007), was remarkably discovered by the same observer. Subsequent investigation suggests that the first record, which was photographed, involved the race *badia*, a subspecies previously unrecorded in the Western Palearctic (CS Roselaar *in litt* 2010).

East Anatolia: Gelinkaya, Erzurum, 12 Oct 07 (S Bekir; *Sandgrouse* 30: 20).

Eastern (Siberian) Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*
Precise distribution poorly known (*S. m. variegatus*, previously referred to as *S. m. armenicus*: see Svensson *et al* 2012), breeding in small numbers in eastern third of country and probably more widely distributed in non-breeding season, but contact, if any, during breeding season with European Stonechat *S. rubicola* very poorly known (Kirwan *et al* 2008a). One previous possible record of *S. m. hemprichii* in Turkey, from 1999, which taxon was previously referred to as *S. m. variegatus* (see Svensson *et al* 2012). Records of *S. m. maurus*, *S. m. hemprichii* or any other stonechat taxon, except *variegatus* and *rubicola*, in Turkey require detailed documentation.

South-East: *S. m. hemprichii*, Urfa, 11 Mar 10 (Ş Esin); first record in Turkey of this taxon.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*
Status uncertain; perhaps only a vagrant, but has reportedly bred at Birecik (Peter 1994). Many reports are inadequately documented.
Black Sea Coastlands: Male, Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 12 Mar 10 (G Cıvdı; photo).

Western Anatolia: Kocaçay delta, 30 Oct 10 (T Gözükara; *Sandgrouse* 33: 91).

Southern Coastlands: Antalya, 13 Mar 09 (O Kepiroğlu). Female, Samandağ, Hatay, 6–11 Jan 11 (A Atahan *et al*; photo; Plate 12; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

South-East: Ceylanpınar, Urfa, 12 Oct 11 (S İsfendiyaroğlu, E Tabur).

Plate 12. Female Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*, Samandağ, Hatay, Southern Coastlands, Turkey, January 2011. © *Ali Atahan*

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*
Vagrant. The fourth and fifth records in Turkey, following those in Feb 1914 (Kasparek 1992a), Apr 1996 (Kirwan & Martins 2000) and May 2005 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Southern Coastlands: second-calendar year, *O. l. lugens* or *O. l. persica*, Göksu delta, 27 Mar 08 (R Wüst-Graf; photo; Plate 13) has been accepted by the Swiss rarities committee.

Plate 13. Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*, Göksu delta, Southern Coastlands, Turkey, 27 March 2008. © *R. Wüst-Graf*

South-East: first-summer male *O. l. warriae*, paired with female Finsch's Wheatear *O. finschii*, Suruç, Urfa, 27 Apr–4 Jun 11 (D Domuschiev *et al*; photo); raised two young and was last reported 13 Aug 11 (B Bilgen). Further details of this remarkable record appear in Shirihai *et al* (2011) and Shirihai (2012).

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*

Vagrant. First record. Comparatively regular vagrant to Cyprus, where 16 records to the end of 2011 (Richardson 2012), and recently (May 2012) recorded for first time in Greece (Bekel-Kastrup *et al* 2013).

Southern Coastlands: male, Göksu delta, 20 Feb 98 (F Orbay; photo), has not previously been mentioned in these reports.

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*

Vagrant. Second record, following the first in Feb 2006 (Yoğurtuoğlu 2006). That the species might occasionally appear in small flocks in Turkey is unsurprising given status in neighbouring Iran.

East: up to 14 *atrogularis*, Erzurum Ovası, 13–20 Mar 11 (C Sevindi *et al*; photo; Plate 14; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208, where incorrectly stated that record involved eight individuals).

Plate 14. Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*, Erzurum Ovası, East, Turkey, 20 March 2011. © *Ayhan Öztürk*

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Status uncertain. Apparently scarce/rare (but regular) passage migrant through western two-thirds of Turkey. No recent evidence of breeding (see Kumerloeve 1967).

West Anatolia: Bafa Gölü: singing, 19, 22 and 23 Mar 08 (J Pels).

Southern Coastlands: Dalyan, Muğla, 6 Apr 07 (J Lyles). Kırıhan, Hatay, 3 Apr 11 (*Sandgrouse* 34: 106). Balık Gölü: 28 Aug 11, 10 Sep 11 (*Sandgrouse* 34: 106).

East: Aras ringing station, Tuzluca, Iğdır: 25 Apr 07; 7 May 07; trapped and ringed, 2 May 09 (Kuzey Doğa Derneği; photo).

River Warbler Locustella fluviatilis

Rare passage migrant in small numbers across Turkey, but almost certainly more widespread and frequent than records suggest. One Jun record from Black Sea Coastlands suggests that the species might occasionally breed in Turkey.

Thrace: Gala Gölü, 21 Aug 11 (M Özen).

Western Anatolia: Efes ruins, Selçuk, 01 May 07 (S Fisher).

Central Plateau: Kozanlı Gölü, 20 Apr 11 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu; photo).

East: Tuzluca ringing station, Iğdır: 15 trapped between 8 Apr and 16 May 2007; 4 trapped between 23 Aug and 23 Sep 07 (Kuzey Doğa Derneği; photo).

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*
Very rare summer visitor to at least three localities in East and recently discovered apparently breeding at one locality in South-East; elsewhere a very scarce passage migrant, although two recent (1998) records from the Central Plateau are also suggestive of breeding. Only records from new localities are presented.

East: Aras ringing station, Iğdır: 23 May 07 (Y Şaşmaz); 13 Aug 09; 6 Sep 09 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 101).

Booted Warbler *Hippolais* (*Iduna*) *caligata*
Vagrant, or perhaps regular passage migrant in very small numbers principally through eastern third of the country.

Black Sea Coastlands: up to 2, Rize, 5–8 Sep 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu, B Bilgen; photo; Plate 15; *Sandgrouse* 33: 91).

Plate 15. Booted Warbler *Hippolais* (*Iduna*) *caligata*, Rize, Black Sea Coastlands, 8 September 2010. © *Emin Yoğurtçuoğlu*

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*
Common summer visitor to South-East and parts of adjacent East; more widespread on passage. A record of one singing in Istanbul (Thrace) in May 1998, suspected to be the first documented in Europe (Kirwan *et al* 2003, 2008a), has recently been reviewed by the observer concerned, and the tape-recording re-identified as a Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* (L Svensson).

Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*
Vagrant. Second record for Turkey (the first was in Nov 1970), but quickly followed by another in spring 2013.

Black Sea Coastlands: Filyos, 29 Oct 11 (M Erturhan *et al*; photo; Plate 16; *Sandgrouse* 34: 106, where incorrectly listed for 30 October).

Plate 16. Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*, Filyos, Black Sea Coastlands, Turkey, 29 October 2011. © *Mustafa Erturhan*

Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax*
Seventh record and the first since 2003; six have been in Southern Coastlands (all but one of them at Göksu delta) and all have been in spring.

Southern Coastlands: Göksu delta, 19 Apr 10 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 187).

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*
Previously considered a vagrant, though some of the six records between 1969 and 1983 are not well documented. An apparently quite large breeding population

recently discovered at a site in South-East (Welch & Welch 2004), where seen again in 2009 (C Şekercioğlu), with a smaller one since found in Southern Coastlands (Gül & Atahan 2011). The latter at least is resident.

Southern Coastlands: Kırıkhan, Hatay: 8 (4 pairs), 23 Apr–1 May 10 (Gül & Atahan 2011); 2, 29 Oct 10 (M Atahan); 4, 30 Oct 10 (B Demirci; 5, 25 Dec 10 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 91); 2, 5 Jan 11 (M Atahan); 3, 11 Feb 11 (*Sandgrouse* 33: 208); 5, 3 Dec 11 (A Atahan).

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Considered hypothetical by Kirwan *et al* (2008a) given lack of sufficient documentation discriminating any of the previous five records from Green Warbler *P. nitidus*; we prefer to await definitive photographs and sound-recordings before adding this species to the Turkey bird list. The sixth and seventh records, but also lacking acceptable documentation.

Black Sea Coastlands: 2, Ayder plateau, 13 Jun 08 (J Tavares, E Çağlayan). Aras ringing station, Kars, 25 Sep 08 (M Özen; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

Vagrant. Second record for Turkey.

Black Sea Coastlands: probably first-winter, Pelitköy, Samsun, 19 Nov 11 (M Danacı; photo; Plate 17; *Sandgrouse* 34: 106).

Plate 17. Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*, Pelitköy, Samsun, Black Sea Coastlands, Turkey, 19 November 2011. © *Murat Danacı*

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Vagrant. The sixth to 12th records in Turkey suggest that this species might eventually prove to be a more or less regular passage migrant in tiny numbers.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: trapped and ringed, 17 Oct 08 (OMÜKUŞ; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100); trapped and ringed, 21 Mar 10 (*Sandgrouse* 32: 186); 24 Oct 10; 6, 25 Oct 10 (OMÜKUŞ; erroneously listed as 25–27 Nov in *Sandgrouse* 34: 105). Rize, 9 Jan 10 (M Genç, M Özcan; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186; Plate 18). Kadıköy, İstanbul, 22–23 Oct 11 (I Eroğlu *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105). Riva, İstanbul, 2 Nov 11 (M Bozdoğan; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Vagrant. First to third records.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta, 23 Oct 11 (N & K Yavuz; photo; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105). Riva, İstanbul, 2 Nov 11 (M Bozdoğan; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105).

East: Singing, Hasankeyf, near Batman, 26 Mar 10 (M Zucca; photo).

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce winter visitor to the western two-thirds of Turkey, most frequently to Thrace. The following comprise the first record for South-East (an individual of the nominate race, like the vast majority of other records in Turkey identified to subspecies) and the first three records of race *pallidirostris* (so-called Steppe Grey Shrike) from Central (Middle) Asia, which subspecies has sometimes been recommended for species status (Hernández *et al* 2004) or included within Southern Grey Shrike *L. meridionalis* (Dickinson 2003). Just one previous record of *meridionalis* in Turkey, a specimen taken in the environs of İstanbul, but subsequently lost and therefore impossible to validate (Mathey-Dupraz 1921, Kirwan *et al* 2008a). However, a recent molecular study found high levels of incongruence between molecular and other data with respect to the taxonomy of

Plate 18. Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*, Rize, Black Sea Coastlands, Turkey, 9 January 2010. © *Murat Genç*

Plate 19. Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor pallidirostris*, Rize harbour, Black Sea Coastlands, Turkey, 4 November 2010. © *Murat Genç*

Plate 20. First-winter Great Grey Shrike *Lanius e. excubitor*, west of Ceylanpınar, South-East, Turkey, 2 November 2009. © *Emin Yoğurtçuoğlu*

Plate 21. Turkestan Shrike *Lanius isabellinus phoenicuroides*, Gediz delta, İzmir, Western Anatolia, Turkey, 21 January 2008. © *Zafer Kurnuç*

Plate 22. Daurian Shrike *Lanius i. isabellinus*, Karkamış dam, South-East, Turkey, 12 October 2008. © *Fatih İzler*

'grey shrikes' (Olsson *et al* 2009). As a result, we retain all records under *excubitor* until such time as a more robust dataset pertaining to this group becomes available.

Black Sea Coastlands: *L. e. pallidirostris*, Yomra, Trabzon: 8 Sep 2010 (K & V Kahraman; *Sandgrouse* 33: 91); 11 Sep 2011 (E Yogurtçuoglu *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 34: 105). *L. e. pallidirostris*, Rize harbour, 4 Nov 2010 (M Genç; Plate 19; *Sandgrouse* 33: 91, where incorrectly dated 26 Nov).

South-East: first-winter, race *excubitor*, west of Ceylanpınar, 2 Nov 09 (JL Copete, D López-Velasco, E Yogurtçuoğulu; photo; Plate 20).

Isabelline Shrike *Lanus isabellinus*

Vagrant or perhaps very scarce passage migrant, with two recent winter records. The 16th to 22nd records in Turkey. Thus far, of those definitely ascribed to form, only *phoenicuroides* (Turkestan Shrike) and *isabellinus* (Daurian Shrike) have been recorded. Future observers of these red-tailed shrikes in the country are encouraged to attempt, where possible, racial identification and, preferably, to document occurrence with photos.

Black Sea Coastlands: first-winter female *isabellinus*, Gelemen, Kızılırmak delta, 24 Nov 07 (OMÜKUS; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 17, 20). Filyos delta, Zonguldak, 30 Sep–2 Oct 08 (Ö Gemili; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Western Anatolia: second-calendar year male *phoenicuroides*, Gediz delta, 19–21 Jan 08 (O Döndüren, B Öztürk; photo; Plate 21; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223). Ayvalık, Balıkesir, 26 Apr 09 (G Fisher).

Southern Coastlands: Yamansaz, Antalya, 5 Oct 08 (M Özen, Ö Sözüer; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). Kırıkhan, Hatay, 12 Dec 08 (A & M Atahan; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

South-East: probably immature female *isabellinus*, Karkamış dam, 12 Oct 08 (A Atahan, F Izler; photo; Plate 22; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Eurasian (Spotted) Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryoctactes*

Vagrant. Third to fifth records in Turkey, following those on the Central Plateau in Nov 1966 and off Black Sea Coastlands in Oct 2005. Elsewhere in the Middle East, the species is

considered 'irregular' in northern Iran in the southern Caspian region (Hüe & Etchécopar 1970), from where there is at least one recent record, in Mar 2005 (Sehhatisabet *et al* 2006), with a recent report from Syria, in 'late summer' 2006 which, although published, lacks the appropriate level of documentation necessary for acceptance as a first record (Ottelin 2008). Also a recent documented record from Azerbaijan, in Sep 2011 (Heiss 2013).

Thrace: 2, Durusu, near Çatalca, İstanbul, 16 Oct–8 Dec 08 (İKGT *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100). 2, Kemerburgaz, 18 Jan 09 (Ö Üner; photo) were possibly same individuals.

East: Erzurum plain, 8 Oct 08 (C Sevindi; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 100).

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*
Very rare and irregular winter visitor, with one summer record from Black Sea Coastlands (Kirwan & Martins 2000).

Thrace: Beykoz, İstanbul, 12 Dec 10 (A Ertan).

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githaginens*
Rare summer visitor to South-East and East, with other records from Southern Coastlands; has bred in the first two regions. Occurrence perhaps due more to nomadic rather than strictly seasonal movements. Records listed here represent previously unknown localities for the species; those in Kızılırmak delta are first for Black Sea Coastlands.

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta: 1 May 10 (S Barış), 30 Apr–1 May 11 (Ü Malkoçoğlu *et al*; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

Southern Coastlands: Samandağ, Hatay, 1 Apr 08 (A & M Atahan).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*
Irregular winter visitor, occasionally in quite large numbers, mainly to Black Sea Coastlands. Those records presented here bring the total of acceptable records in Turkey to 12 (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Black Sea Coastlands: Kızılırmak delta, 6 Feb 10 (O Sağlam; photo; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186). Kefken, Kocaeli, 13 Nov 11 (M Bozdoğan; *Sandgrouse* 34: 106). Bartın, 18 Nov 11 (NK Özkazanç; *Sandgrouse* 34: 106).

Thrace: Vize, 22 Oct 07 (Ö Necipoğlu; photo). Terkos Gölü, Istanbul, 13–14 Dec 08 (S Bilgin, KA Boyla, T Türker; *Sandgrouse* 31: 101).

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*
Vagrant. The second record, following the first in Nov 2006 (Bekir 2007).

Thrace: İğneada, 11 Feb 10 (E Yoğurtçuoğlu, M Bozdoğan *et al*; photo; Plate 23; *Sandgrouse* 32: 186).

Plate 23. Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*, İğneada, Thrace, Turkey, 11 February 2010. © *Emine Nurhan Tekin*

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
Vagrant, but occurrence poorly documented, with no extant specimens and just two previous modern (post-1966) reports, both in Black Sea Coastlands in Apr 1992, which

Plate 24. Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*, Subaşı, Hatay, Southern Coastlands, Turkey, 13 November 2010. © *Mehmet Atahan*

Plate 25. Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*, Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul, Thrace, Turkey, 11 January 2008. © *Fikret Can*

although made by observers familiar with the species lacked documentation (Kirwan *et al* 2008a), making the two records in November 2010 the first to be fully documented in the country.

Southern Coastlands: Subaşı, Hatay, 13 Nov 10 (M Atahan; photo; Plate 24; *Sandgrouse* 33: 91).

South-East: Karkamış, Gaziantep, 27 Nov 10 (F İzler; *Sandgrouse* 33: 91).

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Vagrant. Second to fifth modern (post-1966) records (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Black Sea Coastlands: Karasu, Sakarya, 18–20 Jan 08 (S Bekir *et al*; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223). Ordu, 11 Dec 08 (A Karataş; photo).

Western Anatolia: Uludağ University campus, Bursa, 14 Feb 09 (M Coşkun; photo).

Central Plateau: Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 15 Mar 09 (K Kırlangıç; photo; *Sandgrouse* 31: 220).

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Vagrant. The tenth to 13th records in Turkey (Kirwan *et al* 2008a).

Thrace: adult female, Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul, 10–16 Jan 08 (F Can; photo; *Sandgrouse* 30: 223; Plate 25).

Central Plateau: Yahyalı, Kayseri, 31 Jan 11 (M Ünlü; photo; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208).

East: Akçadağ, Malatya, 30 Jan 08 (M Erturhan). Trapped and ringed, Tuzluca ringing station, Iğdır, 16 Mar 11 (Kuzey Doğa Derneği; *Sandgrouse* 33: 208, where stated to be 13 Mar).

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Some notes on ageing and sexing Watercocks *Gallicrex cineria* with specific reference to a vagrant bird in Oman

STEPHEN MENZIE

On 6 January 2013, a Watercock *Gallicrex cineria* was discovered by SM, Oscar Nilsson, Andreas Wernersson and Raul Vicente at Khawr Rawri, Dhofar, southern Oman (Plates 1–3). It is the fourth record for Oman and, following a record from Socotra in 2011, apparently the fifth record for the OSME region (Eriksen & Victor 2013, Porter & Suleiman 2011). Following the discovery of the Khawr Rawri individual, an investigation was conducted by SM to determine if it was possible to age and/or sex this individual reliably. Skins were examined at the Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, and the World Museum, Liverpool. Material available for study was limited; only birds collected during the non-breeding season were considered, with six skins at Natural History Museum Denmark and eight at World Museum Liverpool. Specimens examined were collected in India (1), Malaysia (1), Indonesia (3), Philippines (2), Singapore (2), Thailand (3), and unknown (2).

The Watercock is strongly dimorphic in size and during the breeding season in plumage (Taylor & van Perlo 1998). Males are considerably larger than females with wing lengths given by Taylor & van Perlo (1998) as 175–224 mm for males and 163–192 mm for females; culmen length (including shield) as 41–65 and 32–43 mm respectively; tail as 66–83 and 53–70 mm; and tarsus as 64–78 and 53–67 mm. The species is monotypic (Taylor & van Perlo 1998, Taylor 1996) with no reported variation in size across its range. Thus, sexing of museum skins by size was reasonably straightforward. Overall size difference was substantial enough that differences were clearly visible when specimens of different

Plate 1. The immature male Watercock *Gallicrex cineria*, Khawr Rawri, Dhofar, Oman, 6 January 2013. © *Stephen Menzie*

Plate 2. The immature male Watercock *Gallicrex cineria*, Khawr Rawri, Dhofar, Oman, 6 January 2013. © *Stephen Menzie*

Plate 3. The immature male Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*, Khawr Rawri, Dhofar, Oman, 6 January 2013. © *Stephen Menzie*

sex were compared side-by-side (Plate 4). Leg length was visibly much longer in males than in females, while bill depth gave an additional visual reference that should be useful for sexing in the field. Average and range of bill depth at base, measured to 0.1 mm, were: 14.7 (14.0–15.2 mm, n = 3) in males, 13.0 (12.5–13.6 mm, n = 4) in females. Skins on which the bill was visibly partly open were not measured.

Details of moult and ageing in Watercock are scant in the standard references (Ali & Ripley 1980, Grimmett *et al* 2012, Porter & Aspinall 2010, Rasmussen & Anderton 2012, Roberts 1991, Taylor 1996). Ripley & Lansdowne (1984) stated of immature birds, "like the [adult] female but less barred below and more tawny generally". Wells (1999) stated, "Iris pale grey-brown (juvenile) or deep brown (adult)". Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) offered the most in-depth description, "Juvenile and immature as female but can be more rufous-buff above and on head and neck; immature male can be paler grey overall, some with prominent rufous-buff fringes on head and body". Whilst not stated, their description of 'immature male' presumably refers to the breeding plumage acquired in the bird's second calendar-year. There is no information regarding the age or sex of birds previously recorded in Oman (Eriksen & Victor 2013), though Porter & Suleiman (2011) stated of the Socotra bird, "the unbarred underparts...and the pale brown crown suggest it was an immature, which would have hatched the previous year." A vagrant bird from the Australian Cocos Islands, in December 2005, was also aged as an immature (first calendar-year) due to its incomplete breast barring (Chongkin *et al* 2009). Primary moult was stated by Taylor & van Perlo (1998) to be 'possibly simultaneous'. Specific details regarding post-juvenile moult are entirely lacking.

To allow comparison with the Khawr Rawri bird, only museum specimens collected between October and April—when birds were in or largely in non-breeding plumage—were examined. As a starting point, the primary feathers of each specimen were examined. Using shape, wear and colour, two categories could be discerned: specimens with pointed tips to the brownish and apparently worn outer primaries (Plate 5), and specimens with rounder tips to the blacker and apparently less worn outer primaries

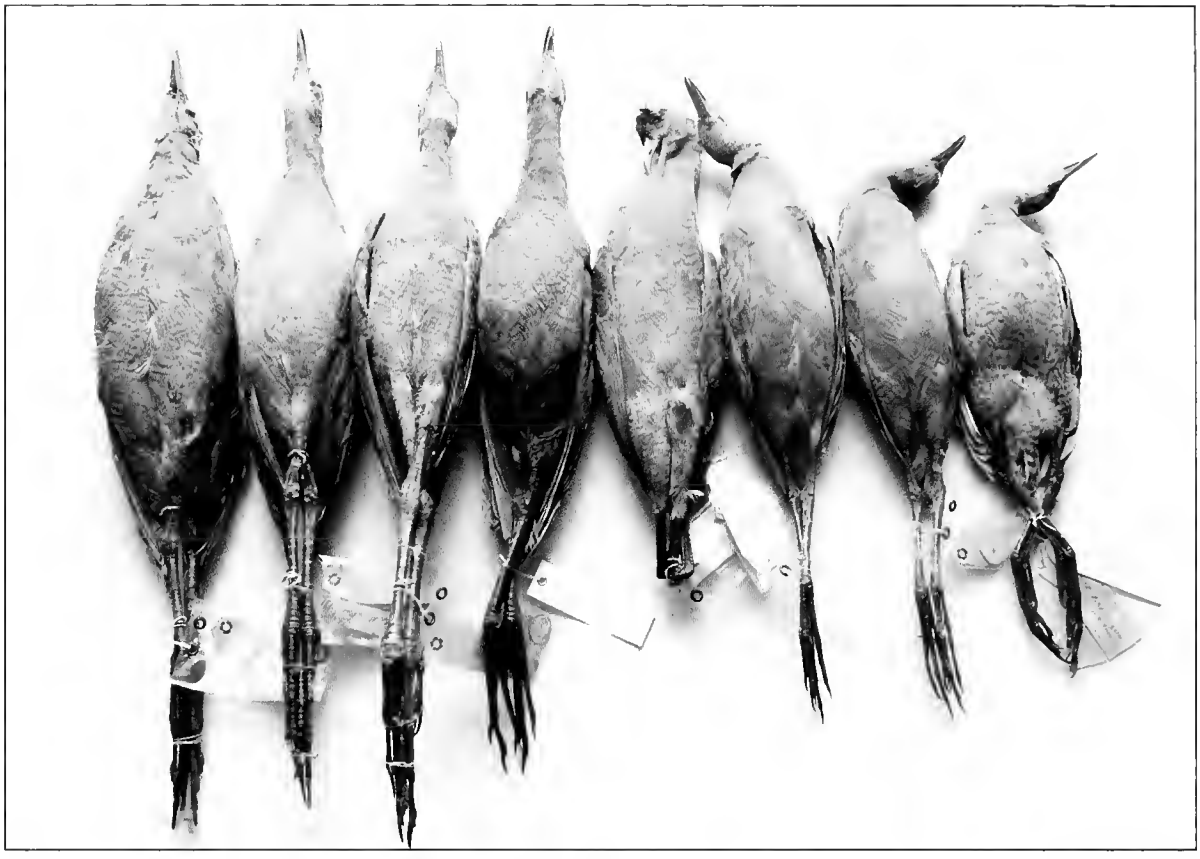

Plate 4. Four male (left) and four female Watercocks *Gollicrex cinerio*. © *Notionol Museums Liverpool*

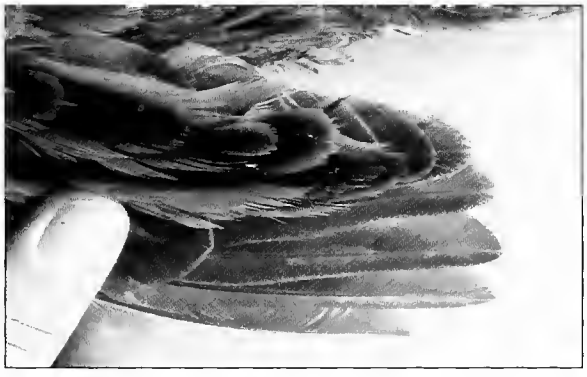

Plate 5. Worn and pointed outer primaries of a Watercock *Gollicrex cineria*, considered to belong to an immature bird, collected in March. © *Noturol History Museum of Denmork*

Plate 6. Relatively fresh and rounded outer primaries of a Watercock *Gollicrex cineria*, considered to be an adult bird, collected in January. © *Natural History Museum of Denmark*

(Plate 6). This feature has not previously been noted in the Watercock but is known to be a reliable ageing criterion for other Rallidae *eg* Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* (pers obs) and Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* (Baker 1993). It was therefore taken that this feature could be used as a first step for ageing the Watercock specimens. Following the same principles as in related species, it was assumed that the worn and pointed outer primaries related to immature (first/second calendar-year) birds while the less worn and more rounded outer primaries related to adult birds. I henceforth refer to the two groups as immature (n = 9) and adult (n = 5), though note that none of the skins examined were of known age prior to examination. Comparing immature and adult birds, a number of plumage features were found that should prove useful for ageing in the field.

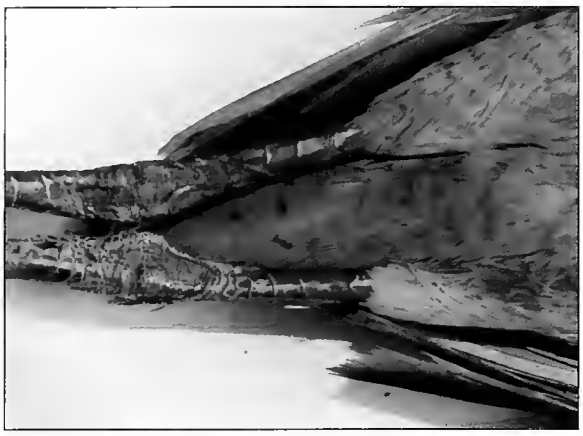

Plate 7. Undertail coverts of a Watercock *Gallicrex cineria*, aged as immature. © *Natural History Museum of Denmark*

Plate 8. Undertail coverts of a Watercock *Gallicrex cineria*, aged as adult. © *Natural History Museum of Denmark*

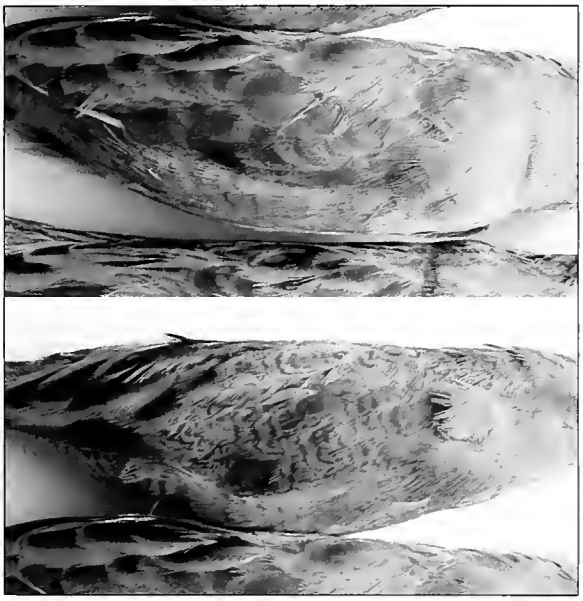

Plate 9. Wing coverts of an immature male (top) and an immature female Watercock *Gallicrex cineria*. © *National Museums Liverpool*

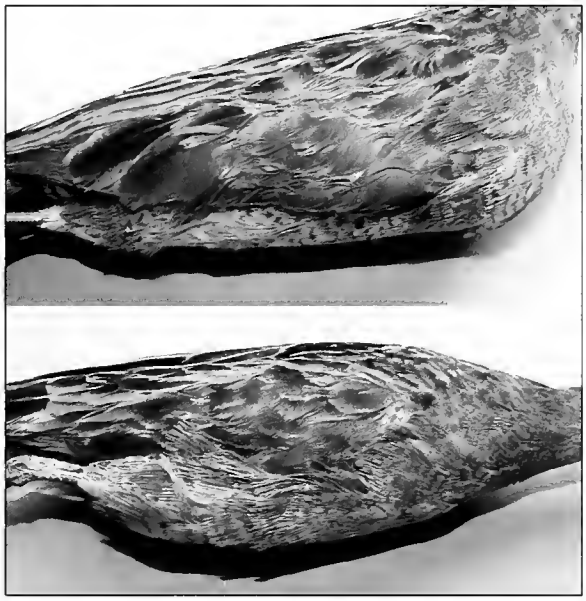

Plate 10. Wing coverts of an adult male (top) and an adult female Watercock *Gallicrex cineria*. © *Natural History Museum of Denmark*

Undertail coverts. The undertail coverts of immature birds were washed cinnamon-buff with weak or no barring (Plate 7). On adult birds, undertail coverts were whiter with bolder dark barring (Plate 8). This feature appeared to be independent of sex.

Wing coverts. Wing coverts of immature birds were overall brown-toned, darker brown variably variegated paler cinnamon-buff in the centre and with a broad cinnamon-buff feather fringe (Plate 9). In adult birds, wing coverts were overall a rather smooth dark grey with a blue-grey bloom to the feather centres and a broad blue-grey feather fringe (Plate 10). In immatures, the greater coverts appeared to be less variegated in males than in females; in adults, the greater coverts were overall darker and more bluish in males, browner tinged in females.

Underpart colour. Underpart barring was more prominent on males than on females. On average, immature birds were less heavily barred and warmer toned below than adult birds, though there was overlap.

Upperpart colour. Although differences were subtle, the upperparts of immature birds were on average warmer toned than on adults. Males showed, on average, darker less variegated feather centres than females.

Cap colour. Cap colour was similar in many birds. On average, the cap was blacker in adults but in many cases coloration was similar enough as to not be of practical use in determining age. On three immature birds, the cap was distinctly brown and showed a diffuse rear border, blending into the nape. It seems that a brown and diffusely rear-bordered cap is a feature of immatures, though a dark-looking more solid cap is not necessarily diagnostic of an adult. Males appeared to show on average a blacker crown than females.

KHAWR RAWRI BIRD

The Khawr Rawri bird showed cinnamon-buff undertail coverts with sparse broken barring (Plate 2). The wing coverts were dark with a broad brown-buff fringe, and lacked any blue or grey tones. The bird displayed rather warm cinnamon-toned underparts. In all, this bird fits the criteria deduced from museum specimens for an immature bird, hatched the previous year. Additionally, photos appear to show the iris as being rather pale and grey-tinged (Plate 2 inset), fitting well with the description given by Wells (1999) for juvenile birds. Although no direct comparison is available, the bird appeared large. It was long-legged with the body appearing high off the ground. The bill was large and thick. The apparent size and dimensions of the bird fit with that noted on skins for a male. The relatively heavy flank barring and dark-centred wing coverts (Plate 3) also agree with this conclusion.

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Estimating Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* numbers in western Cyprus

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The Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* is widespread and relatively common in western Cyprus, particularly so in cereal-growing areas and at lower altitudes. In Pafos District it is virtually absent from natural vegetation and its numbers are therefore heavily dependent upon agricultural practices. By recording calling males in a 2.4 km^2 farmed valley near Polis, and also along a series of foot transects across a much wider area, both counted over a six-year period, numbers of Black Francolins were estimated at between 344 and 500 pairs in Pafos District, although this figure needs to be used with caution; the Cyprus Game and Fauna Service figures are much higher. There is some evidence of a slow decline during the years 2006–2011, though the species may be spreading into more upland areas, especially where cereals are grown or hay is cut, both of which have become more common recently. Methods of estimating the species' numbers are discussed; since these depend largely upon calling males and there is evidence that only a fairly small proportion of males can be heard calling at any one time, a number of repeat counts are needed for territorial mapping to prevent under-estimating actual numbers.

INTRODUCTION

The Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus* occurs east to northeast India, with only a small proportion of the total population being found in Europe, where Cyprus is one of only four European countries with a population of the species, the others being Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Internationally, its conservation status is least concern (BirdLife International 2013), but within Europe it is regarded as SPEC 3 (declining: moderate continuing decline, BirdLife International 2004). Within the western Palearctic it occurs in a wide variety of habitats, including thickets and thorn, vineyards and orchards (Snow & Perrins 1998). However, it rarely occurred in any of these habitats during my Cyprus surveys. Snow & Perrins (1998) also listed "fields of barley and wheat flanked by bushes", which is much more typical of the bird's habitat in western Cyprus.

In western Cyprus, the Black Francolin is widely distributed, but almost entirely in man-modified habitats and only rarely in the more natural scrub areas (phrygana, machis *etc*) and never in my experience in pine forest, although it has been recorded twice in forests in the north of the island by Peter Flint (pers comm) and it also occurs there in dense juniper scrub (Flint & Stewart 1992). It is most numerous in cultivated areas, especially cereals (barley and wheat). Flint & Stewart (1992) noted that it is particularly common in coastal areas but does occur up to 400 m asl; records in recent years have increased the altitudinal range to 1000 m (Whaley & Dawes 2003). It was apparently very common prior to the 1980s, but then declined in most areas due to excessive hunting (Flint & Stewart 1992 and references therein). Snow & Perrins (1998) gave a figure of 350–450 pairs for the whole island, which seems likely to be too low. Improved control of hunting has led to increasing numbers and distribution in the last two or three decades. Recent annual reports from BirdLife Cyprus confirm that the species is now widely distributed across the whole island, and the estimate by BirdLife International (2004) of 2000–5000 pairs for Cyprus seems much more likely. This represents about a third of their estimate for Black Francolins in Europe. Here I am concerned both with the methods of obtaining population estimates for this sometimes noisy but otherwise elusive species, as well as its actual numbers. The Cyprus Game and Fauna Service (formerly the Game Fund) make periodic counts of Black Francolins, by driving along minor roads (Hadjigerou *et al* 2004, N Kassinis pers comm). Their data help to inform the annual quotas for hunters. The present study extends and complements that work.

METHODS

I made counts of all landbird species from 2006–2011 by walking along 38 transects in western Cyprus, predominantly in Pafos administrative district (Pafos District). In most years, each transect was counted twice, but in some years three times and occasionally only once, with a few routes being missed in two of the years. All counts were made in the breeding season, mostly between mid April and late May. Transect lengths varied, but most were from 1–2 km long, and each was sited in a particular land-use type of which there were six: forest, uncultivated, grass/phrygana, arable, permanent crops and built-up. The distance of each bird from the transect line was also recorded. Using the software DISTANCE (Buckland *et al* 1993, Thomas *et al* 2010), the density of Black Francolins at each site was calculated. Black Francolins were only recorded along ten of these transects, all in Pafos District, and only at the four low-to-mid altitude arable sites were they at all common (see Appendix 1).

A second breeding season method, again in Pafos District, consisted of plotting calling males in a section of the Chrysochou valley, from just south of Chrysochou village to the outskirts of Prodromi and Polis town in the north. This encompassed an area of *c*2.4 km^2, throughout which Black Francolins can frequently be heard in the spring. This area was surveyed from a slow-moving car, using farm tracks with little or no traffic. I made from 10–18 counts per season, which varied from 20–70 minutes and were between 07.00–19.00 h. The average ambient shade temperature during counts was recorded from an electronic thermometer. Any one count only covered part of the area but collectively the set of counts for each year covered every part of the area several times. Additional observations were made from a raised listening point on the road from Tera to Chrysochou. Birds were plotted on a large-scale map of the area, using a different symbol for each visit. Alongside each symbol, the land-use was noted, except where the bird was near a boundary between two or more types, and I could not be sure from which the bird was calling (almost all records were of birds calling).

At the end of each season, the number of territorial males was estimated from the maps (Bibby *et al* 2000). Most records formed clusters of from two to five symbols close together, although sometimes one or two were less close and a decision based upon experience had to be made as to whether one bird was involved or two. This was helped in about half of such cases when the two symbols were from the same visit: clearly that had to be two birds. Occasional symbols were isolated—less than 5% of them—and these birds were also counted, for two reasons. Firstly, as will be seen, only about 20% of the birds finally recorded were heard calling on any one visit, so isolated birds may simply have been missed by chance on some visits. Secondly, birds closer together (*eg* 200–300 m apart) called more often than birds towards the edge of the area, where most of the isolated records occurred.

In 1994, the Government of Cyprus published a *Census of Agriculture*, which gave the areas of land under different forms of land use (Census of Agriculture 1994). These data were, however, incomplete and Pomeroy and Walsh (2006) used them as a basis to estimate total areas for the whole of Pafos District at that time; these are the figures used in this paper (Appendix 2). Since then, one change that may have favoured Black Francolins has been the penning of livestock rather than having them graze on the hills. This has resulted in two important changes. Firstly, the total amount of vegetation has increased, being ungrazed, at least until it is cut for hay or silage. Secondly, some former grasslands are now growing cereals; altogether, however, these areas of cut vegetation are not extensive. Nevertheless, the presence of Black Francolins around Kritou Terra, Arodhes and Drinia (Table 1) may be a result of these changes.

RESULTS

Over six years, 85 birds were recorded during 112 transect counts (see Table 1 and Appendix 1), and 164 were plotted in the Chrysochou valley (not all were different individuals, as both transects, and especially valley counts, were repeated within each year). It is clear that, in this part of Cyprus, the Black Francolin is predominantly a bird of arable land, with 81 of 85 records from that habitat, and all but seven of those from low and mid altitudes (Table 1). Both methods showed a probable gradual decline in numbers 2006–2011. For the Chrysochou valley (Figure 1a), the decline was statistically significant ($P < 0.02$), whilst for the transects (Figure 1 b) the decline, although suggestive, was not significant.

Data collected from Chrysochou valley provide some indications of how best to plan such counts. Thus, the average numbers recorded as calling showed a gradual increase from mid April to early June (Table 2, note that the sample for late May/early June is only four visits). The time of day during which the visits took place did not have a big effect on the results (Table 3) but it does seem better to make counts before 10.00 h in the morning, when it is also likely to be cooler: counts were lower when the temperature was above 25°C (Table 4). The number of calling birds on any one visit to the Chrysochou valley was typically 3 or 4 (range 0–12), and the number of presumed territories that were recorded thus increased with successive visits, so that it took a number of visits to accumulate the positions of all (or at least most) of the males in the area. Figure 2 shows this as examples for two years. In both cases it seems likely that one or two more territories would have been located by continuing with visits for a further week or so. Thus the numbers of territories that I report here are minima. Cereals covered nearly half of the Chrysochou valley study area in 2011 (Figure 3b), but this was only one of five main forms of land use that year, and indeed all years during the period of study. The figure also shows (averaged over several years) the proportions of birds recorded from each type—in fact, where it was possible to determine where the bird was with some certainty, most were in cereals and the rest in fallow areas (which included a few small hay fields).

DISTANCE analysis showed that the effective width (ESW) counted in transects was from 97–99 m on either side of the transect line, but with fairly wide confidence limits. Appendix 2 gives total transect lengths for each type of land use; hence the effective area counted for each transect could be calculated, and when multiplied by the numbers of birds, yielded an estimate of density (Appendix 2). This was highest in the low-to-mid altitude arable areas, where it averaged *c*4.5 birds per km^2, compared to just over one bird

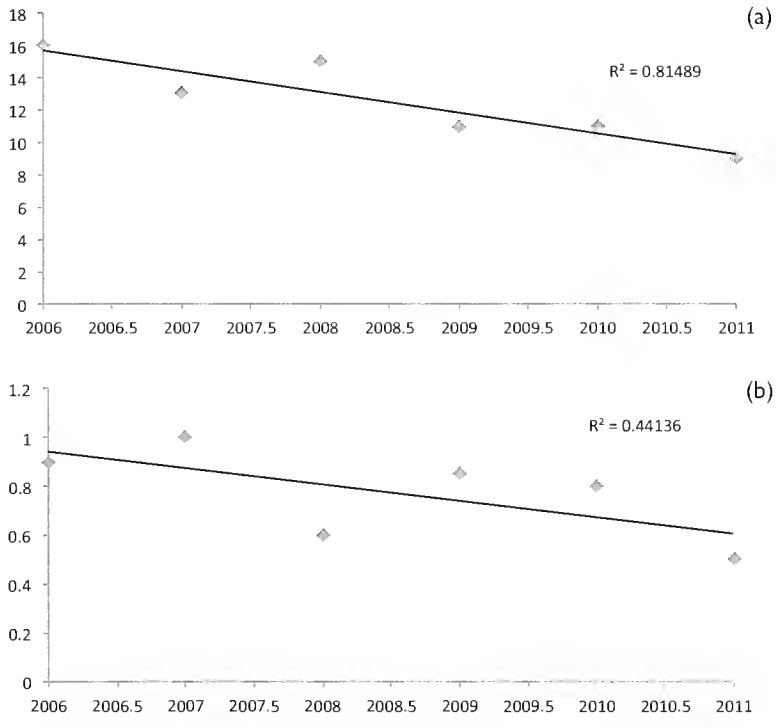

Figure 1. The estimated numbers of birds (a) in the Chrysochou valley and (b) per kilometre of transect. The latter is an average from the 8 transects along which the species was recorded.

Table 1. Details of the foot transects along which Black Francolins were recorded and estimates of the density of calling males.

Land use (number of transects)	Transect name	Length (m)	Altitude (m)	Numbers of birds			Mean density (birds km^{-2})
				total birds	no. of counts	average no. of birds	
Uncultivated (9)	Lara juniper	1680	50	1	11	0.09	0.05
Grass/phrygana (8)	Kritou Terra	930	490	1	9	0.11	0
Low–mid altitude arable (4)	Limui	1180	80	21	14	1.50	4.54
	Latchi	1200	30	22	13	1.69	
	Nata	2150	120	11	12	0.92	
	Terra	2100	350	22	14	1.57	
Higher altitude arable (4)	Arodhes[a]	800	620	5	12	0.42	0.87
	Drinia[a]	550	550	2	9	0.22	
Permanent	Ghoudhi	830	60	1	0	0.10	0.20
Crops (7)	Neo Chorio	910	220	1	10	0.10	

[a] sections of longer transects, the remaining parts being grass/phrygana

Table 2. Average number of Black Francolins recorded in four ten-day and a final three-day period at Chrysochou valley. Data are from 2006–2011 combined.

Period		Number of visits	Number of birds	Average no. of birds
April	21–30	18	42	2.33
May	01–10	18	41	2.28
	11–20	9	30	3.11
	21–30	7	28	4.00
May 31–June 02		4	23	5.75

Table 3. Average number of Black Francolins recorded in Chrysochou valley at various times of day.

Time period	Number of visits	Number of birds	Average no. of birds
07.00–10.00 h	28	92	3.29
10.00–16.00 h	17	32	1.88
16.00–19.00 h	11	25	2.27

Table 4. Average number of Black Francolins recorded in Chrysochou valley at different temperatures.

Temperature (°C)	Number of visits	Number of birds	Average no. of birds
11–15	4	9	2.25
16–20	10	25	2.50
21–25	26	64	2.45
26–30	3	5	1.67
31–35	2	3	1.50

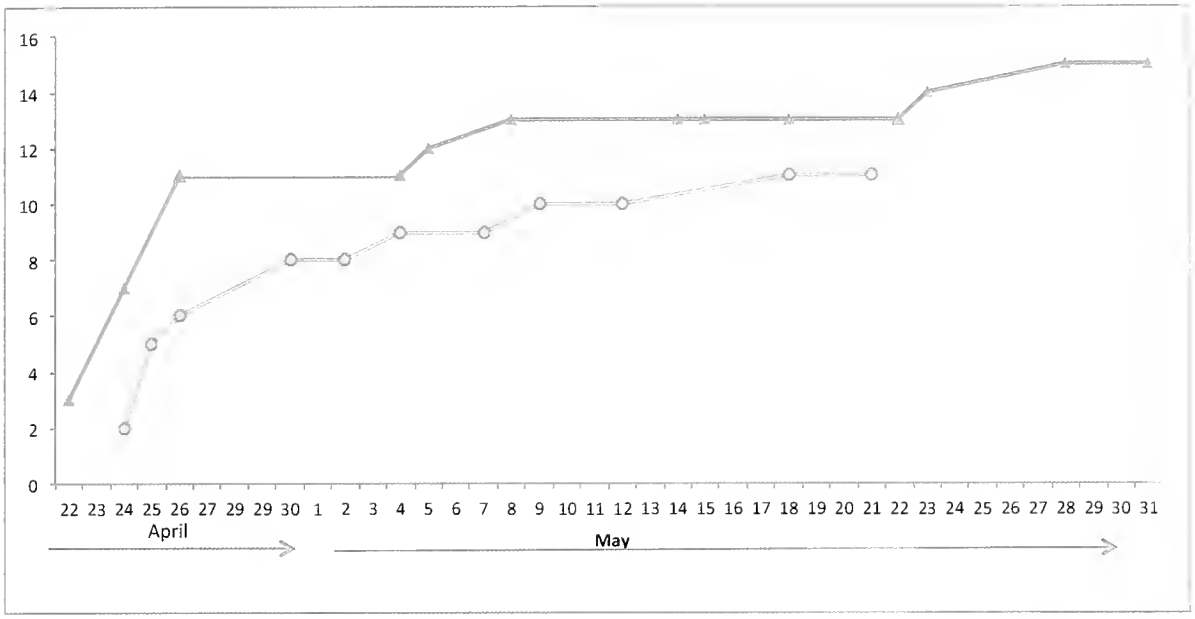

Figure 2. Cumulative totals of calling Black Francolins in Chrysochou valley over several weeks, April/May, in 2008 (triangles) and 2010 (circles).

per km^2 in the upland areas and far fewer in the only other sites where the species was recorded. The average density of calling birds in the Chrysochou valley was 5.21 km^{-2} over the six years, a little higher than for the foot transects in the comparable low to mid altitude arable areas, and also comparable to the figure of one male per 15–30 ha in parts of Turkey (Kirwan *et al* 2008). The density estimates given in Appendix 2 can form the basis of an estimate of the total population of Black Francolins in Pafos District. Using the estimates for the area of each main land use type in the district (as described in Methods), the figures in Appendix 2 were obtained. Altogether, these figures probably underestimate the numbers of males (or pairs since the species is monogamous, Snow & Perrins 1998), because, as suggested by Figure 2, making more counts would probably have added a few more birds to the Chrysochou counts, and in the same way the transect counts, although they typically lasted for about an hour, will almost inevitably have missed any birds not calling (sight records were rare). Further, birds in the grassland and uncultivated areas were sparsely distributed and probably called less as a result.

DISCUSSION

There is evidence that Black Francolin numbers have changed considerably in the past, and in 1989 were estimated to be as low as 150 birds in western Cyprus (Flint & Stewart 1992). The Cyprus Game and Fauna Service have used transect counts along minor roads to make counts of calling males (Hadjigerou *et al* 2004) and they estimated that in 2004 there were 36 000 birds in Pafos District which, even allowing for the release of captive-bred birds, seems to represent a remarkable increase. Their total of 36 000 in fact represented an estimated 6000 pairs, with each pair having produced four surviving young before the start of the hunting season in November. Even so, their figure is more than six times higher than my upper confidence limit for the period 2006–2011. And although my figures clearly suggest a declining trend in the past few years, the hunters themselves claimed to have shot 11 336 birds in the 2011–2012 season (N Kassinis pers comm). Other estimates include the figure of 2000–5000 pairs for the whole island by BirdLife International (2004). If the species now occurs in all parts of the island, as suggested by the BirdLife Cyprus

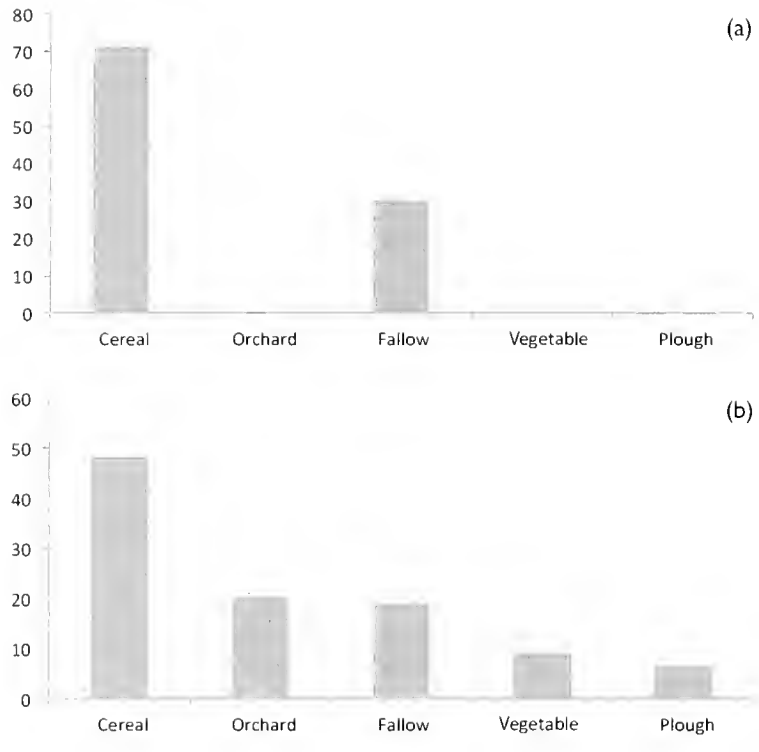

Figure 3. (a) Numbers of calling Black Francolins (expressed as percentages) in different land-use types in Chrysochou valley (n = 79), compared to the percentage frequency with which each land-use type occurred there in 2011 (n = 100), as shown in (b).

annual reports for recent years, and Pafos District is 15% of Cyprus by area, this would give a figure of 300–750 pairs for Pafos District, fairly consistent with my estimates of 344–500 pairs. Both methods used in this study suggest an overall decline in numbers of Black Francolins over a period of five years. The final year, 2011, showed the biggest declines, possibly due to a shorter recording period than previous years, although the ten counts at Chrysochou should have been adequate. Agricultural intensification (Panayides *et al* 2011, Shirihai 1996) and too much hunting are possible reasons for declining populations of birds in farmland, but further studies are clearly needed to clarify this situation.

Both methods are relatively time consuming in relation to the amounts of data collected, meaning that Black Francolins are not easy to monitor. This is further complicated by the probability that birds at low density, receiving no answers to their calls, may call less frequently than those in areas of high density, such as the Chrysochou valley. If that is the case, then birds in areas of lower density are more likely to be missed, and their populations under-estimated, especially in vehicle counts, where a calling bird could only be heard for a few minutes (foot transects were compact in shape, and a calling bird would usually have been in range for at least half-an-hour). But the importance of Black Francolins to the hunting community necessitates a rigorous monitoring programme. The mapping of calling males, or the use of transect counting on foot, are likely to be the best methods.

As with many species it is usually best to make counts before 10.00 h and when the temperature is below 25°C. Surprisingly, counts were higher during the later periods of this study (Table 1), and presumably could have been higher still at even later dates. Small young of this species are observed late April–late August (BirdLife Cyprus annual bird reports) so egg-laying must begin by early April. Since many cereal fields have been cut by mid May, successful breeding presumably has either to be early, or in uncut fallow areas. The species is described by Snow & Perrins (1998) as omnivorous so the fact that many herbaceous plants are dry by May will not necessarily reduce the food supply available for both adults and young. Most species are more vocal when courting and earlier, rather than later, in the breeding season. From the evidence of this study, early morning counts in June may be the best, although this conclusion is only provisional. The evidence of Figure 2 indicates that most, though not all, birds had been recorded after *c*6–8 visits; perhaps fewer visits would be needed if counts were made later in the season. It is clear that, in western Cyprus at least, Black Francolins are heavily dependent on man-made habitats,

with cereal crops being particularly important, and other forms of land use holding far fewer (and none in some, Appendix 2).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Appendix 1. Numbers of Black Francolins counted in the ten transects listed in Table 1 where they were recorded. Thus 2/1/1 means that 2, 1 and 1 birds respectively were recorded in three counts for that transect in that year. A blank indicates no counts.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
UNCULTIVATED						
Lara juniper	0	0	0/0/0	0/0	0/1	0/0
GRASS/PHRYGANA						
Kritou Terra	0/1	0	0/0	0	0/0	0
ARABLE						
low/mid-altitude						
Limni	3/2	2/0/2	2/1/0	1/2	2/1	2/1
Latchi	2/1	3/2/4	2/1/1	1/0	2/1	1
Nata		0/1/0	0/1/0	5/1	1/1	0/1
Terra	1/2	2/2/1	1/3/3	0/2	2/1	1/1
higher altitude[a]						
Drinia	0/1	0/1/0	0/0	0	0	
Arodhes	1/1	1/0/1	0/0	0	0/1	0/0
PERMANENT CROPS						
Ghoudhi: citrus/olive	0/1	0	1/0/0	0		

Neo Chorio: carob/olive	0	0	0/0	0	1/0	0/0
Total birds	16	22	16	12	14	7
Number of counts	18	22	26	15	17	14
Average number of birds per count[b]	0.89	1.00	0.62	0.80	0.82	0.50

[a] see text.

[b] strictly speaking, the averages are not quite comparable because of differences in numbers of counts per site between years.

Appendix 2. The population of Black Francolins in Pafos District calculated from transect data using DISTANCE. ESW = estimated strip width. LCL, UCL = lower, upper 95% confidence limits.

		Area (km^2)[a] of land-use type	**No. counts 2007–10**	**Length (km)**	**ESW (n = 127)**	**LCL**	**UCL**	**Total birds counted**
Forest		328	10	11.28				0
Uncultivated		345	10	9.90	97.0	80.8	116.6	1
Grass/phrygana		475	8	6.05				
Arable	Low	80	10	6.49	98.8	81.6	119.7	57
	Up	21	8	2.90				4
Permanent Crops		107	8	6.41	97.0	80.8	116.6	2
Built-up		40	9	7.14				0
Total		1396	63	50.13				

		Area surveyed (km^2)[b]		**Density (birds km^{-2})[c]**		**Total population[d]**	
		LCL	UCL	LCL	UCL	LCL	UCL
Forest							0
Uncultivated		16.00	23.08	0.0434	0.0625	15	22
Grass/phrygana							0
Arable	Low	10.59	15.41	3.70	5.38	296	431
	Up	3.79	5.51	0.725	1.06	15	22
Permanent Crops		8.287	11.938	0.168	0.241	18	25
Built-up						0	0
TOTAL						344	500

[a] from Pomeroy & Walsh (2006), with their 101 km^2 of arable divided into 80 for lowland (to 400 m asl) and 21 km^2 for upland (formerly grass/phrygana), this division being based upon field observation

[b] total transect length × no. of counts × LCL/UCL [in km^2] × 2. [× 2 because LCL/UCL apply to both sides of route]

[c] number of birds counted/area surveyed (= [b])

[d] density × area of land use type

The First Record of Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* in Iran

SEYED AMIR TALEBI GOL†, ARASH MOODY & MOHAMMAD TOHIDIFAR

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* breeds in the southeastern Russian Federation, northern Mongolia and northeastern China. The main wintering grounds are located in southern China and northern Vietnam (BirdLife International 2013). Although the main migration routes of the species seem to follow a simple north–south path, the bird occurs regularly in western Europe. It was formerly considered to be only a rare vagrant to western Europe, but is now known to be an annual visitor in small numbers, mainly in autumn (Svensson 2010).

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

At *c*09.45 h on 27 October 2013, while searching for Asiatic Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* and photographing a wild sheep *Ovis* sp in a dry rocky river bed in Naybandan wildlife refuge (Shand valley, 32° 28′ 33″ N, 57° 19′ 13″ E, South Khorasan province), SATG spotted a small bird moving towards us through some bushes. The bird disappeared in a thick *Amygdalus* bush but soon reappeared and came much closer, eventually perching within 0.5 m of SATG's shoes. After 1–2 minutes, the bird moved away and perched on a stone near AM. After a while, the bird flew away and disappeared among the rocks in the river bed. The peculiar behaviour of the bird astonished us, as it showed almost no fear of humans and seemed as if it was trying to inspect us. According to our notes, there was a light wind at the time of our observation and the sky was cloudy. The temperature was *c*15°C.

Plate 1. Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*, Naybandan WR, Iran. © *Arash Moody*

DESCRIPTION AND IDENTIFICATION

The bird was immediately identified as a *Phylloscopus* warbler by its small and compact size, generally greenish appearance and conspicuous supercilium. The bird had two clear yellowish wing bars, a very dark eye stripe, a broad yellow supercilium, a conspicuous yellowish stripe through the centre of the crown and a conspicuous pale yellow rump. Other features noted at the time included the yellow-tinged alula and rather pale legs.

It was not possible to identify the bird at first because of the lack of reference books, but as soon as we had access to the relevant literature, we were able to identify the bird as a Pallas's Leaf Warbler. The bird was distinguished from Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus* and Hume's Leaf Warbler *P. humei* by its bold yellow crown-stripe (Plate 1) and pale yellow rump (Plate 2). It also differed from Hume's Leaf Warbler in its brighter olive and yellow colouration, two very distinct wing-bars and rather pale legs. Two similar species, Lemon-rumped Warbler *P. chloronotus* and Chinese Leaf Warbler *P. yunnanensis*, were eliminated because of the deep yellow supercilium which is characteristic of *P. proregulus* (Per Alstrom *in litt*).

Plate 2. Distinct rump patch of Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*, Naybandan WR, Iran. © *Seyed Amir Talebi Golt*

OCCURRENCE IN THE REGION

Given that Pallas's Leaf Warbler is a regular visitor to European countries from its east Asian breeding grounds, its occurrence as a vagrant in Iran is not unexpected. The occurrence of this individual in Naybandan wildlife refuge on 27 October coincides very well with the peak period of occurrence in western Europe, namely late October and November (Derek Scott *in litt*, Svensson 2010). The only other records of Pallas's Leaf Warbler in the Middle East would appear to be from Israel, where the bird has been recorded as a vagrant (Porter & Aspinall 2010) as well as some records from Turkey (Harrison & Grieve 2012). This record constitutes the first known occurrence of Pallas's Leaf Warbler in Iran and has been accepted by the Iran Records Committee. SATG regretfully passed away during a field investigation after submission of the manuscript.

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First confirmed breeding record of Northern Raven *Corvus corax* in Lebanon for over four decades and recent records in Lebanon of Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* and Black-bellied Sandgrouse *P. orientalis*

GHASSAN RAMADAN-JARADI & ASSAD SERHAL

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

On 13 April 2012 we observed a Northern Raven leaving one of the rocky cliffs at Qalaat Niha, central Lebanon (Plate 1), flying north, but after 100 m he returned cawing to chase away two Short-toed Eagles *Circaetus gallicus* that were in courtship, with outstretched necks, near the cliffs. We immediately recognized that the Northern Raven (Plate 2) must be defending its nest or chicks but we were still lacking real proof. A visit to the site on 8 February 2013 revealed the presence of five Northern Ravens (Plate 3). On 9 March 2013, we visited the site at 09.30 h with the hope of seeing the bird again but instead we watched a tribe of hyraxes on nearby sunny rocks. However, before we left at 10.45 h, the Northern Raven appeared with a bundle of fine sticks in its beak flying to the same previously frequented cliff. This observation of the carrying of nesting material confirmed breeding by Northern Raven, the first record of breeding by this species for over 43 years in Lebanon. A Northern Raven was seen, by a group of birdwatching trainees, nesting

Plate 1. Qalaat [fortress] Niha (the structure in the cave), Lebanon, 13 April 2012. © *Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi*

again (carrying food) at Qalaat Niha on 4 April 2014.

The status of the Northern Raven in Lebanon is uncertain (Ramadan-Jaradi *et al* 2008). It is recorded as a former breeder based on old occasional breeding records (Kumerloeve 1962, Benson 1970) but no recent proof (Ramadan-Jaradi & Ramadan-Jaradi 1999, Ramadan-Jaradi *et al* 2008, BirdLife International 2014). Since Benson (1970) there were four published records of the occurrence of the species: at least one at Wadi el Karm, Anti-Lebanon range, 1 October 1976 (Macfarlane 1978); one at Afqa 14 April 1996; one at Ainab 27 July 1996; and three between Ainab and Hermel 11 August 1996 (Bara *in* Ramadan-Jaradi & Ramadan-Jaradi 1999). More recently, there have been at least 16 records of Northern Ravens 1998–2006, of which 13 were recorded by staff and volunteers of A Rocha Lebanon (Colin Conroy pers comm). Of them, at least three records suggested that the species is still breeding in the country: a pair at mount Sannine, near Zahleh, 23 February 2000 (see Balmer & Betton 2001), a pair at Tannourine 30 March 2005 (Colin Conroy pers comm) and a pair at Riim/Sannine 18 May 2005 (Richard Prior pers comm). Also the Northern Raven was reported from Bcharri, Beirut river valley, Jabal Arabi, Kefraya, Qadisha, Qaraoun, Ras Baalbek, Tannourine and Wadi el Karn (Ramadan-Jaradi *et al* 2008). In nearby countries, the Northern Raven is a resident with definite breeding records in Syria (Murdoch & Betton 2008), Israel (Shirihai *et al* 1999), Jordan (Shirihai *et al* 1999, Andrews *et al* 1999) and Turkey (Kirwan *et al* 1998).

Plate 2. Northern Raven *Corvus corax*, Qalaat Niha, Lebanon, 13 April 2012. © *Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi*

Plate 3. Northern Ravens *Corvus corax*, Qalaat Niha, Lebanon, 8 February 2013. © *Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi*

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

We spent two days in the area of Akkar, at the extreme north of the country. During early morning on 7 December 2013 our guide sent us a photo of a Black-winged Kite and hunter. Knowing that this species was last seen in Lebanon at Tyre on 4 December 1863 (Tristram 1882) and at Cedars on 21 September 1954 (Kumerloeve 1972), we rushed to find the hunter in Harar/Akkar village. The bird was alive but stressed (Plate 4) and we noted some blood on its left wing's secondaries that revealed the presence of a clotted superficial injury on its flank. After negotiation with the hunter, the bird was released and it flew easily away. This is the third certain record of Black-winged Kite for Lebanon. The species bred 2011–2012 in Israel (Perlman & Israeli 2013) but has not been recorded from Syria (Murdoch & Betton 2008) or Jordan (Shirihai *et al* 1999, Andrews *et al* 1999, Perlman & Israeli 2013). The appearance of this individual could be the first sign of expansion of the species in

Plate 4. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Harar, Lebanon, 7 December 2013. © *Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi*

Plate 5. Male Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*, Andqit, Lebanon, 8 December 2013. © *Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi*

Plate 6. Male and female Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis* and a female Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata*, Andqit, Lebanon, 8 December 2013. © *Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi*

Lebanon as happened in Iraq in 2001 (Salim 2002), Israel in 2011 (Perlman & Israeli 2013) and in eastern Arabia (Jennings 2010).

Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* and *P. orientalis*

In the evening of 7 December 2013, we returned to Andqit-Akkar where we spent the night. Early next morning we noted an unusually high intensity of shooting by hunters. Immediately we scanned with our eyes the sky and the landscapes but we could not find unusual birds. While thinking that the hunters were lucky spotting probably woodcocks, five birds flew overhead with typical sandgrouse flight. The contrast with the bright cloudy sky did not allow us to identify all those five individuals but two of them were male Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata*. A hunter that we met on the Andqit plain had two male and a female Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis* and one female Pin-tailed Sandgrouse on a string (Plates 5, 6). We counted *c*350 Black-bellied and 17 Pin-tailed Sandgrouse in flight in Akkar that day. This is the second record for Black-bellied Sandgrouse in Lebanon (first in 1996, Bara 1998) and the third for Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (second in 1997, Ramadan-Jaradi & Ramadan-Jaradi 1999). The occurrence of the large number of Sandgrouse preceded the 'Alexa' snow storm that hit Lebanon on 10 December.

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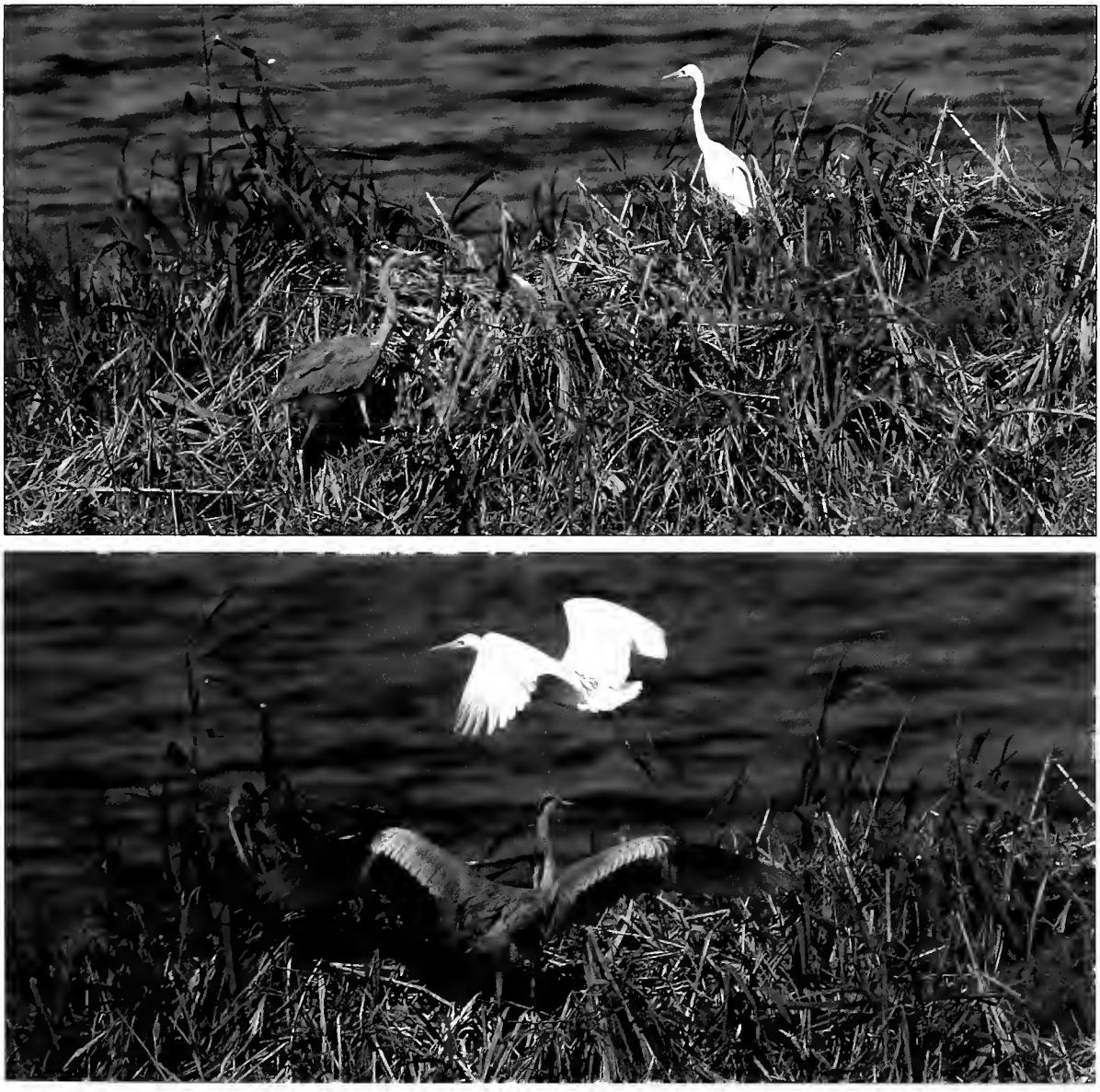
Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*: first record for Qatar

NEIL G MORRIS

Whilst counting herons and cormorants at Abu Nahkla, Qatar's premier grey water lagoons, on 22 January 2014, I noticed a white heron (Plates 1–4) being mobbed by two Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea*. The white heron was trying to join the Grey Herons in a particularly productive feeding area at the edge of the reedbed. The white heron would try to land and then be chased off by the Greys. It was immediately apparent that the white heron was significantly shorter in stature and less bulky than the Greys, and sported a relatively short orange bill. My first thought was Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*, though this was not on the Qatar List. I spent a few minutes taking photographs and comparing the size and structure of the bird with its sparring partners. Along with the bill, I noted long black legs and feet, and an obvious long kinked neck, hence quickly ruling out Little



Plates 1–2. Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* at Abu Nahkla, Qatar, 22 January 2014. © *Neil G Morris*

Plates 3–4. Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* at Abu Nahkla, Qatar, 22 January 2014. © *Neil G Morris*

E. garzetta, Indian Reef *E. gularis* and Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*. The jizz, especially the head and bill shape, also seemed to rule out a runt Western Great Egret *Egretta alba*. I also discounted an early juvenile heron/egret, given the clean white plumage, uniform bill colouration and also leg colour. Confident of the identity as Intermediate Egret, I put the news out to local birders.

Eventually, after a few successful though brief touchdowns, the Intermediate Egret gave up trying to land in the reeds and flew to the main stone causeway on which dozens of Grey Herons, Western Great Egrets, Little Egrets, Indian Reef Herons, Great Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* and a solitary Cattle Egret were resting. I was pleased that this direct comparison confirmed my identification. With Western Great Egrets alongside, the compact head and shorter rather stubby bill shape was most evident. Unfortunately, the Intermediate Egret was not seen again until I relocated it on 29 January, and Jamie Buchan relocated it a final time on 31 January 2014. We were the only two observers. This is the first record for Qatar and has been accepted into category A of the Qatar List by the Qatar Birds Records Committee (www.QatarBirds.org).

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The status, frequency and abundance of passerine passage migrants and seasonal visitors in Cyprus 2003–2013

COLIN RICHARDSON

A great deal of work has been published on bird migration in Cyprus, especially since the formation of the Cyprus Ornithological Society in 1957. Subsequently as the society grew stronger, migration was well studied by WRP Bourne and others (Bourne 1959, 1960, Stagg 1967, Flint 1972), and is covered in a dedicated section on bird migration by Peter Flint and Peter Stewart in the second edition of their standard work of reference *The Birds of Cyprus* (Flint & Stewart 1992). This reference is still fairly accurate today for many species, although there have been changes in both the status and distribution of some species. The purpose of this paper is to present an up-to-date picture of current passerine migration and movements, based on an analysis of the results of my own regular observations, primarily in western Cyprus, without the visiting observer bias present in the annual *Cyprus Bird Report*. However a fuller picture of migration including earlier and later migrant timings and larger flock counts will undoubtedly be available in these reports.

METHODS

My birdwatching in Cyprus commenced in 1998 and after taking up full-time residence in Paphos in late 2003, my outings became almost daily over the ten years from late 2003 until late 2013, with every bird observation logged and the numbers of each species counted. Generally surveys covered a 2–4 hour period 7.00–12.00 h, with at least a one full day weekly outing. I logged 61 830 individual records, of which 36 850 were of passerines. A 'record' (or sighting) is a single data entry and includes the species, location, number of birds and date. It can refer to single or multiple birds, but is generally the result of one site visit, lasting any period of time on that date. I decided to use only my own sightings as a basis for the study to avoid seasonal observer bias, *ie* records from visiting birdwatchers, mostly in spring and autumn, give rise to a large increase in sightings of

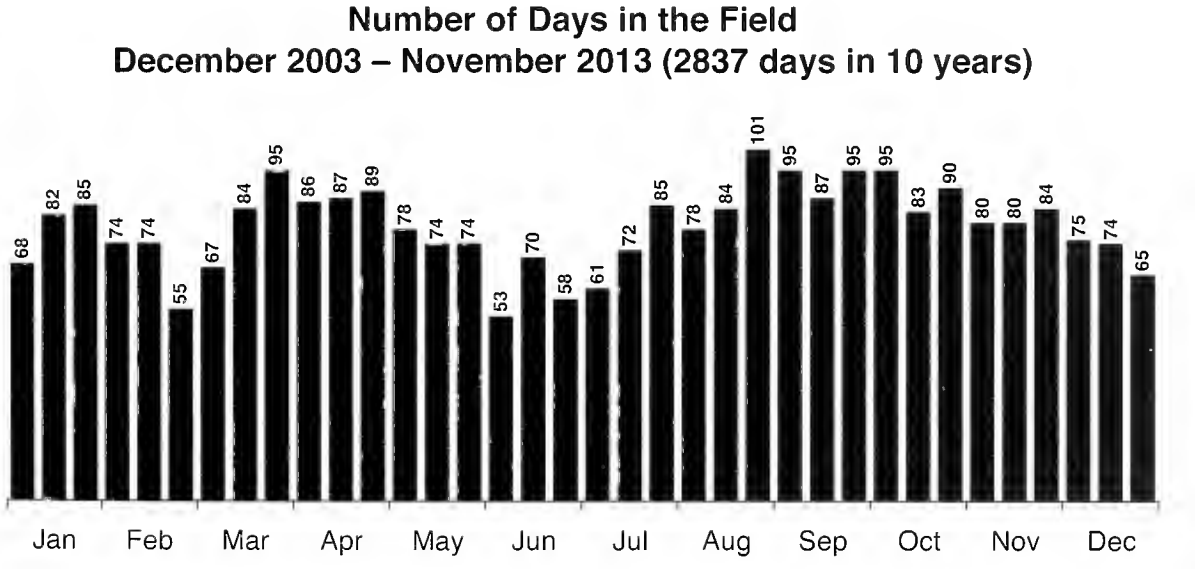


Figure 1. Number of days spent in the field, in thirds of a month, by the author. Lowest recording periods February, June–mid July and December–early January (times of low migration and little day-to-day species variation).

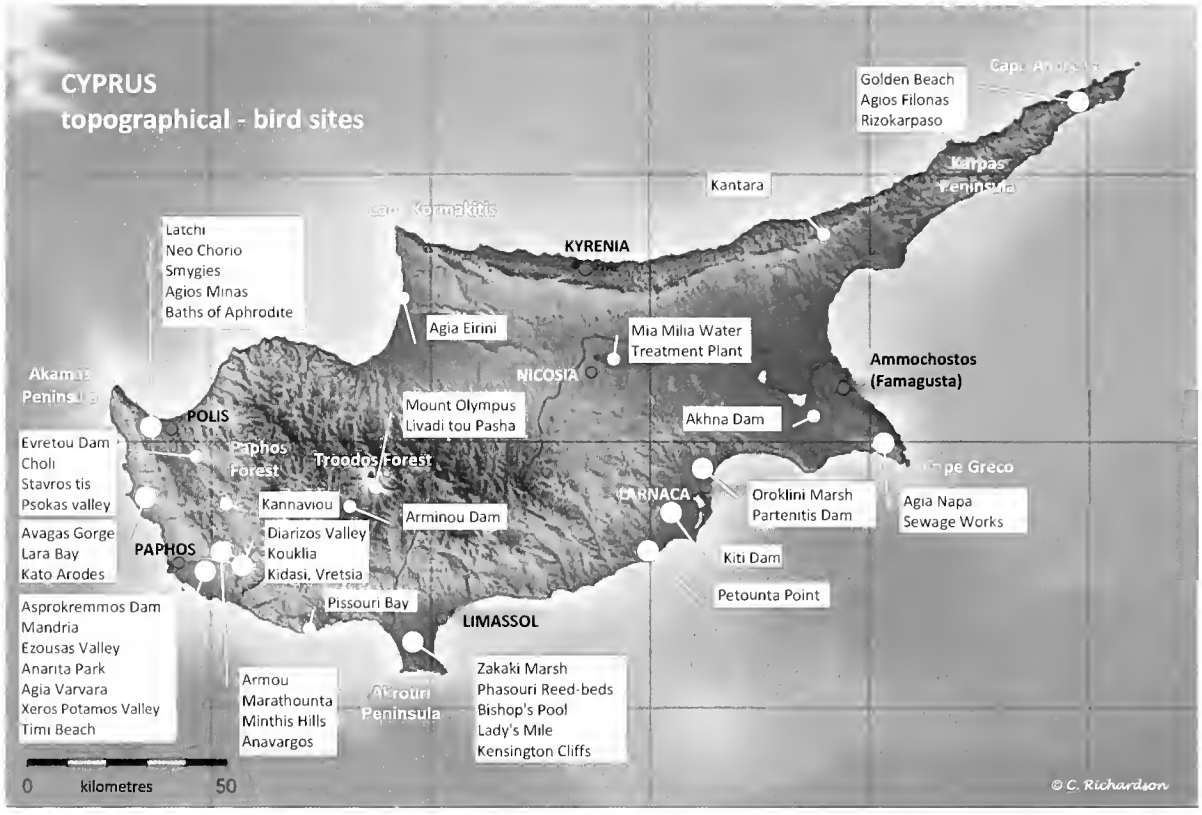


Figure 2. Topographic map of Cyprus showing location of some bird sites.

interesting migrants. For example, in Cyprus during the period 2005–2012 the average number of birdwatchers submitting their records in spring (Mar–May) was 44 per month, while in winter (Dec–Feb) this dropped to 25 per month (Richardson 2005–2012). My own observations are prolonged and fairly consistent throughout the year. Figure 1 shows the number of days/third of a month spent in the field over the period December 2003–November 2013

During the ten year period, I visited a total of 580 sites throughout the island (Figure 2) and counted all species at each. My largest number of observations were in the Paphos foothills at Armou (918 visits, Plates 1, 4), Marathounta (701 visits, Plates 2, 7, 8) and Minthis hills (437 visits). These three are part of a range of hills 400–550 m asl, and are located 8–15 km inland, east of the coastal town of Paphos. Regular visits were also made to top migration 'hot-spots', including a number of important bird areas (IBAs) (www.birdlifecyprus.org/en/news-296). They include the Asprokremmos dam (Xeros valley IBA, 420 visits, Plate 5), Mandria (Paphos plain IBA, 384 visits, Plate 6), the Paphos sewage works (306 visits), the Akrotiri peninsula IBA (259 visits) and the Kato Paphos lighthouse IBA (154 visits) (Plate 3). Migration varies to some extent across the island (Flint & Stewart 1992), so it should be noted that 78% of my observations were in the west of Cyprus (generally Paphos District, an administrative area which includes the Akamas peninsula, Paphos forest and a large area of foothills and coast up to the border with Limassol district, c25 km east of Paphos town). The other 22% included (in order of coverage) the Akrotiri peninsula, Larnaca, Troodos forest, Akhna dam, capes Greco and Kormakitis and the Karpas peninsula.

Many habitats were covered. In the Paphos District they are mostly low intensity, mixed agricultural farmland with grape vineyards and groves of Olive *Olea europaea*, Carob *Ceratonia siliqua* and Almond *Prunus amygdalus* bordered by Terebinth *Pistacia*

Plate 1. Typical farmed foothills at Armou, 450 m asl and 10 km inland from Paphos, Cyprus, with fields of winter barley, while groves of carob, olive and almond are bounded by gorse and terebinth bushes. The electric wires provide good vantage points for birds. © *C Richardson*

Plate 2. The Paphos hills near Marathounta, Cyprus, offer a variety of habitats including typical garrigue and maquis, comprising wild olive, carob, spiny gorse, spiny burnet and Mediterranean medlar. © *C Richardson*

Plate 3. The Kato Paphos lighthouse archaeological site, Cyprus, is protected from development by its UNESCO status. It is a major bird migrant hot-spot, characterised by open meadows of wild grasses, common asphodel, crown daisy and poppy, interspersed with stands of medlar and spiny gorse. © *C Richardson*

Plate 4. The Armou plateau, Cyprus, is a patchwork of vineyards and barley fields, bounded by stands of carob, olive, terebinth, medlar and almond. © *C Richardson*

(*terebinthus*) *palaestina* and Mediterranean Cypress *Cupressus sempervirens*, interspersed with cereal (mostly barley) fields and scattered bushes. The steeper, stony hillsides are covered with herbs, grasses and Mediterranean scrub. The latter, sometimes known as garrigue/phrygana (Polunin 1976), is an open scrubland plant community on a limestone base which on Minthis hills includes lower shrubs up to 0.5 m high such as Prickly Burnet *Sarcopoterium spinosum*, Common Thyme *Thymus vulgaris* and *Cistus* sp merging in places into maquis, with taller (2–4 m high) stands of Thorny Gorse *Genista sphacelata*, Thorny Broom *Calicotome villosa*, Mediterranean Medlar *Crataegus azarolus* and young Aleppo Pine *Pinus halepensis*. Dominant herbs and grasses include Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*, Giant Fennel *Ferula communis*, Syrian Thistle *Notobasis syriaca*, Viscous Globe Thistle *Echinops spinosissimus* and Common Asphodel *Asphodelus microcarpus*.

The species

The Cyprus bird list comprises 393 species, of which *c*170 are passerines (Richardson 2007–2013, Stylianou 2013) and of these passerines *c*157 are migratory to some extent.

Plate 5. When the Asprokremmos dam, Cyprus, fills up, shallow reed beds of *Phragmites* and stands of tamarisk form at the dam wall. The distant mixed woodland at the amenity car park is a perfect complementary habitat for passerines. © *C Richardson*

Plate 6. The coast at Mandria, Cyprus, part of the Paphos plain, is an important migration staging point, where the mixed agricultural farmland and rocky coastline provide birds with a vital landmark and an abundant food supply. © *C Richordson*

Plate 7. The goat-grazed foothills 15 km inland from Paphos, Cyprus, are dotted with wind-sculptured carob, almond, ancient olive and Mediterranean medlar amongst the bare boulders and rocky outcrops. In early spring the ground is a forest of common asphodel. © *C Richardson*

Plate 8. In spring the 400 m foothills at Marathounta, near Paphos, Cyprus, are ideal for breeding Great Spotted Cuckoos, migrant warblers, shrikes and finches. Flowering medlar and giant fennel are evident while prickly burnet and wild thyme provide ground cover. Evergreen carob trees dominate the landscape throughout the year. © *C Richordson*

These include a number of resident species which are supplemented by passage migrants, winter visitors and/or breeding visitors *eg* Woodlark *Lullula arborea*, Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* and Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. Localised or scarce breeders and infrequent passage migrants including Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra* and Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* are not included in this study, as insufficient data was obtained. I have included non-resident breeding species which also occur as passage migrants and/or winter visitors *eg* Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*, Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* and Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*. Multiple statuses are covered in the species accounts. I have endeavoured to show their migration periods by frequently visiting and recording at known, mainly coastal, migration sites, where the species is not known to breed. Many passage migrants show different patterns in spring and autumn for a variety of reasons including geographical, food availability or seasonal weather conditions. Other species apparently take direct non-stop journeys and may simply

overfly Cyprus in autumn, while others perform loop migrations. Different spring and autumn migrations are well illustrated in some of the species histograms and are usually referred to in the species' texts.

Solely resident species *eg* Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*, Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* and Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* were not part of the study. Although fairly regular, but with less than five records per year in some cases, the following species are also omitted: Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*, Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*, Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatillis*, Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*, Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*, Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*, Western Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea* and Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. A full list of species included in the present study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. A full list of species covered in the study

Species	Number of records	Number of birds	Notes
Red-backed Shrike	602	1322	
Lesser Grey Shrike	320	808	
Woodchat Shrike	183	257	
Masked Shrike	717	1973	includes breeding visitors
Eurasian Golden Oriole	123	271	
Eurasian Penduline Tit	23	86	
Sand Martin	280	6918	
Barn Swallow	1474	38 998	includes breeding visitors
Common House Martin	541	17 635	includes breeding visitors
Red-rumped Swallow	427	3041	includes breeding visitors
Greater Short-toed Lark	274	5653	includes breeding visitors
Woodlark	443	4644	includes residents
Eurasian Skylark	617	27 252	
Great Reed Warbler	108	145	
Moustached Warbler	103	212	
Sedge Warbler	119	231	
Eurasian Reed Warbler	277	838	includes breeding visitors
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	423	1097	includes breeding visitors
Willow Warbler	551	3603	
Common Chiffchaff	845	3827	
Eastern Bonelli's Warbler	37	46	
Wood Warbler	42	62	
Eurasian Blackcap	605	1802	
Lesser Whitethroat	336	892	
Eastern Orphean Warbler	54	89	
Common Whitethroat	151	242	
Eastern Subalpine Warbler	55	72	
Sardinian Warbler	1289	3635	includes residents & breeding visitors
Rüppell's Warbler	63	126	
Cyprus Warbler	645	1191	resident and breeding visitor only
Common Starling	109	8178	
Eurasian Blackbird	274	524	includes residents

Song Thrush	479	2538	
European Robin	603	2185	
Bluethroat	99	162	
Common Nightingale	93	167	includes breeding visitors
Western Black Redstart	651	1433	
Common Redstart	114	153	
Whinchat	646	2150	
European Stonechat	1286	6770	
Isabelline Wheatear	379	1043	
Northern Wheatear	728	2529	
Cyprus Wheatear	919	2568	breeding visitor only
Eastern Black-eared Wheatear	298	596	
Finsch's Wheatear	237	502	
Blue Rock Thrush	133	157	includes residents
Spotted Flycatcher	468	1001	includes breeding visitors
Eurasian Pied Flycatcher	74	126	
Collared Flycatcher	53	171	
Spanish Sparrow	991	59 954	includes residents
Yellow Wagtail	1013	33 218	includes breeding visitors
Grey Wagtail	206	277	includes residents
White Wagtail	744	26 390	
Tawny Pipit	334	1084	
Meadow Pipit	874	17 217	
Tree Pipit	285	1133	
Red-throated Pipit	338	3234	
Water Pipit	194	635	
Common Chaffinch	821	15 442	includes residents
European Serin	583	13 384	includes residents
European Greenfinch	749	6113	includes residents
European Goldfinch	950	18 689	includes residents
Common Linnet	979	21 315	includes residents
Corn Bunting	956	14 639	includes residents
Ortolan Bunting	152	550	
Cretzschmar's Bunting	229	678	includes breeding visitors
Black-headed Bunting	138	271	includes breeding visitors

The histograms

The histograms show the timing, frequency and abundance of each species. Abundance is reflected by the number of individuals encountered, included as a single record, and can embrace single birds, a small party or a large flock. The histogram's heading gives the total number of records logged for the period of the study and each vertical bar indicates the total number of birds recorded. The first and middle thirds are each ten days for all months, but the last third of each month varies from 8–11 days. In particular, the last third of February is on average 1.7 days (17%) shorter than those adjacent to it (allowing for 3 leap years in 10 years). This manifests itself as an apparent dip in late February with some, but not all species. The 'Number of birds' shown in tables 1–3 combine all my observations, and where relevant the notes column refers to the species' multiple status while the text

includes analysis of their migration patterns. Spring passage for many species tends to be briefer and more concentrated, involving a more pronounced peak than in autumn (Flint & Stewart 1992) and this is displayed well in the histograms (Figures). This applies particularly to Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*, Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* and Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*. The reverse is also true and where contrasting spring and autumn migrations occur, I have tried to analyse the reasons for this where references are available. The 20 most frequently encountered and most abundant species are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Cyprus Wheatear and Cyprus Warbler

The two Cyprus breeding endemic species are both migratory to different degrees, but Cyprus is their final breeding destination. However, their histograms show interesting movement patterns which are not fully understood. I have referred to this in each of their species' texts.

Although a summer breeding visitor, Cyprus Wheatear *Oenanthe cypriaca* has very occasionally been recorded in winter months, most recently, two at St Hilarion castle in January 2010, two there December 2010, one at Tala February 2010 and one at Minthis hills January 2011 (D & J Walker, M Willis pers comms). They usually arrive in Cyprus from their African wintering grounds in March, occasionally earlier, and depart in October, with stragglers remaining to November some years. When the first arrivals make landfall, some are recorded at sites where they are not known to breed. These may then disperse to breeding territories, which can take up to two weeks following arrival (pers obs), while others arrive immediately on breeding territory (Randler *et al* 2010). After the breeding season fledged young and adults become unobtrusive and harder to find from late July–August. There is an obvious increase in sightings from early September prior to their departure from Cyprus, which commences in mid September and continues through October. At this time numbers appear to increase on low ground; probably some of the population from higher

Table 2. The 20 most frequently encountered species

	Species	Number of records
1	Barn Swallow	1474
2	Sardinian Warbler	1289
3	European Stonechat	1286
4	Yellow Wagtail	1013
5	Spanish Sparrow	991
6	Common Linnet	979
7	Corn Bunting	956
8	European Goldfinch	950
9	Cyprus Wheatear	919
10	Meadow Pipit	874
11	Common Chiffchaff	845
12	Common Chaffinch	821
13	European Greenfinch	749
14	White Wagtail	744
15	Northern Wheatear	728
16	Masked Shrike	717
17	Western Black Redstart	651
18	Whinchat	646
19	Cyprus Warbler	645
20	Eurasian Skylark	617

Table 3. The 20 most abundant species.

	Species	Number of birds
1	Spanish Sparrow	59 954
2	Barn Swallow	38 998
3	Yellow Wagtail	33 218
4	Eurasian Skylark	27 252
5	White Wagtail	26 390
6	Common Linnet	21 315
7	European Goldfinch	18 689
8	Common House Martin	17 635
9	Meadow Pipit	17 217
10	Common Chaffinch	15 442
11	Corn Bunting	14 639
12	European Serin	13 384
13	Common Starling	8178
14	Sand Martin	6918
15	European Stonechat	6770
16	European Greenfinch	6113
17	Greater Short-toed Lark	5653
18	Woodlark	4644
19	Common Chiffchaff	3827
20	Sardinian Warbler	3635

ground preparing to move south (Flint & Stewart 1992). There may also be some departure from upland forest areas at this time. The histogram reflects some of these movements.

Whilst some Cyprus Warblers *Sylvia melanothorax* are resident, a sizeable proportion departs Cyprus to winter in the Middle East and northeast Africa (Flint & McArthur 2014). These include many from areas above 1000 m asl (Flint & Stewart 1992). In spring, the number of records increases in March, as breeding visitors return and song is widely heard. Many are also recorded at this time at sites where they are not known to breed, presumably as arriving migrants make landfall (pers obs). They can be difficult to find July–early August, when singing ceases and the species becomes unobtrusive. Records increase in September, and although departure of migrants may start earlier, a distinct decline was noted annually from mid November onwards. Numbers are noted passing through Israel from late October increasing in November (Shirihai 1996, Shirihai *et al* 2001).

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The list follows the OSME Regional List taxonomic order and nomenclature (Blair *et al* 2011). The species' name is followed by reference to the relevant histogram. Each species account begins with a statement of its known status *in italics*, taken from the *2011 Cyprus Bird Report* (Richardson 2005–2012), which largely follows Flint & Stewart (1992). DF desalination fields, GP gravel pits, RB reed-beds, SW sewage works, WTP water treatment plant.

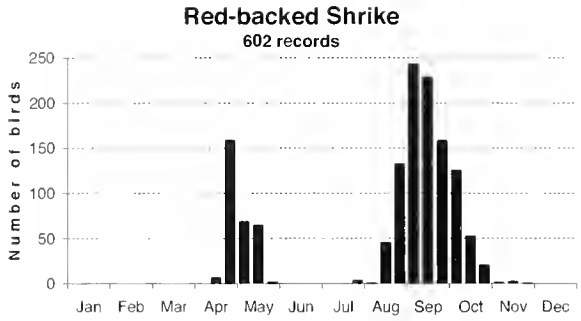
Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* (Figure 3). *Passage migrant, more common in autumn than spring. Occasional breeder.* Recorded mid April–May, late July–November. More common in autumn, when migration was more protracted than spring. Caused by a loop migration, many spring migrants simply passing east of Cyprus (Lefranc & Worfolk 1997). Spring passage (302 birds) was 30% that of autumn (1020 birds). Breeding last occurred June 1999 on the Akamas peninsula and no breeding has been confirmed since (Whaley & Dawes 2003). 48% of sightings of two or more birds in loose association. There were 602 records (1322 birds), mean 2.2 birds/record. The 25th most frequently recorded migrant and 32nd most abundant. **Spring**: earliest spring sighting 16 April 2006, latest 31 May 2009. Main passage late April. Largest counts, 57 Karpas peninsula 30 April 2013 and 17 Larnaca SW area 12 May 2007. **Autumn**: earliest record 21 July 2008, latest 24 November 2012. Peak passage early–mid September. Largest count 30 on 8 km road from cape Andreas to Golden beach, Karpas peninsula, 17 September 2009.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* (Figure 4). *Common passage migrant in autumn, rather scarce spring.* Recorded mid April–mid May, late July–mid October. Main passage late April and mid August–early September. A strong loop migration was evident. It was much more common in autumn, involving a more protracted passage, while most spring migrants probably pass further east (Lefranc & Worfolk 1997) including through the Arabian peninsula (pers obs, Richardson 1990) and probably through eastern Cyprus (*eg* cape Andreas). Spring passage (71 birds) was 10% that of autumn (737 birds). 52% of sightings were of two or more in loose association. There were 320 records (808 birds), mean 2.5 birds/record. The 36th most frequently recorded migrant and 41st most abundant. **Spring**: earliest spring sighting 16 April 2006, latest 13 May 2009. Largest number 10 cape Andreas 30 April 2013. Only singles observed in the west in spring. **Autumn**: earliest sighting 30 July 2010, latest 18 October 2010. Largest counts, 14 at Paphos SW 30 August 2007 and 26 in the Ezousas valley 20 August 2005.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (Figure 5). *Widespread passage migrant in spring in variable numbers; rare autumn. Also an irregular and very scarce breeding visitor.* Recorded mid March–early June, late June–early September. Main spring passage mid–late April, while peak autumn passage, based on less than 20 records, appeared to be mid August. It occurred mainly in spring so probably overflies Cyprus in autumn, with many others passing further west during an anticlockwise loop migration (Bourne 1960, Lefranc & Worfolk 1997). Spring passage (241 birds) 15 times that of autumn passage (16 birds). 73% of sightings of singles, with only a few records of three or more together. There were 183 records (257 birds), mean 1.4 birds/record. The 45th most frequently recorded migrant and 50th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest record 20 March 2006, latest 17 May 2013 of a tired migrant on the coast at Paphos plain where no breeding has ever been recorded. Largest counts, six Armou 14 April 2010 and seven Karpas peninsula 24 April 2007. **Autumn**: earliest, either a dispersing juvenile or migrant, Marathounta 21 June 2009; latest 4 September 2010.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* (Figure 6, Plate 9). *Common breeding visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded mid March–mid October. Performs a loop migration, being very common in autumn and scarce in spring. Low spring numbers may consist mainly of arriving breeders, while most passage migrants probably pass further east, including through Israel, where it is much more common in spring than autumn (Shirihai 1996). Early spring sightings 11–20 March occurred five times 2003–2011 at cape Greco in eastern Cyprus (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012), suggesting a possible entry of migrants/breeding visitors from the east. I made very few visits to their forest breeding grounds, except occasionally late May–June. Large numbers were evident in the Paphos area from early July, becoming common island-wide late July–early September (Richardson 2005–2012). 62% of sightings of two or more, though 18% were of five or more together. There were 717 records (1973 birds), mean 2.7 birds/record. The 16th most frequently recorded migrant and 28th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest at a non-breeding site 18 March 2011 and latest at a non-breeding site 18

Plate 9. After breeding, Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* numbers reach a peak in mid August in Cyprus. This adult was at Asprokremmos dam 1 April 2011. © *G Reszeter*



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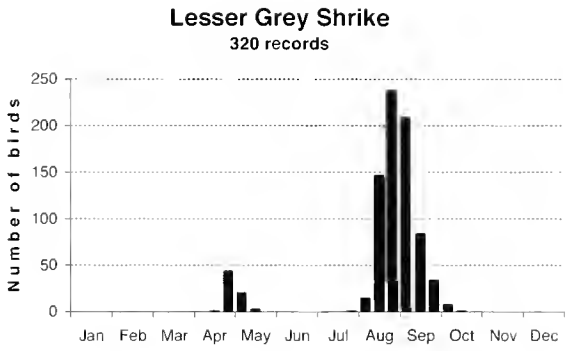

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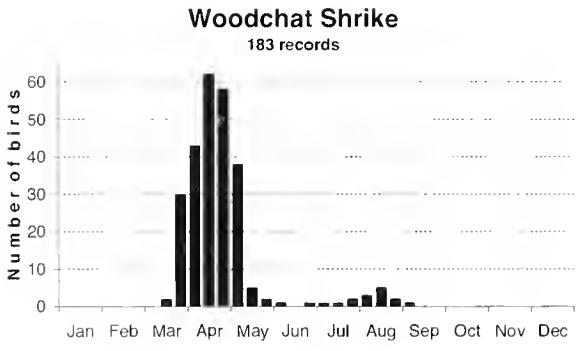

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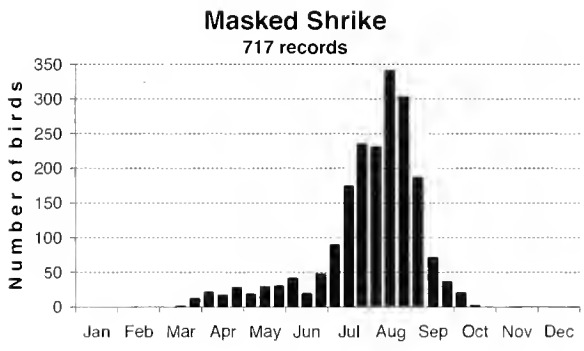

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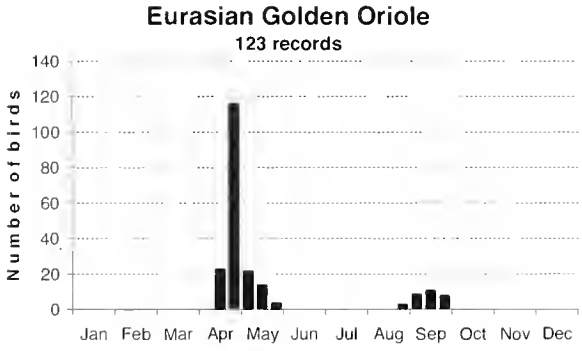

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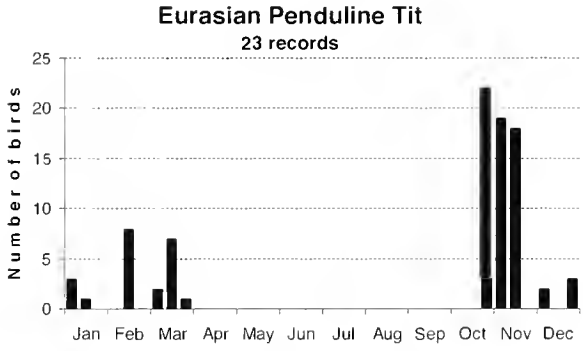

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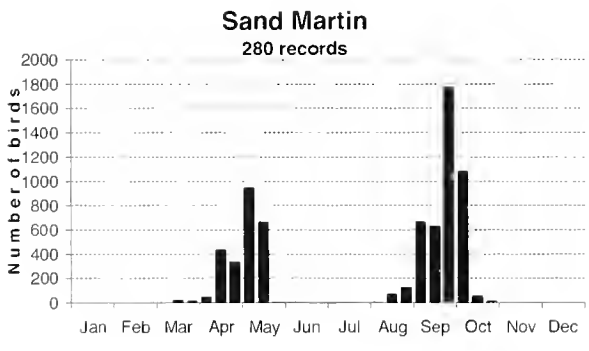

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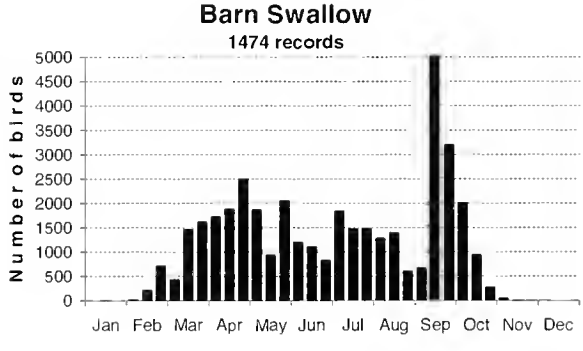

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Figures 3–10. Red-backed, Lesser Grey, Woodchat and Masked Shrike, Eurasian Golden Oriole and Penduline Tit, Sand Martin and Barn Swallow numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

May 2011. No obvious peak in spring. **Autumn**: earliest at a non-breeding site 13 June 2006, probably the beginning of post-breeding dispersal from forest breeding areas 20–60 km away. Latest autumn migrant 15 October 2005. Largest counts, 14 Armou 30 July 2012 with 13 there 1 August 2003 and 12 Marathounta 6 August 2012. I suspect these large counts are more likely to be of groups of passage migrants than departing breeders.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* (Figure 7). *Fairly common spring passage migrant, less so in autumn. Also regular, localised and rather elusive breeding visitor.* Recorded mid April–May, late August–September. Main spring passage late April. One of the latest spring migrants, many heard in song in May, but no other breeding activity was observed during the period of this study. Autumn passage, which peaked in September, was found to be very sparse as it is throughout the Mediterranean. In autumn many probably overfly the region at night (Mason & Allsop 2009) while others appear to undertake a loop migration passing east through mainland Middle East and the Arabian peninsula (Andrews 1995, Eriksen *et al* 2003). Spring passage (240 birds) nearly eight times greater than autumn passage (31 birds). 55% of observations of single birds, 30% three or more together. There were 123 records (271 birds), mean 2.2 birds/record. The 52nd most frequently recorded species and the 49th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest arrival 11 April 2007, latest 22 May 2010. Largest numbers, 10 at Armou 26 April 2005 and 30 April 2000 and 10 Agios Filonas, Karpas 29 April 2009. **Autumn**: earliest record 27 August 2013, latest 29 September 2008. Largest group 3 Paphos SW 29 September 2008.

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* (Figure 8). *Annual winter visitor and passage migrant to the island's reed-beds in small numbers.* A small number of sightings from 2 or 3 regular sites. Regarded only as a winter visitor by Flint & Stewart (1992), but I found it to be more common as an autumn passage migrant, corroborated by the records published in Gordon (2004), Richardson (2005–2012) and the *Cyprus Ornithological Society (1957) Bird Report* series published 1971–2003. Earliest in autumn 27 October 2010, latest in spring 21 March 2008. Autumn migration peak late October–mid November with spring peaks mid February and mid March. Largest numbers, 11 Zakaki marsh 30 October 2010 and 10 Phasouri RB 13 November 2006. There were 23 records (86 birds), mean 3.7 birds/record. 67th most frequently recorded species and 64th most abundant.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* (Figure 9). *Fairly common late spring passage migrant and very common autumn passage migrant.* Recorded all months mid March–October. Spring migration prolonged while autumn passage probably commenced late June, blurring transition between spring and autumn (Kephalas 2011). Main spring passage mid April–mid May, occasionally to early June. Some possibly remain as non-breeding summer visitors, as happens in Israel (Shirihai 1996). Main autumn passage late September–early October. Cramp (1988) refers to Russian populations (*R. r. riparia*), which breed much later than European populations, passing through eastern Mediterranean late April and early May. It is possible Cyprus experiences part of this movement. However, the large autumn passage through Cyprus appears to concur with the migration timing of more western European populations (Cramp 1988). Only 23% of sightings of singles, while 56% of four or more birds together. Spring passage (2484 birds) 56% that of autumn (4434 birds). There were 280 records (6918 birds), mean 25 birds/record. The 41st most common species recorded and 14th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest record 13 March 2011, latest 3 June 2013. Largest counts, 700 at Akrotiri RB 7 May 2009 and 500 at Koloni canal, Paphos, 7 May 2009. **Autumn**: earliest autumn migrants were possibly one Phasouri RB 23 June 2013, one

Akhna dam 30 June 2009 and five Zakaki marsh 11 July 2008. Latest, two Zakaki marsh 4 November 2007. Largest count 1000 Akrotiri peninsula 24 September 2004.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (Figure 10). *Common passage migrant and breeding visitor, occasionally in winter.* Recorded all months, but mainly February–early November. Main spring passage mid March–early May. Numbers declined mid May, before increasing late May as number of fledged birds increased. Big roosts were noted from July, mostly juveniles. Autumn migration apparently also commenced July, peaking mid–late September, continuing most years to early November, occasionally early December. This closely matches country-wide records (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012). Movement pattern complicated and probably involves passage of several northern populations. In spring, breeding visitors probably first to arrive, mainly February, while it appears far northern breeding populations are latest to pass through, in mid May (Flint & Stewart 1992, Richardson 2005–2012). Local breeders fledge from mid–early May, with second broods noted July. Odd birds reported mid December–early January, supposedly lost or wandering individuals. Largest numbers, *c*1000 Golden beach–cape Andreas 17 September 2009 and *c*800 Mandria 28 September 2009. There were 1474 records (38 998 birds), mean 26+ birds/record. The most common species recorded and 2nd most abundant. **Spring**: earliest record four Zakaki marsh 12 January 2008 [this species arrives in mid January with some regularity. Other early records, in *Cyprus Bird Reports* 2000–2010, include one Polis flying north 19 January 1999, one Partenitis dam 14 January 2000, one Zakaki marsh 20 January 2001, two Oroklini marsh 18 January 2002 and two Zakaki marsh 18 January 2010]. Largest number *c*600 Agios Filonas preparing to head north across sea 29 April 2009. **Autumn**: latest record ten Armou 5 December 2008. One Phasouri RB 11 December 2006 may have been a late migrant or a wandering individual.

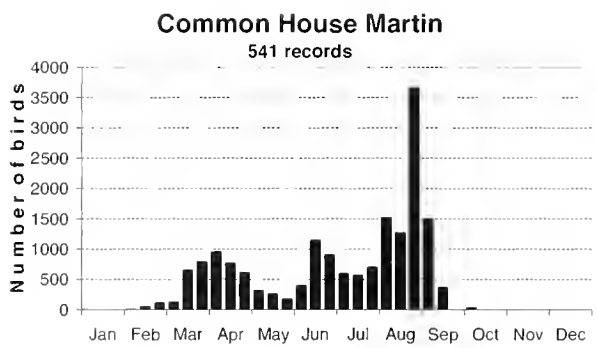
Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* (Figure 11). *Common passage migrant and breeding visitor.* Recorded late January–early October. Main spring passage mid March–mid April. As with most hirundines, movement patterns of this species difficult to interpret. Generally in spring, breeding visitors are the first to arrive, mainly mid February. Local breeders fledge from mid–early May and many then appear to disperse and feed over the pine forests. 100s were in post-breeding flocks from mid June. Autumn migration appeared to commence in July, peaking in late August, coming to a halt rather suddenly mid September. This matched the wider pattern in the country (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012). Largest numbers were one group of 2000 on power lines in Diarizos valley 29 August 2008, 900 feeding over Paphos forest 19 June 2004 and 450 over mount Olympus 8 August 2011. There were 541 records (17 635 birds), mean 33 birds/record. 70% of records of five or more together. The 23rd most frequently recorded migrant and 8th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest spring migrant at a non-breeding site was 24 January 2011; latest spring migrant at a non-breeding site was probably mid May, although accurate timing obscured by large feeding range of local breeding birds. **Autumn**: 300 arriving from the north into Polis bay 22 July 2012, were the first obvious sign of autumn migration, with latest departure 7 October 2008.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* (Figure 12). *Fairly common passage migrant and breeding visitor.* Recorded early March–early November. Small numbers of passage migrants were noted early March, before breeding visitors arrived and started nest-prospecting mid March. Peak numbers late March–April. Autumn migration more difficult to interpret, with congregations of tens noted from early July. Many were locally breeding family parties, but numbers first observed widely at non-breeding sites from early August and assumed to be

migrants. Numbers seen in spring (*c*1460) almost equal to those in autumn (*c*1480). There were 427 records (3041 birds), mean 7.1 birds/record. The 30th most frequently recorded migrant and 23rd most abundant. 50% of sightings of three or more together. **Spring**: first recorded spring passage migrant 8 March 2009, the latest at a non-breeding site 10 May 2013. Largest numbers, 220 Mandria 24 March 2009, 150 passing Aphrodite Beach hotel, Latchi, at sunset 17 April 2010. **Autumn**: difficult to determine the earliest autumn migrant with certainty, but dispersal from mid June, with large numbers, probably including passage migrants, seen from early August peaking in early–mid September. Largest autumn number 79 going to roost Episkopi, Ezousas valley, 20 August 2009. Latest record 5 November 2010.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* (Figure 13, Plate 10). *Common spring migrant, fewer autumn. Occasional breeding visitor.* Recorded March–late May, August–November. Main passages late March and mid–late September. In Larnaca DF up to four were seen on several occasions June and August and may have been nesting. Numbers in spring (4879) 6.4 times those in autumn (770). There were 274 records (5653 birds), mean 20+ birds/record. The 42nd most frequently recorded migrant and 17th most abundant. Gregarious, with 81% of sightings of two or more birds together. **Spring**: earliest arrival 7 March 2009, latest at a non-breeding site 21 May 2013. Largest numbers, 320 Mandria 27 March–4 April 2009, 300 Geroskipou sports club 25 March 2009, 290 Paphos SW 24 March

Plate 10. Seen here at Mandria 9 April 2011, Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* is a common migrant and localised breeding visitor to Cyprus. © *G Reszeter*



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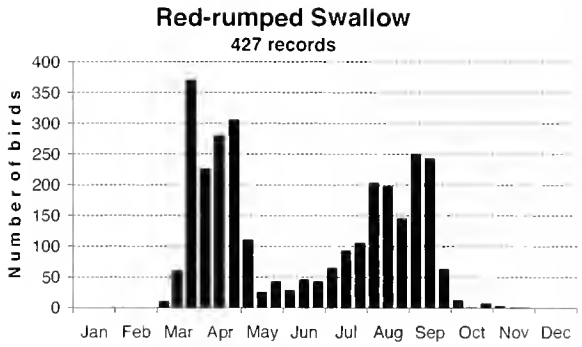

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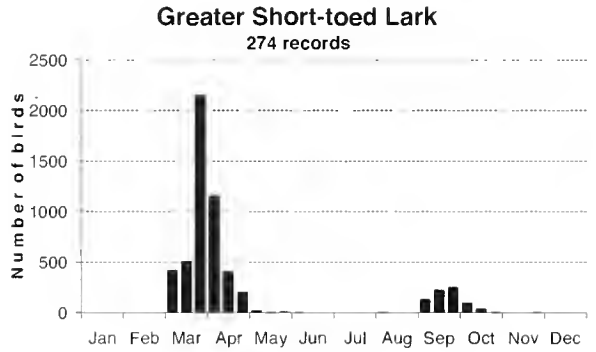

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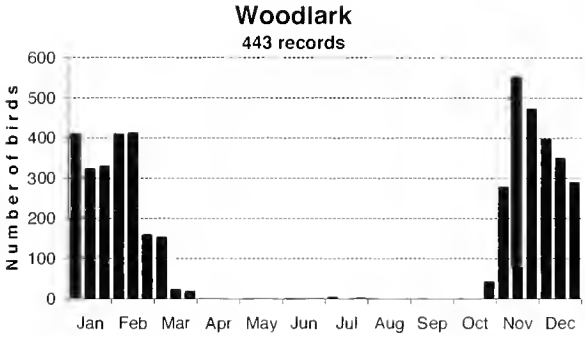

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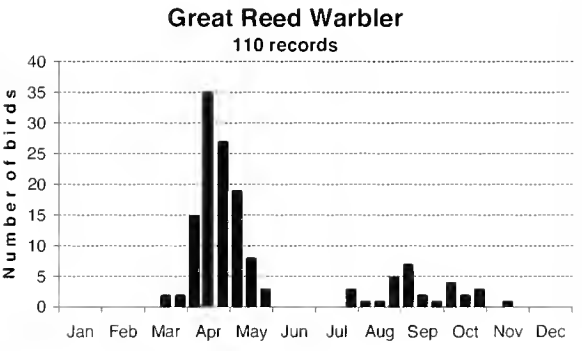

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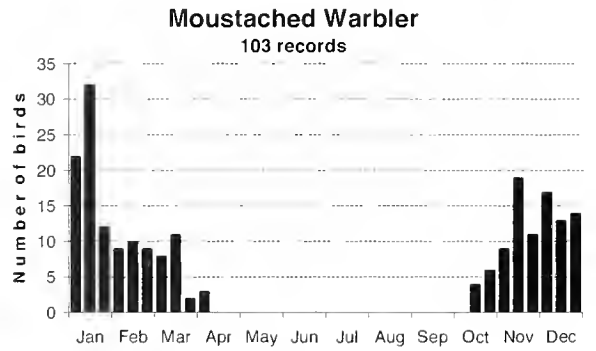

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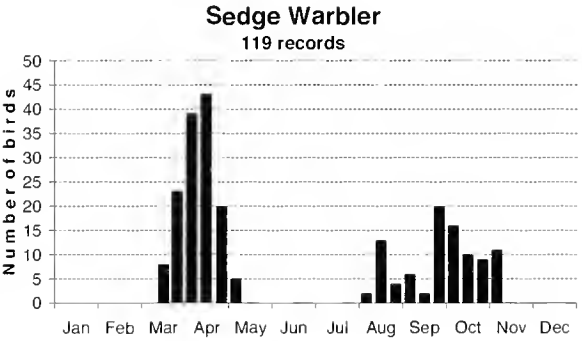

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Figures 11–18. Common House Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Greater Short-toed Lark, Woodlark, Eurasian Skylark, Great Reed, Moustached and Sedge Warbler numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

2009 and 280 Mandria 9 March 2010. **Autumn**: earliest at a non-breeding site 24 August 2006, latest 24 November 2011. Largest numbers, 36 Mandria 7 September 2011 and 46 there 11 September 2004.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* (Figure 14). *Localised resident breeding species in the mountains. Fairly widespread winter visitor to lower ground.* Migrants and winter visitors recorded late October–March. Autumn arrival consistently 25–29 October, with peak involving passage migrants mid November–early December. Numbers declined rapidly from late February and there was no perceptible spring passage. Earliest autumn arrival 25 October 2011; the latest spring departure 30 March 2004. One or two birds noted in Troodos forest breeding territories during my irregular visits there June and July. Gregarious in winter, with 90% of records of two or more birds together. The largest groups recorded Armou hills, with 61 there 19 February 2011, 60 on 20 November 2012, 47 on 13 November 2011 and 44 on 7 February 2011. There were 443 records (4644 birds), mean 10+ birds/record. The 28th most frequently recorded migrant and 18th most abundant.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (Figure 15). *Very common passage migrant and winter visitor.* Recorded October–mid April. Autumn arrival mid–late October and an autumn peak mid November–early December, possibly of passage migrants. A decline early–mid January, a distinct peak late January, followed by a steady departure of winter visitors throughout February and March. All departed by late March, except for odd stragglers remaining to early April in 2008 and mid April in 2010. Earliest autumn sighting 6 October 2010; latest in spring 19 April 2010. Gregarious in winter, with 90% of records of two or more birds together. Largest counts, 520 Paphos SW 12 November 2010, 500 Mandria 8 February 2009 and 450 there 4 December 2009. There were 617 records (27 252 birds), mean 44 birds/record. The 20th most frequently recorded migrant and 4th most abundant.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceous* (Figure 16). *Fairly common passage migrant. Has bred, last in 1985.* Recorded mid March–May, late July–mid November. Main spring passage mid–late April. There was an almost imperceptible autumn migration peak late August–early September. Much more common in spring than autumn. According to Lemke *et al* (2013) it makes frequent and long stopovers in spring during northbound migration to Eurasia, while in autumn many simply overfly the Mediterranean sea without stopping (M Tarka pers comm). Spring passage (111 birds) just over 3 times greater than in autumn (34 birds). 77% of sightings of singles. There were 108 records (145 birds), mean 1.3 birds/record. The 54th most frequently recorded migrant and 58th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest record 18 March 2013, latest 24 May 2013. Largest numbers, five Phasouri RB 11 April 2013 and five Agia Varvara 19 April 2007. **Autumn**: earliest record 31 July 2007, latest 11 November 2011, with a maximum of 3 seen.

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon* (Figure 17). *Scarce to fairly common winter visitor.* Recorded mid October–early April. This localised winter visitor only associated with active reed-beds during present study. Numbers varied annually with most winter visitors arriving late October and remaining to mid March. Sightings in late March and early April only occurred 2006, 2008 and 2012 and may have involved passage migrants. Earliest autumn arrival 17 October (2008 and 2012), latest departure 6 April 2012. Largest numbers, six Asprokremmos dam pools 4 December 2003 and 15 January 2006, five there 28 January 2004 and five Phasouri RB 22 February 2006. 51% of sightings of 2 or more birds. There were 103 records (212 birds), mean 2+ birds/record. The 57th most frequently recorded migrant and 54th most abundant.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* (Figure 18). *Common passage migrant.* Recorded mid March–early May, August–early November. Main spring passage early–mid April and main autumn passage late September–early October. More common in spring than autumn and very rarely found away from wetlands, which were not visited so frequently as other sites. Spring passage (138 birds) was 1.5 times that of autumn (93 birds) when most wetlands are dry. 60% of sightings of singles. There were 119 records (231 birds), mean nearly 2 birds/record. The 53rd most frequently recorded migrant and 52nd most abundant. **Spring**: earliest record 11 March 2006, latest 3 May 2013. Largest numbers, 20 Phasouri RB 5 April 2006, nine there 11 April 2013 and nine Xeros Potamos pools 24 April 2004. **Autumn**: earliest record 10 August 2012, latest 9 November 2010. No more than five were reported together at any one site in autumn.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (Figure 19). *Common breeding visitor* (*race fuscus*) *and passage migrant.* Recorded mid March–November. Peak spring passage mid April, but autumn migration imperceptible. During this study recorded only at reed-beds, which were visited irregularly. Uneven appearance of the histogram reflects this to some extent. Earliest spring arrival 11 March 2012, latest autumn departure 21 November 2006. 68% of sightings of two or more. Largest numbers, 20 Phasouri RB 21 May 2007, 19 there 31 July and 10 August 2007, and 17 Mia Milia WTP 24 March 2010. There were 277 records (838 birds), mean 3 birds/record. The 39th most frequently recorded migrant and 40th most abundant.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida* (Figure 20). *Very common breeding visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded late March–mid October. Very vocal passage migrant and breeding visitor. Seasonal peak numbers recorded late May, when local breeders in full song, and mid–late August, which were probably mostly passage migrants. The earliest spring arrival 25 March 2013; the latest autumn sighting 15 October 2005. 57% of sightings of two or more together. Spring (March–June) numbers (593 birds) slightly outnumbered autumn (July–October) numbers (503 birds). Largest counts, 50 (mostly heard singing) Kannaviou forest 31 May 2008, 20 Livadi tou Pasha 5 June 2012, 20 Kelefos bridge, Paphos forest, 16 June 2008 and 20 Akhna dam 20 August 2013. There were 423 records (1097 birds), mean 2.6 birds/record. The 31st most frequently recorded migrant and 35th most abundant.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (Figure 21). *Very common autumn passage migrant, uncommon spring.* Recorded late March–mid May, mid August–early November. Peak passages late April and September–early October. Considerably more common autumn than spring. Undertakes a strong loop migration, with concentrated numbers passing further east over Israel, the Arabian peninsula and other parts of the Middle East in spring where numbers exceed those recorded in autumn, contrary to the pattern occurring in Cyprus (Shirihai 1996, Eriksen *et al* 2003, Gregory 2005, Richardson 1990). In autumn closely associated with long stalks of Fennel from which it takes small insects and often found in large numbers where the plants were concentrated. Spring passage (86 birds) was 2.7% that of autumn (3158 birds). 75% of sightings of two or more birds. There were 551 records (3603 birds), mean 6.5 birds/record. The 26th most frequently recorded migrant and 21st most abundant. **Spring**: earliest sighting 28 March 2010, latest 17 May 2013. Largest number 20 beside the Neo Chorio–Smygies road 22 April 2004. **Autumn**: earliest record 12 August 2005, latest 13 November 2007. Largest numbers, 150 Evretou dam 22 September 2005, 55 Paphos SW 18 October 2006 and 45 Minthis hills 10 September 2007.

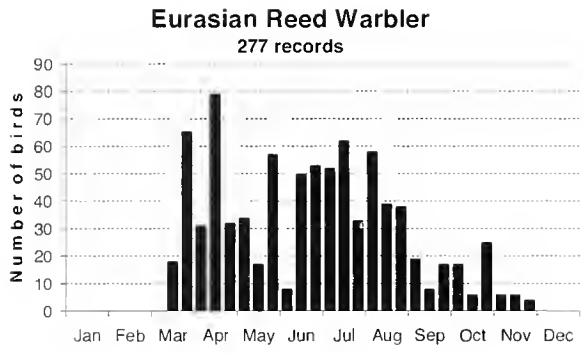
Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (Figure 22). *Very common passage migrant and winter visitor.* Recorded late September–April. Most occurred late October–March, with a

spring migration peak late March. A small peak in November probably refers to passage migrants, but this is uncertain. A number of different migrant races were detected, separable by their contact calls. The most common passage migrant and winter visitor was *abietinus* November–early April and *collybita*, in smaller numbers, mostly passage October and March, which were predominant during the mid–late March peak. This matches closely Flint & Stewart (1992). *P.c. tristis* was not recorded with certainty. A loop migration may occur with one or more of these races. Earliest autumn arrival 28 September 2007, latest spring departure 20 April 2008. Largest counts, 120 Paphos lighthouse area 23 March 2009, 100 Geroskipou 25 March 2009, 50 Agios Minas 29 March 2009 and 50 Baths of Aphrodite 29 March 2009. 75% of records of two or more birds together. There were 845 records (3827 birds), mean 4.5 birds/record. The 11th most frequently recorded migrant and 19th most abundant.

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis* (Figure 23). *Uncommon, although regular spring passage migrant. Rare autumn.* Observed mid March–late April, main passage late March. Not recorded in autumn during this study, corroborating status in Flint & Stewart (1992). Only 6 singles recorded Cyprus mid July–mid October 1993–2012 (*Cyprus Bird Report* 1993–2012, Stylianou 2013). Its near absence in autumn may be due to the Turkish breeding population overflying the island in autumn while most of the Balkan population is likely to pass west of Cyprus at this time (Cramp 1992). Earliest spring sighting 16 March 2010, latest 30 April 2009. Largest number recorded seven Baths of Aphrodite 29 March 2009. There were 37 records (46 birds), mean 1.2 birds/record. The 66th most frequently recorded migrant and 67th most abundant.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* (Figure 24). *Fairly common spring passage migrant, uncommon autumn.* Regularly recorded April–mid May and rather less so September–early October. Spring migration peaked mid–late April. No obvious peak was noted in autumn from such a small sample, but most were seen in the upland pine forests where numbers may be passing unnoticed. Spring passage (57 birds) 11 times larger than autumn (5 birds). 32% of sightings of two or more birds. Largest numbers, five Neo Chorio, Akamas, 1 May 2010 and four Kiti dam 12 April 2012. There were 42 records (62 birds), mean 1.5 birds/record. The 65th most frequently recorded migrant and 66th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 1 April 2007, latest 16 May 2012. **Autumn**: earliest 4 September 2012, latest 9 October 2011.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* (Figure 25). *Very common passage migrant spring and autumn; winter visitor in variable numbers.* Passage migrant and winter visitor mid August–mid May. Spring migration apparent mid March–mid May, peak mid–late April, a time when most were in sub-song with much calling and chasing occurring. In autumn, there appeared to be multiple peaks—probably as different populations moved through—particularly mid September, early then late October. This pattern supported by sightings at cape Greco autumn 2005 (Roth 2008). Several European populations also occur Israel, where northern European and nearer populations both recorded on migration (Shirihai 1996, Shirihai *et al* 2001). More common spring than autumn, which corroborates its status island-wide (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012). Flint & Stewart (1992) considered Eurasian Blackcap to be more numerous in autumn, mainly because of earlier very high daily totals in the southeast, but autumn numbers passing there are now apparently much lower (*eg* Roth 2008). Earliest autumn sighting 17 August 2008, latest spring 15 May 2011. Largest groups, 35 Akrotiri GP 25 April 2013, 35 Agia Napa SW 4 September 2009 and 27 Armou hills 25 September 2008. 59% of records of two or more birds together. There were



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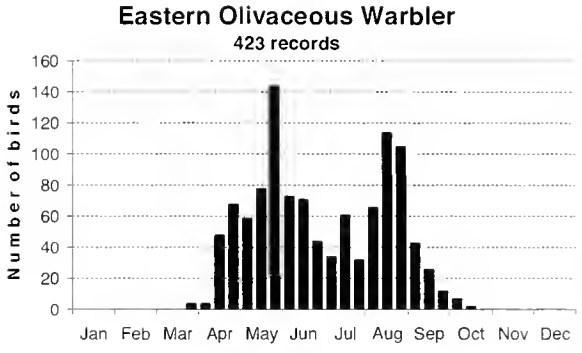

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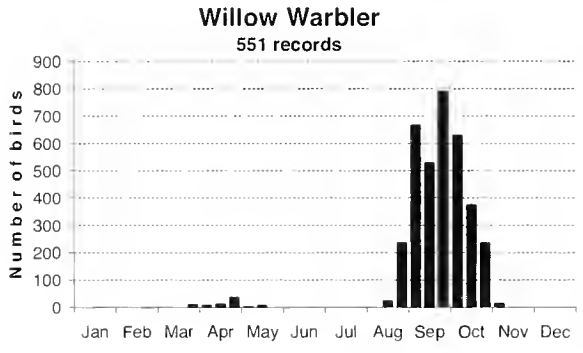

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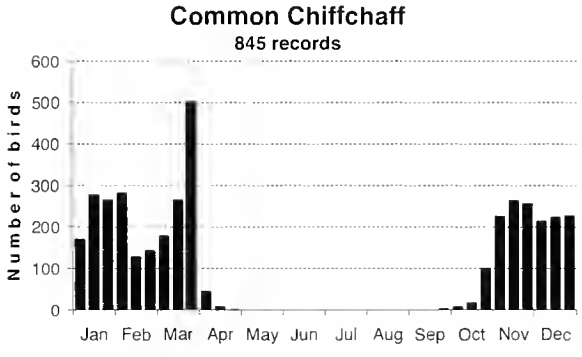

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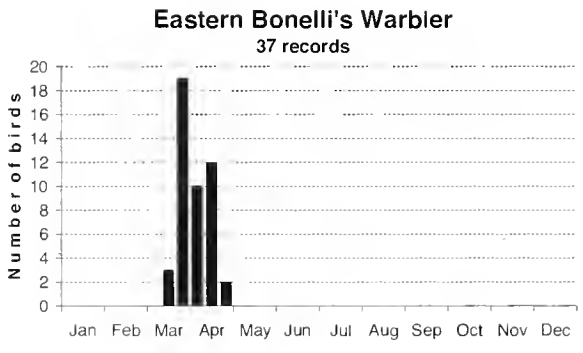

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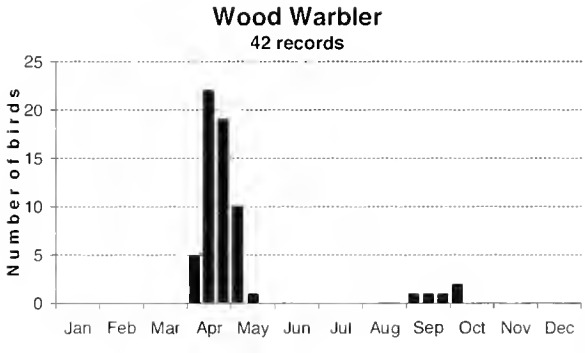

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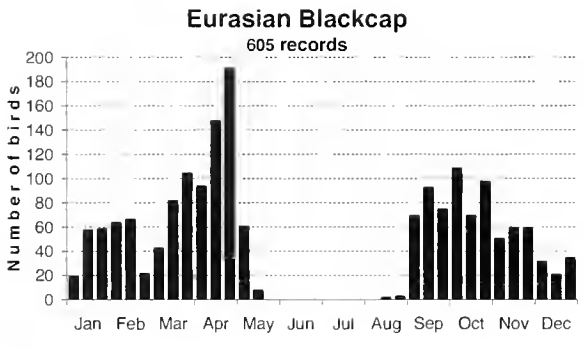

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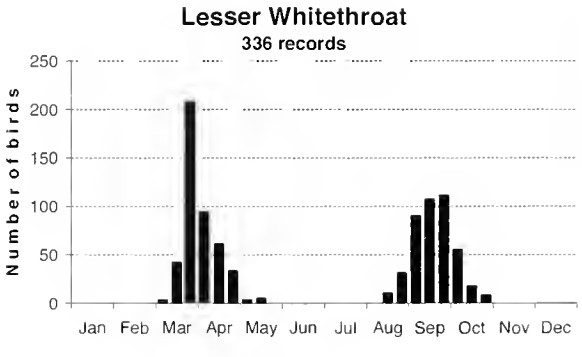

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Figures 19–26. Eurasian Reed, Eastern Olivaceous, Willow Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, Eastern Bonelli's, Wood Warbler, Eurasian Blackcap and Lesser Whitethroat numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

605 records (1802 birds), mean 3 birds/record. The 21st most frequently recorded migrant and 30th most abundant.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia minula* (Figure 26). *Common spring and autumn migrant.* Passage migrants March–mid May, mid August–October. Main passage late March and mid–late September. Spring passage numbers (455 birds) were very similar to autumn (437 birds) though autumn migration lacked an obvious peak. 54% of sightings of two or more birds. There were 336 records (892 birds), mean 2.6 birds/record. The 34th most frequently recorded migrant and 39th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 8 March 2012, latest 13 May 2007. Largest numbers, 30 Paphos lighthouse 29 March 2007 and 25 there 23 March 2009. **Autumn**: earliest 16 August 2012, latest 28 October 2008. Largest number 35 Agia Napa SW 4 September 2009.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* (Figure 27). *Common spring migrant, scarce autumn.* Recorded mid March–early May, late July–mid September. Main passages late March and August. Not common but in this study larger numbers were seen in autumn than spring contrary to Flint & Stewart (1992). However recent *Cyprus Bird Reports* (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012) indicate that records from all island observers are fairly equal in spring and autumn. There were 54 records (89 birds), mean 1.6 birds/record. The 64th most frequently recorded migrant and 63rd most abundant. Spring passage (34 birds) 62% of autumn (55 birds). 70% of sightings single birds. **Spring**: earliest 12 March 2010, latest 7 May 2010. Maximum of two seen at any one site. **Autumn**: earliest 24 July 2011, latest 15 September 2002. Largest numbers at Agia Napa SW with 12 on 10 August 2012, five 20 August 2013 and four 11 September 2009; and three Marathounta hills 15 August 2012.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* (Figure 28). *Common spring migrant, less common autumn.* Passage migrants mid March–mid May, mid August–late October. Peak passage mid April and early September. Spring passage (138 birds) 1.3 times that of autumn (104 birds). 68% of sightings single birds. There were 151 records (242 birds), mean 1.6 birds/record. The 49th most frequently recorded migrant and 53rd most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 13 March 2009, latest 12 May 2007. Largest number nine Paphos lighthouse 14 April 2009. **Autumn**: earliest 12 August 2013, latest 27 October 2002. Largest number 10 Armou 1 September 2004.

Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia albistriata* (Figure 29). *Spring passage migrant in variable numbers, rare autumn.* Passage migrants March–early May and, rarely, September–early October. Peak passage late March. In spring, on departing Africa, many appear to follow the upper Nile valley and Red sea coast (pers obs) heading north, some following the mainland through the Levant countries and/or crossing the eastern Mediterranean including Cyprus on a broad front (Shirihai 1996). It performs a loop migration. In autumn their absence appears to be due to most post-breeding migrants departing their breeding grounds, which lie mainly west and northwest of Cyprus, in a more southwestward direction towards the African coast (Shirihai *et al* 2001). Spring passage (67 birds) 13 times larger than autumn (five birds). 80% of sightings single birds. There were 51 records (72 birds), mean 1.4 birds/record. The 63rd most frequently recorded migrant and 65th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 7 March 2010, latest 9 May 2012. Largest numbers, seven Paphos lighthouse area 26 March 2009 and four there 20 March 2009. **Autumn**: earliest 7 September 2012, latest 3 October 2011.

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* (Figure 30, Plate 11). *Fairly common or common winter visitor in variable numbers.* This species' status has changed since 1992. Breeders

have colonised at least the northern Kyrenia range, the north coast, and the west including most of Paphos District. It is now very common and appears to be mainly resident and continues to extend its range (*eg* Frost 1995, Cozens *et al* 2000, Pomeroy & Walsh 2000, Jones 2006, Radford 2009, Richardson 2011, Flint & McArthur 2014). Apparent passage migration and/or arrival/departure of local breeders evident spring and autumn, with numbers recorded at sites where they are not known to breed. Winter visitors were not noted during the present study (although winter visitors are often recorded by others, especially in the southeast of the island from late October to mid March (Richardson 2005–2012)). Main movements probably mid–late March, possibly to early April (but partly obscured by resident breeding activity) and late September–early November (peaking in October at sites where no residents occur). The early October peak in the histogram coincides with a survey undertaken in 2013 and inflates the figures, so passage probably peaks in late October based on sightings in areas where it is not known to breed (A Tye pers comm). This concurs with Shirihai *et al* (2001) and Flint & Stewart (1992). Numbers are swollen late April–late May due to post-breeding presence of family parties. The summer dip matches the period of least activity followed by a peak in activity in autumn when territories are re-established (pers obs). Largest numbers, 20 Choli 27 April 2003, 20 Lara point, Akamas, 5 May 2003 and 15 Minthis hills 15 October 2011. 22 territories were counted at Marathounta in a 2 km transect 26 May 2013. There were 1289 records (3635 birds), mean 2.8 birds/record. The 2nd most frequently recorded migrant, and 20th most abundant.

Plate 11. Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* is a passage migrant, winter visitor and successful colonising breeding species in Cyprus. This male was at Paphos sewage plant 25 March 2013. © *G Reszeter*

Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli* (Figure 31, Plate 12). *Fairly common spring passage migrant, rare autumn.* Passage migrants observed late February–mid April, mid August–mid September. Peak passage late March. It performs a loop migration, similar in pattern to Eastern Subalpine Warbler (above). In spring its passage is across the eastern Mediterranean (including Cyprus) and the Levant heading for breeding grounds north and northwest of Cyprus. In autumn it heads south/southwestward over the Mediterranean sea to the African coast, thus passing west of Cyprus (Shirihai *et al* 2001). Spring passage (121 birds) 24 times that of autumn (5 birds). 71% of sightings single birds. There were 63 records (126 birds), mean 2 birds/record. The 61st most frequently recorded migrant and 61st most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 28 February 2006, latest 14 April 2010. Largest numbers, 14 Marathounta 24 March 2011, 13 Paphos lighthouse 26 March 2009 (eight still

Plate 12. A regular and fairly common spring migrant in Cyprus, Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli* is at its passage peak in late March. This male was at Asprokremmos dam 28 March 2012. © *G Reszeter*

present 31 March) and six Marathounta 29 March 2011. **Autumn**: earliest 20 August 2011, latest 11 September 2007.

Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax* (Figures 32 & 33, Plates 13 & 14). *This Cyprus endemic is a common resident breeder and breeding visitor.* Cyprus Warbler undertakes complicated migratory movements, which are difficult to interpret. An unknown but apparently substantial proportion of the breeding population leave the island in winter (Flint & Stewart 1992, Shirihai *et al* 2001). Sightings in Israel suggest numbers depart Cyprus from early November (Shirihai 1996), which might explain the dip in November. Summer visitors apparently return from early March (*eg* five Minthis hills 6 March 2007 were probably returning migrants). Sightings increased late March and early April, a period of peak singing and territorial activity. 51% of sightings singles, 17% of 3 or more birds. Largest numbers, 16 Paphos forest 19 June 2004, 15 Pissouri bay gorge 2 January 2007 and eight Minthis hills 22 June 2005. There were 645 records (1191 birds), mean 1.8 birds/record. The 19th most frequently recorded migrant and 33rd most abundant. The population is showing a worrying decline in

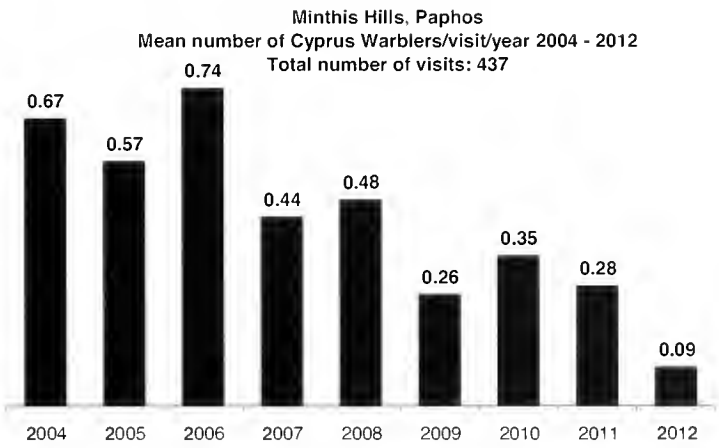
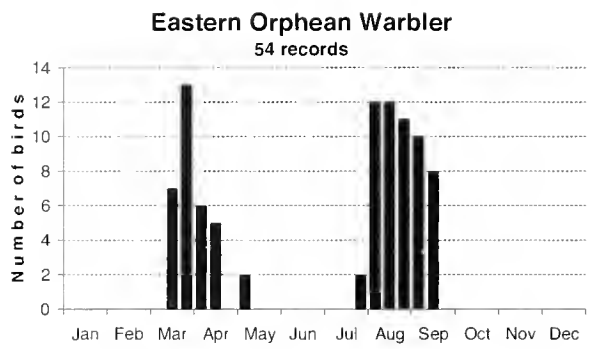


Figure 33. There is increasing evidence of a decline of the breeding population of Cyprus Warbler in many areas, but particularly in the southwest of the island. A large proportion of bird records in this survey were obtained from Minthis hills and near surrounds. This histogram indicates a decline of the species there during the period 2004–2012.



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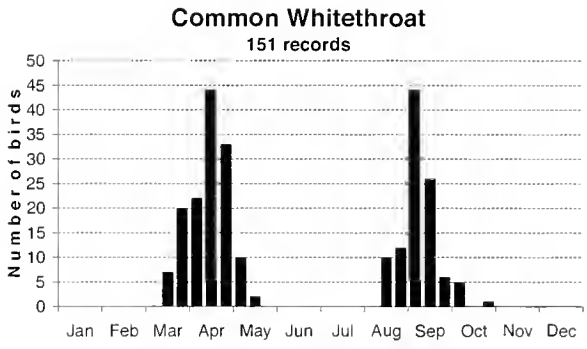

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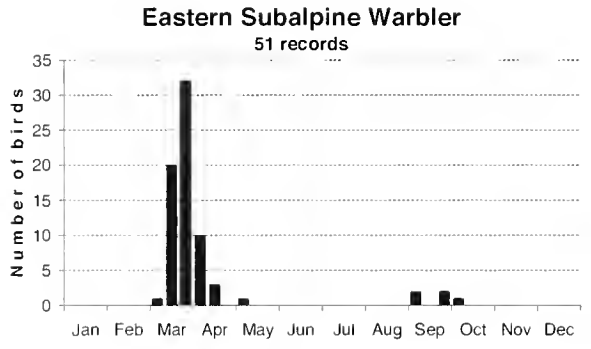

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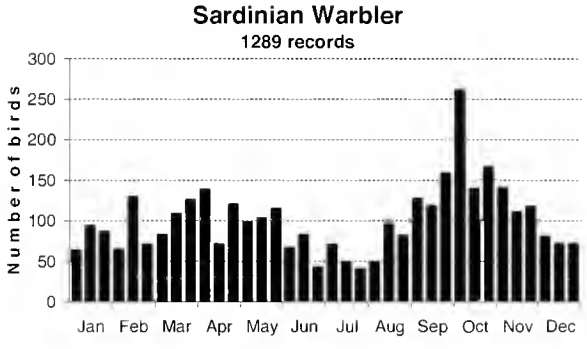

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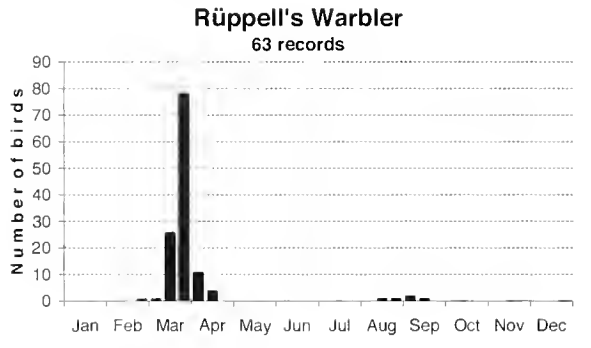

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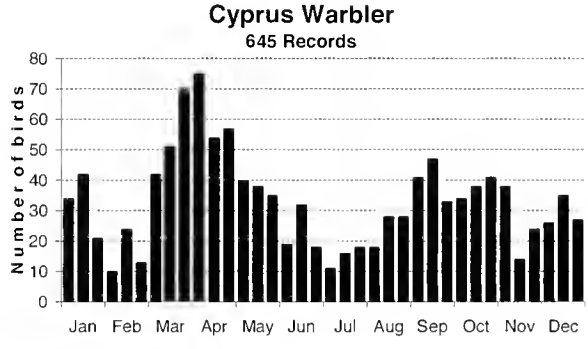

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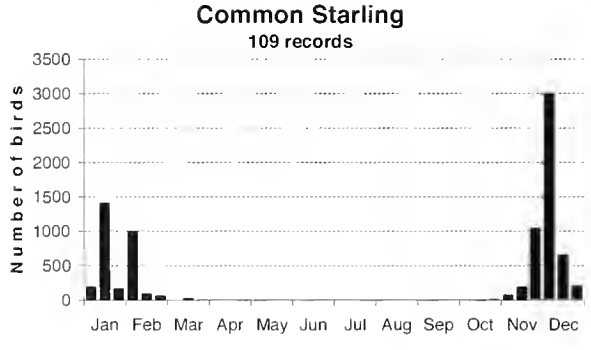

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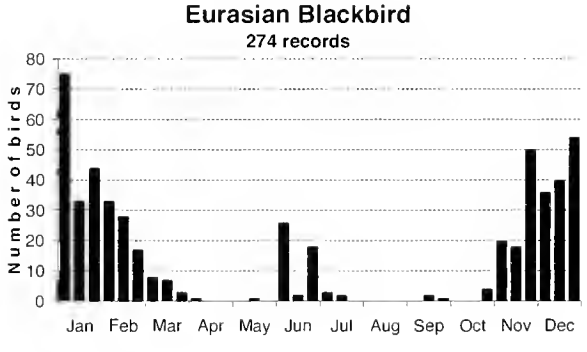

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Figures 27–35 (not Figure 33). Eastern Orphean Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Eastern Subalpine, Sardinian, Rüppell's and Cyprus Warbler, Common Starling and Eurasian Blackbird numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

Plate 13. Under pressure, the endemic Cyprus Warbler *Sylvia melanothorax* is declining in many areas of the country. This male was at Asprokremmos dam 28 March 2012. © *G Reszeter*

Plate 14. Even female Cyprus Warblers *Sylvia melanothorax* are jaunty and distinctive. This bird was at Anarita, near Paphos, 30 March 2012. © *G Reszeter*

western and other parts of Cyprus (Pomeroy & Walsh 2000, 2002, Jones 2006, Richardson 2011, Flint & McArthur 2014)

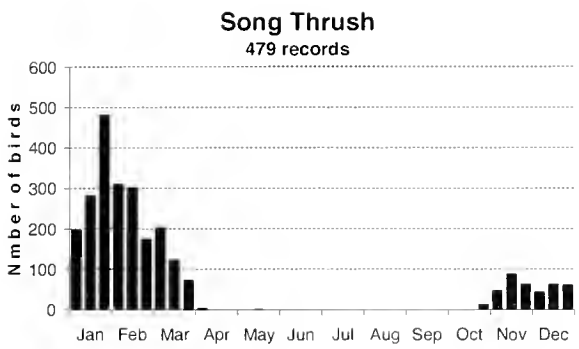
Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (Figure 34). *Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded all months October–May. Distinct peak early December, apparently a mid winter high, before numbers declined to mid March. Systematic lists in the Cyprus Ornithological Society (1957) reports 1990–2003, Gordon (2004) and Richardson (2005–2012) detail flocks of up to 2000 birds concentrating at wetlands in the Larnaca, Akrotiri and Famagusta areas and at roost sites in Nicosia city centre late November–early January, numbers peaking early December. Erratic peaks late winter are probably due to patchy observations and chance sightings of large flocks at wetlands. Earliest autumn sighting 9 October 2013, latest, in spring, 9 May 2011. Records after 11 March were only of ones and twos and probably relate to passage migrants. Otherwise spring passage imperceptible. 59% of records of 10 or more birds together. Largest groups, 1900 Larnaca SW 10 December 2011 and 1200 Phasouri RB 14 January 2005. There were 109 records (8178 birds), mean 75 birds/record. The 56th most frequently recorded migrant and 13th most abundant.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula* (Figure 35). *Fairly common winter visitor, irregular passage migrant and localised breeding resident in the upland forests.* Winter visitors recorded late October–late March. In summer seen or heard during my visits to the Troodos and Paphos forests where it is a breeding resident. No perceptible autumn peak and histogram fluctuations late November–January probably reflect random visits to areas of high occurrence (see largest numbers below). Although spring passage was imperceptible, reports in the Cyprus Ornithological Society and Birdlife Cyprus bird reports 1993–2012 of singles seen in non-breeding areas 13 times between 11 Apr and 4 May probably refer to passage migrants. Earliest autumn sighting at a non-breeding site 29 October 2006, latest spring sighting 23 March 2006. Largest numbers, 21 Avagas gorge 4 January 2007 and 10 Oreites forest, Kouklia, 10 January 2007. 54% of records singles. There were 274 records (524 birds), mean 1.9 birds/record. The 38th most frequently recorded migrant and 46th most abundant.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* (Figure 36). *Common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant.* Recorded all months October–May. Almost indiscernible peak mid November suggests a small movement of passage migrants. Greatest numbers occurred late January, a probable result of its eruptive nature when harsh weather conditions in Europe force birds south. Numbers declined steadily throughout spring until all but a few had departed by late March. There appeared to be some passage mid February–early March, corroborated by Flint & Stewart (1992) but this was obscured by the departure of winter visitors. One ringed Egypt 12 November 1969 and found shot in Cyprus 5 November 1972, also confirms passage migration (Flint & Stewart 1992). Earliest autumn sighting 27 October 2012, latest spring sighting 9 April 2012 though one isolated bird Phasouri RB 14 May 2007. Largest numbers, 58 Armou hills 17 February 2007, 51 Armou hills 8 March 2010, 45 Akhna dam 27 February 2010, 43 Marathounta 14 January 2008 and 40 Armou hills 21 January 2008. 69% of records of 2 or more birds. There were 479 records (2538 birds), mean 5.3 birds/record. The 27th most frequently recorded migrant and 25th most abundant.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* (Figure 37). *Very common passage migrant and winter visitor.* Recorded October–early April. Autumn peak early November. Spring passage negligible and obscured by departure of winter visitors. Earliest autumn sighting 7 October 2006, latest in spring 1 April 2007. Largest numbers, 30 Ezousas valley, Episkopi, 5 November 2009 and 30 Avagas gorge 5 December 2003 and 25 November 2005. 66% of records of 2 or more birds. Autumn numbers (1421 recorded October–early December) 20 times greater than spring (77 recorded March–April). There were 603 records (2185 birds), mean 3.6 birds/record. The 24th most frequently recorded migrant and 27th most abundant.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* (Figure 38). *Fairly common autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.* Most birds were recorded during infrequent visits to wetland sites; the irregularities in the histogram probably reflect this. Earliest autumn sighting 28 September 2011, latest in spring 29 March 2013. Sightings mid–late March probably passage migrants, confirmed by the systematic lists in Gordon (2004) and Richardson (2005–2012), which detail instances of spring passage mid March–mid April. Autumn passage probably late October–early December, although timings obscured by arrival of winter visitors. Spring numbers (16, February–March) were 14% of autumn's (116, late September–early December). Largest numbers, five Phasouri RB 12 October 2011 and five Zakaki marsh 27 October 2010. 63% of records single birds. There were 99 records (162 birds), mean 1.6 birds/record. The 59th most frequently recorded migrant and 60th most abundant.



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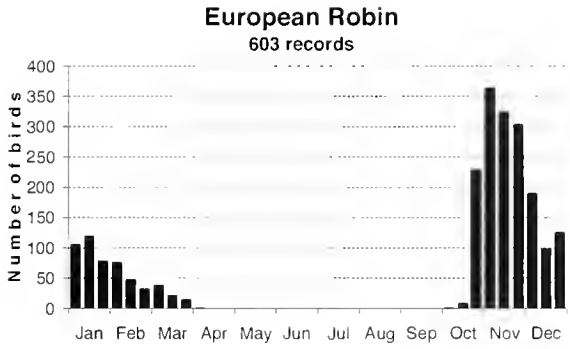

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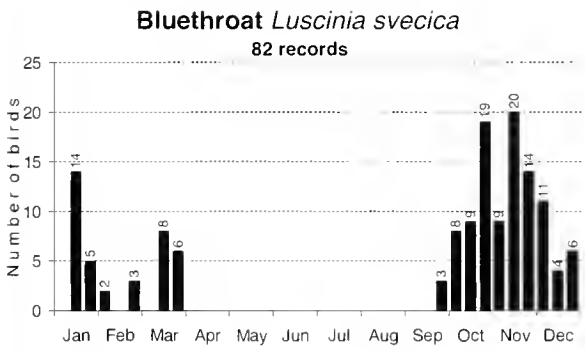

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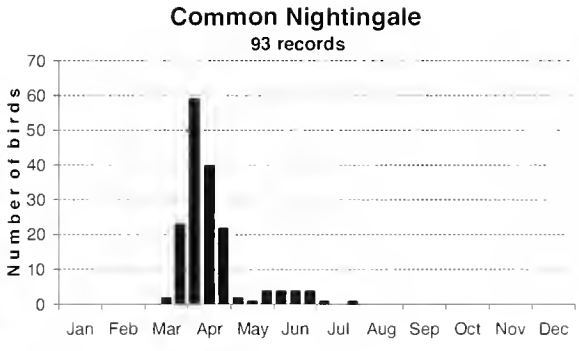

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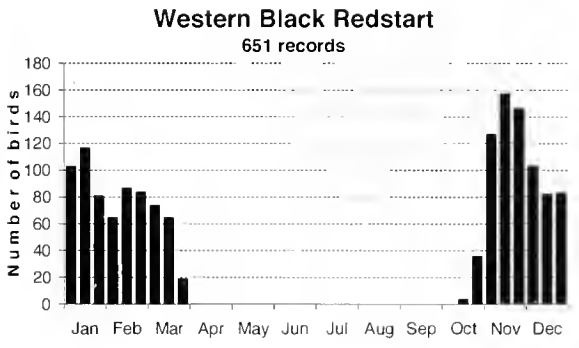

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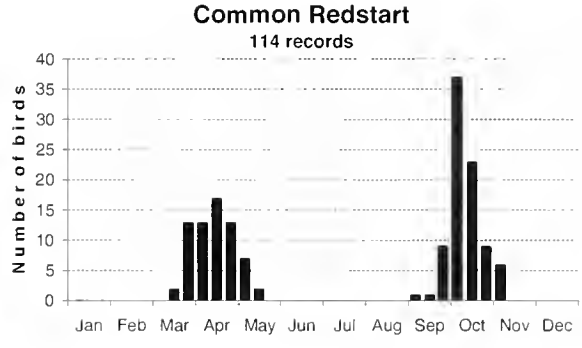

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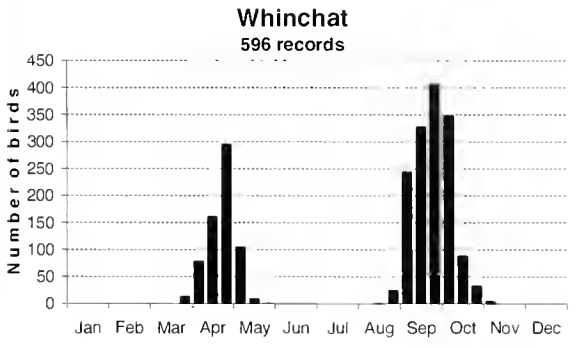

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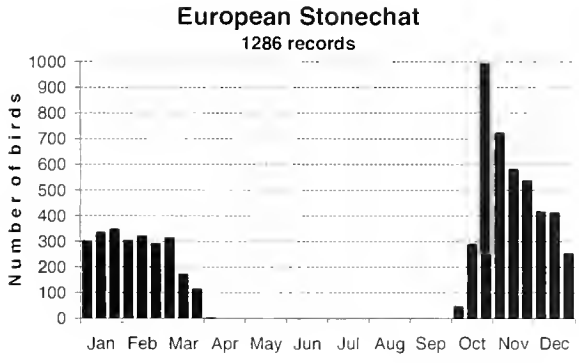

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Figures 36–43. Song Thrush, European Robin, Bluethroat, Common Nightingale, Western Black and Common Redstart, Whinchat and European Stonechat numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (Figure 39). *Common spring passage migrant and breeding visitor to the mountain forests. Rare autumn.* Recorded mid March–July. Peak spring passage early April. Recorded in breeding habitat mid May–July, but other breeding details were not covered in this study. Not recorded in autumn and rare elsewhere in the region at this time (Shirihai 1996) when its favoured lush, damp habitat is largely absent. 62% of sightings singles or 'heard only' birds. There were 93 records (167 birds), mean 1.8 birds/record. The 58th most frequently recorded migrant and 56th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest at a non-breeding site 19 March 2013; latest 5 May 2012. Largest numbers were 12 Anavargos 6 April 2013 and nine Paphos lighthouse 7 April 2006.

Western Black Redstart *Phoenicuroides ochruros* (Figure 40). *Common and widespread winter visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded mid October–March. Earliest autumn sighting 14 October 2006, latest spring departure 31 March 2009. Winter visitors remained in good numbers into late February–early March with a rapid departure thereafter, obscuring any spring passage. Newly arrived birds late October–November often briefly occurred in large concentrations, matching Flint & Stewart (1992). This may partly explain the peak then, but some passage migrants may also be involved. 50% of records two or more birds. Largest numbers, 30 Anarita mast 19 November 2004, 22 Paphos lighthouse 25 February 2012, 20 Avagas gorge 28 December 2008 and 16 there, around the car park, 6 January 2009. There were 651 records (1433 birds), mean 2.2 birds/record. The 17th most frequently recorded migrant and 31st most abundant.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (Figure 41). *Common passage migrant.* Recorded mid March–mid May and September–early November in irregular numbers annually. Less common than in former times, confirming decline across its European breeding range. The reasons for this are complex but include desert encroachment on its sub-Saharan wintering grounds (Porkert & Jiří 2005, Zwarts *et al* 2009). The nominate race predominated, while singles of 'white-winged' *samamisicus* seen 18 March 2011 and 7 October 2013. 84% of sightings single birds. Spring passage (67 birds) 78% that of autumn (86 birds). There were 114 records (153 birds), mean 1.3 birds/record. The 55th most frequently recorded migrant and 59th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest, of the *samamisicus* race, 18 March 2011 (this race is usually the first to occur in spring), latest 12 May 2010. Main passage late March–April, apparent peak mid April. Only ones and twos recorded spring. **Autumn**: earliest 6 September 2004, latest 6 November 2013. Peak passage early October. Largest numbers, 11 Neo Chorio 7 October 2013, seven Neo Chorio 4 October 2008 and five Agios Filonas, Karpas, 15 October 2005.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* (Figure 42). *Common passage migrant.* Recorded late March–May, mid August–early November. Larger numbers recorded autumn than spring contra Flint & Stewart (1992). Similar pattern found in Gordon (2004) and Richardson (2005–2012). Numbers may be struggling to survive the winter south of the Sahara, where the desert is encroaching on their habitat (Porkert & Jiří 2005, Zwarts *et al* 2009), while in autumn their numbers appear to be bouncing back as if following successful breeding in Europe. Spring passage (668 birds) 54% that of autumn (1252 birds). 64% of sightings of 2 or more together. There were 646 records (2150 birds), mean 3.3 birds/record. The 18th most frequently recorded migrant and 29th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 21 March 2006, latest 22 May 2012. Main passage late April. Largest counts included 16 Anarita park 2 April 2007 and 13 at numerous locations mid April–early May. **Autumn**: earliest 12 August 2012, latest 9 November 2010. Main passage mid September–early October with apparent peak late

September. Largest numbers, 26 Mandria 17 September 2005, 21 Mandria 1 October 2007 and 20 Marathounta 2 October 2008.

European Stonechat *Saxicola* (*torquatus*) *rubicola* (Figure 43). *Very common winter visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded October–early April. Winter visitors remained in good numbers until early March, with rapid departure thereafter. Some passage occurred from mid March but it was obscured by the simultaneous departure of winter visitors (two sightings of male Siberian Stonechats *S.*(*t.*) *maurus*, 23 April 2007 and 31 March 2009, not included in the present study). Autumn peak late October. Most common autumn, possibly due to southbound migrants, when reaching the southern Turkish coast heading over Cyprus only 65 km to the south, while in spring after leaving Africa via the Nile valley the more obvious course is to pass over the Levant, east of Cyprus (Bourne 1960, Flint & Stewart 1992). Earliest autumn sighting 1 October 2005, latest in spring 6 April 2009. Largest numbers, 34 Marathounta hills 4 November 2010, 30 Anarita park 25 October 2006, 30 cape Kormakitis 28 October 2006 and 30 Choletria 12 December 2002. Males and females shared territories in winter appearing as 'pairs' with 90% of records of 2 or more birds together. There were 1286 records (6770 birds), mean 5.3 birds/record. The third most frequently recorded migrant and 15th most abundant.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellinus* (Figure 44). *Common passage migrant.* Recorded late January–mid May, late August–mid November. Spring passage (908 birds) 7 times greater than autumn (123 birds). In autumn this species may take non-stop flights over the Mediterranean sea (Cramp 1988) or pass further east through Arabia and the Middle East where passage is more concentrated (Richardson 1990, Shirihai 1996). 51% of sightings of 2 or more together. There were 379 records (1043 birds), mean 2.7 birds/record. The 32nd most frequently recorded migrant and 37th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest spring sighting 24 January 2009, latest 12 May 2011. Main passage mid–late March. Largest numbers, 51 cape Andreas 23 March 2010, 48 Mandria, Paphos, 9 March 2010, 34 Timi beach and picnic area 9 March 2010, 26 Mazotos, Petountas, 12 March 2009 and 26 Mandria, Paphos, 20 March 2011. **Autumn**: earliest 22 August 2013, latest 12 November 2012. Peak passage early September. In autumn, no counts exceeded four birds together.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (Figure 45). *Very common passage migrant.* Recorded late February–mid May, late August–mid November. Peak passage periods late March–early April, mid September–late October. Spring passage (1472 birds) was 1.4 times autumn's (1057 birds). 61% of sightings of 2 or more together. There were 728 records (2529 birds), mean 3.5 birds/record. The 15th most frequently recorded migrant and 26th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 27 February 2006, latest 14 May 2005. Largest numbers, 30 Mandria, Paphos, 2 April 2011 and 27 there 6 April 2012, and 25 cape Greco 21 March 2008. **Autumn**: earliest 28 August 2005, latest 16 November 2011. Largest numbers, 62 Agia Eirini beach 27 October 2006, 38 Minthis hills 26 September 2006 and 29 cape Greco 14 September 2001.

Cyprus Wheatear *Oenanthe cypriaca* (Figure 46, Plate 15). *Common endemic breeding visitor.* Recorded mid March–early December. Peak numbers recorded late March (coinciding with the main arrival of breeders) and late April (coinciding with peak breeding activity). In autumn, peak numbers early September. The dip in early August is hard to explain but could be due to the species' inactivity during the hottest period of summer, or shyness during moult (the earliest fresh-plumaged adult 7 August 2013). The increase in September might be due to birds moving to low ground as they move south (Flint & Stewart 1992); note large numbers in south Karpas peninsula, below, thought to be a departure point.

Plate 15. Cyprus Wheatear *Oenanthe cypriaca* is easy to find April–September. This recently arrived male was at Asprokremmos dam 10 April 2011. © *G Reszeter*

There were 919 records (2568 birds), mean 2.8 birds/record. The 9th most frequently recorded migrant and 24th most abundant. 60% of sightings were two or more together. Earliest spring sighting at a non-breeding site was one at Mandria 11 March 2012, the latest at a non-breeding site one at Anarita park 14 November 2006. Largest numbers, 82 south Karpas peninsula 7 September 2004, 31 cape Andreas 23 March 2010, 22 Diarizos valley 29 August 2008 and 20 Giant Black Pine, Troodos, 10 July 2010. One seen Troodos forest 2 December 2006 suggests occasional over-wintering.

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe melanoleuca* (Figure 47, Plate 16). *Common spring passage migrant, scarce autumn.* Recorded mid March–early May (one early June), late August–mid October. As with several other migrant wheatears, many probably overfly the Mediterranean sea in autumn (Cramp 1988), but during a 2005 autumn survey at cape Greco it was found to be quite common (Roth 2008), suggesting many pass over the eastern capes at that time. Spring passage (560 birds) 15.5 times

Plate 16. Male Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe melanoleuca* is distinctive and its passage peaks in late March on Cyprus. This dark-throated form was at Anarita 7 April 2011. © *G Reszeter*

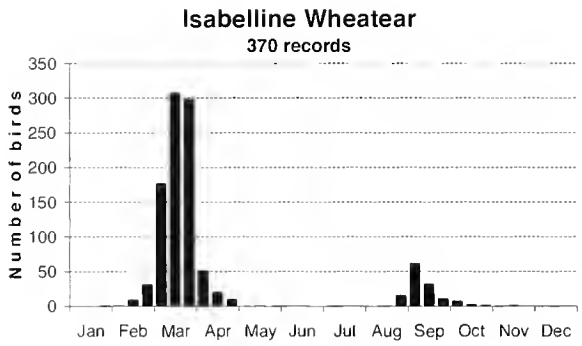
greater than autumn's (36 birds). 56% of sightings singles. There were 298 records (596 birds), mean 2 birds/record. The 37th most frequently recorded migrant and 43rd most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 11 March 2010, latest was one Agia Varvara 1 June 2012. Peak passage late March. Largest numbers, 18 Mandria 7 April 2007, 10 Anarita park 26 March 2007, 10 Asprokremmos dam pools 26 March 2007 and 10 Akrotiri GP 6 April 2008. **Autumn**: earliest 23 August 2008, latest 11 October 2009. Peak passage mid September. Only ones and twos autumn.

Finsch's Wheatear *Oenanthe finschii* (Figure 48). *Fairly common winter visitor and scarce passage migrant.* Recorded October–early April. Peaks recorded late November and mid December. Earliest autumn arrival 5 October 2010, latest in spring 1 April 2006. The only spring passage migrant at a non-wintering site was one at Mandria 21 March 2012; no passage migrants were seen at non-wintering sites in autumn (their habitat was less-visited in late December, accounting for the dip at this time. Largest numbers, eight Asprokremmos dam 7 November 2009, seven Choletria 12 December 2002, six Anarita park 21 January 2009, six Kidasi 23 February 2007 and six Marathounta 21 November 2010. 54% of records of two or more birds. There were 237 records (502 birds), mean 2.1 birds/record. The 44th most frequently recorded migrant and 47th most abundant.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* (Figure 49). *Fairly common winter visitor, passage migrant and localised breeding resident.* Recorded late September–early May, with one on breeding territory in early July. Small numbers nest in rocky areas in the mountains, but no useful data was obtained of their movements at that time. Peak spring passage probably mid–late March. However no autumn passage discernable. Systematic lists in Gordon (2004) and Richardson (2005–2012) suggest that breeding dispersal starts late August, with possible migration and/or arrival of wintering birds increasing from late September through October. Earliest autumn sighting at a non-breeding site was 23 September 2007, latest spring sighting at a non-breeding site 5 May 2012. Largest numbers, three cape Greco 5 February 2011 and three Agia Napa SW 21 March 2009. 84% of records singles. There were 133 records (157 birds), mean 1.2 birds/record. The 51st most frequently recorded migrant and 57th most abundant.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (Figure 50). *Common passage migrant and breeding visitor.* Recorded mid April–late October. Peaks early May and late September. All records between 30 May and 8 August were of birds on breeding territory. Spring passage (411 birds) was 80% of autumn's (509 birds). There were 468 records (1001 birds), mean 2.1 birds/record. The 29th most frequently recorded migrant and 38th most abundant. 54% of sightings of singles. **Spring**: earliest at a non-breeding site 12 April 2008, latest 29 May 2002. Largest numbers (away from breeding sites), 17 Neo Chorio, Akamas, 1 May 2010 and 15 Akrotiri salt lake 2 May 2005. **Autumn**: earliest at a non-breeding site 10 August 2006, latest 27 October 2005. Largest numbers, 16 Marathounta 2 October 2008 and 11 Kantara 3 September 2010.

Eurasian Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* (Figure 51). *Fairly common spring passage migrant, rare autumn.* Recorded April–mid May, largest numbers seen mid–late April, peaking mid April. Occurred in variable numbers annually. There were 74 records (126 birds), mean 1.7 birds/record. The 60th most frequently recorded migrant and 62nd most abundant. 62% of sightings singles. **Spring**: earliest 11 April 2007, latest 14 May 2012. Largest numbers, 18 Armou 20 April 2005 and 13 Neo Chorio–Smygies 22 April 2004. **Autumn**: not recorded in autumn in this study.



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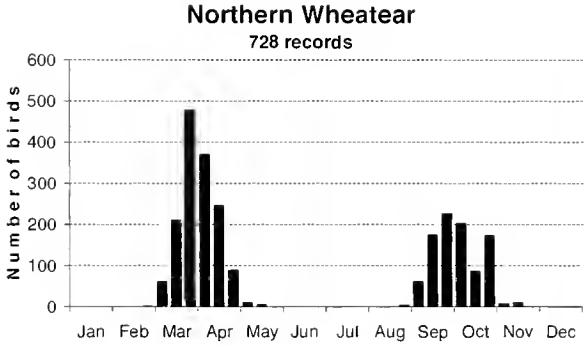

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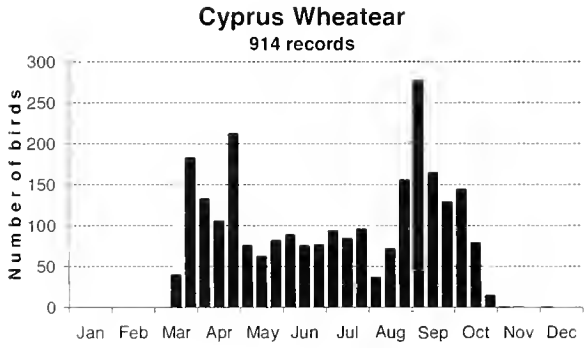

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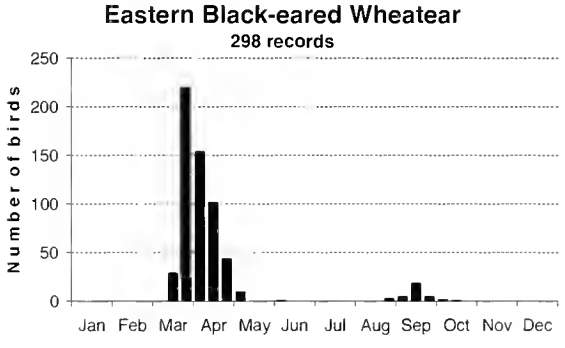

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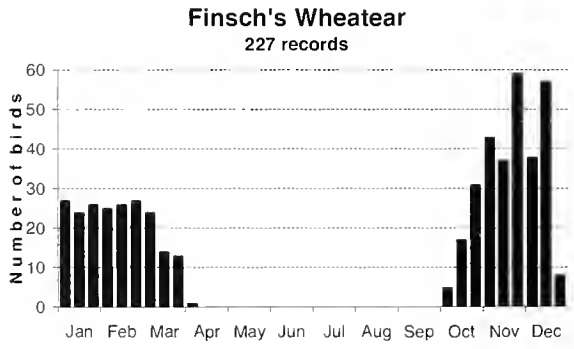

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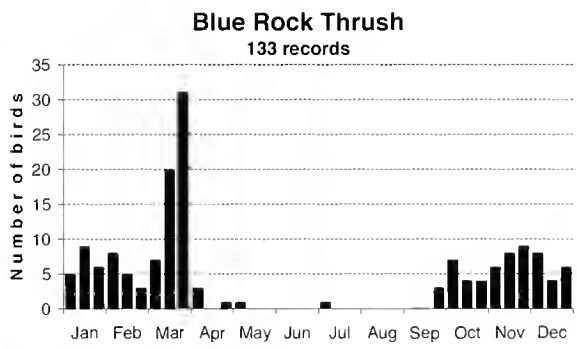

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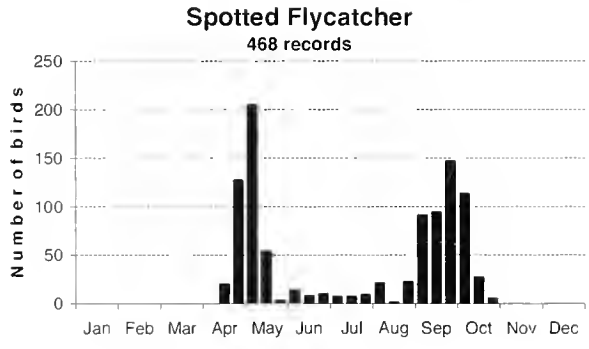

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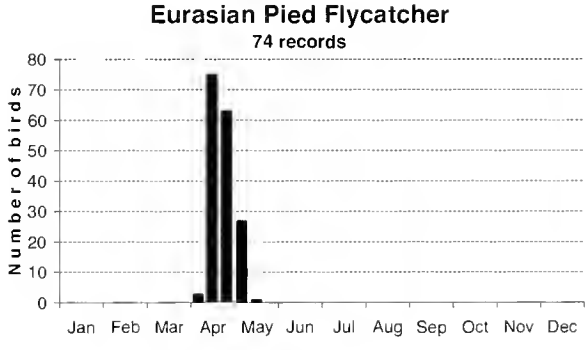

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Figures 44–51. Isabelline, Northern, Cyprus, Eastern Black-eared and Finsch's Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush, Spotted and Eurasian Pied Flycatcher numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

Plate 17. Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* is a fairly common spring migrant from April to early May in Cyprus. This male was at Asprokremmos dam 10 April 2011. © *G Reszeter*

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* (Figure 52, Plate 17). *Fairly common spring passage migrant, rare autumn.* Recorded late March–early May. Passage and numbers more evenly spread over the period than Eurasian Pied Flycatcher's, although both show passage peak mid April. There were 53 records (171 birds), mean 3.2 birds/record. The 62nd most frequently recorded migrant and 55th most abundant. 50% of sightings singles, 24% of 3 or more. **Spring**: earliest 26 March 2010, latest 6 May 2010. Largest numbers, 13 Neo Chorio, Akamas, 1 May 2010, nine Asprokremmos dam car park area 30 April 2010 and eight Bishop's pool 18 April 2009. **Autumn**: not recorded in autumn in this study. [*Ficedula* flycatchers choose a southwesterly direction in autumn thus avoiding the eastern Mediterranean (Moreau 1972, Shirihai 1996); some may overfly Cyprus (Flint & Stewart 1992) resulting in the lack of records at that season.]

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis* (Figure 53). *Very common passage migrant, winter visitor and breeding resident.* Recorded throughout the year. First arrival dates of spring migrants confused by presence of large numbers of winter visitors. Although main spring migration appeared to be mid March–mid April, there were occasional early influxes (of mostly males) from mid February: 270 Paphos SW 18 February 2010 and 150 on foreshore at Mandria beach 18 February 2013. These are about three times the wintering numbers counted at these sites. Decline noted late April, but the date of last migrant departure was confused by remaining breeders, and some breeding visitors may also occur. A histogram peak early–mid August was caused by observations of roost numbers, mostly post-breeding flocks, at Armou: 1900 going to roost Armou hills 7 August 2009 and 600 there 14 August 2009. In autumn, first migrants seen from mid September (*eg* 300 Armou hills 12 September 2006, 350 Marathounta hills 13 September 2009), with main passage early–mid October, and last migrants probably early November (although again movements confused by residents and winter visitors). As in nearby Israel several populations may be involved (Shirihai 1996). Largest numbers, 2200 Paphos SW 12 October 2006, 1500 Paphos SW 28

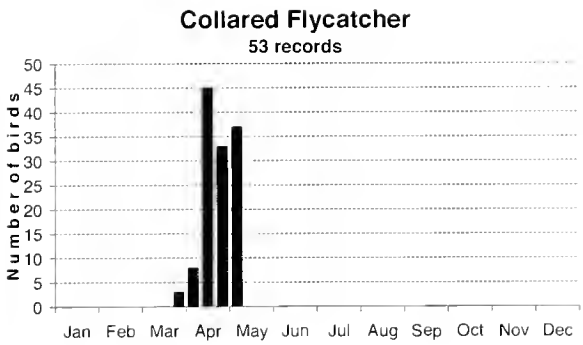
October 2009 and 1500 in one migrating flock Mandria 14 October 2013. 70% of sightings of 10 or more birds. There were 991 records (59 954 birds), mean 60 birds/record. The 5th most frequently recorded migrant and the most abundant.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* (Figure 54). *Very common passage migrant and localised breeding visitor.* Recorded in all months. Passage March–mid May, peaking early April, and August–mid November, peaking September–early October. Not showing up on the histogram, single birds were also found at Paphos SW fields 12 January 2007, Paphos lighthouse 20 February 2013, Paphos SW fields 23 November 2006 and on 9 occasions at 5 different sites in December. Most of these mid winter individuals were of indeterminate race, appeared to be immatures and generally did not overwinter. One *cinereocapilla* at Spiros pool and beach 21 February 2012, where it was seen by others and remained until April 2012. Spring passage (7767 birds) 30% of autumn passage (25 220 birds). There were 1013 records (33 218 birds), mean 33 birds/record. The 4th most frequently recorded migrant and third most abundant. 50% of sightings of four or more birds, 28% of single birds. **Spring**: earliest at a non-breeding site was probably one at Paphos lighthouse 20 February 2013, latest 14 May in four different years. Largest numbers (away from breeding sites) include 760 Mandria 8 April 2009, 290 Phasouri RB 18 March 2013 and 220 Paphos lighthouse 1 April 2007. **Autumn**: earliest away from known breeding sites, two at cape Greco 4 August 2000, latest 19 November 2011. Largest numbers (away from breeding sites), 2300 in cut alfalfa field Mandria 9 September 2007, 2200 Paphos SW fields 29 September 2008 and 1100 Paphos SW fields 29 September 2006. Several subspecies seen, but records in present study treated collectively.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* (Figure 55). *Common winter visitor and passage migrant and localised breeding resident.* Recorded regularly mid September–mid March. June and July histogram bars probably refer to breeding records and the late August bird may refer to a dispersing local breeder. Autumn passage appeared to peak October–November, before numbers declined steadily early March. No perceptible spring migration. One observed visiting my garden swimming pool to take insects 2004–2013, present most days 17 October–25 February. Earliest autumn sighting away from known breeding areas 30 August 2012; next earliest 11 September 2004 and latest in spring 13 March 2009. Largest numbers on the Asprokremmos dam–Mandria canal with seven 26 November 2005 and five 29 January 2005. There were 206 records (277 birds), mean 1.3 birds/record. The 46th most frequently recorded migrant and 51st most abundant. 74% of records single birds. Although breeding was first suspected in 1968 (Flint & Stewart 1992) it was not confirmed until 2013 when two adults were found feeding two juveniles at Platres 29 June 2013 (J Honold pers comm).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (Figure 56). *Very common winter visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded late September–mid May. A relatively small spring migration mid–late March. Autumn peak in mid October. A pinnacle early December was due to a large roost count. Earliest autumn sighting 15 September 2009, latest spring sighting 20 May 2005 (plus one Evretou dam 24 July 2007). Largest numbers, 2600 Paphos SW 18–20 Oct 2006 and 2500 at pre-roost Paphos Carrefour supermarket car park 10 December 2009. 53% of records of five or more together. Autumn–early winter numbers (21 855 birds) 4.8 times late winter/spring numbers (4535 birds). There were 744 records (26 390 birds), mean 35 birds/record. The 14th most frequently recorded migrant and 5th most abundant.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* (Figure 57). *Fairly common spring and autumn passage migrant.* Recorded late August–mid May. Peak migration late March–early April, late September–early October. Up to three birds wintered 2004/2005, 2006/2007 and 2011/2012.



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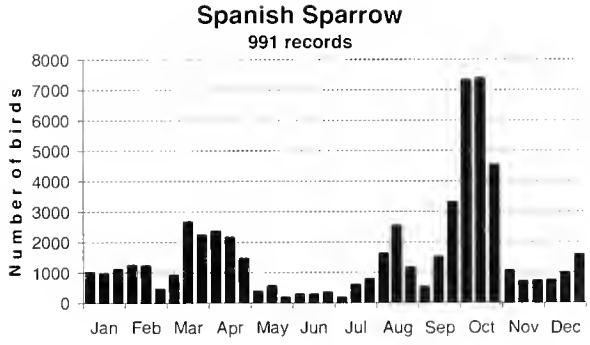

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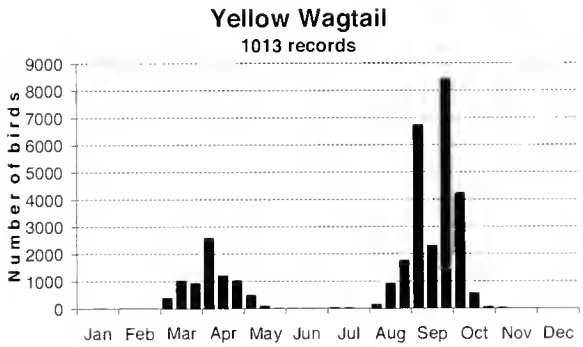

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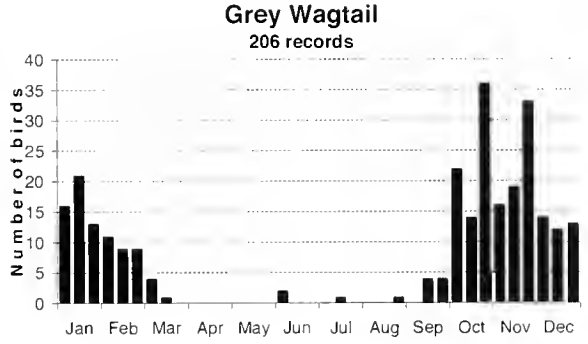

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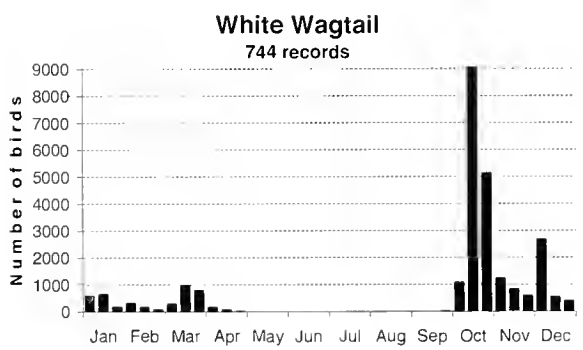

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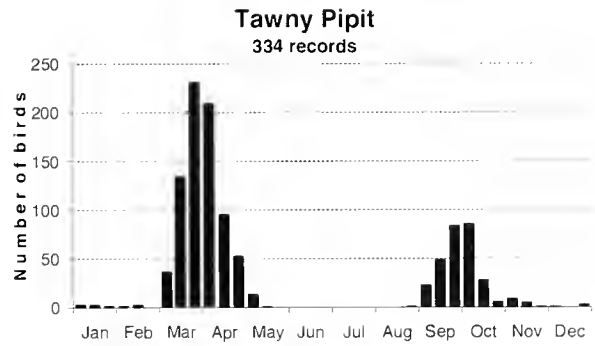

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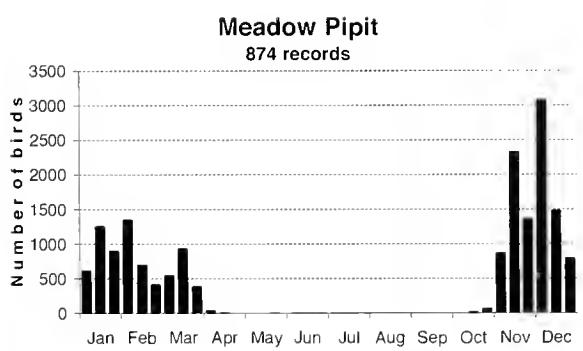

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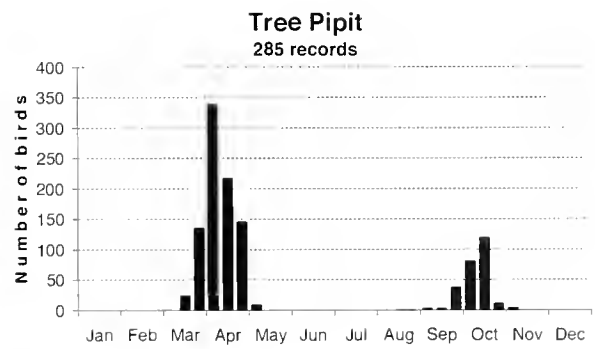

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Figures 52–59. Collared Flycatcher, Spanish Sparrow, Yellow, Grey and White Wagtail, Tawny, Meadow and Tree Pipit numbers, December 2003–November 2013

In autumn undertakes a broad-front migration taking a more easterly track (Cramp *et al* 1988), explaining the smaller numbers then, indeed very common in Arabia late October–November 1984–2004 (pers obs). 65% of sightings of two or more. Spring passage (775 birds) 2.7 times autumn's (284 birds). There were 334 records (1084 birds), mean 3.2 birds/record. The 33rd most frequently recorded migrant and 36th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 6 March 2011, latest 12 May 2011. Largest numbers, 20 Mandria 9 March 2010, 20 Anarita park 5 April 2008 and 26 March 2013. **Autumn**: earliest 29 August 2010, latest 17 November 2010. Largest numbers, 10 cape Andreas 16 September 2009, 10 Kidasi 5 October 2010 and 10 cape Kormakitis 10 October 2012.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* (Figure 58). *Common winter visitor and passage migrant.* Recorded October–mid April. Spring passage migration peak confused by departure of winter visitors, but there may have been a small passage March, and an apparently much larger autumn passage mid November–early December. Earliest autumn sighting 10 October 2011, latest spring departure 12 April 2010. Largest numbers at Paphos SW fields with 870 on 9 December 2010, 600 on 3 February 2008 and up to 390 13 November–9 December 2007; 250 Mandria 8 December 2011. 66% of records of five or more birds together. Winter/spring numbers 72% autumn/winter's. There were 874 records (17 217 birds), mean 20 birds/record. The 10th most frequently recorded migrant and 9th most abundant.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* (Figure 59). *Common spring passage migrant, less frequent autumn.* Recorded mid March–early May, September–early November. Main migration April (peaking early April) and early–mid October (peaking mid October). Spring passage (873 birds) 3.4 times that of autumn (260 birds). There were 285 records (1133 birds), mean 4 birds/record. The 40th most frequently recorded migrant and 34th most abundant. 61% of sightings of two or more birds. **Spring**: earliest 11 March 2010, latest 9 May 2010. Largest numbers, 70 Mandria 8 April 2009, 40 Asprokremmos dam pools 30 March 2008 and 25 Evretou dam 1 April 2008. **Autumn**: earliest 3 September 2010, latest 3 November 2010. Largest number 25 Mandria 15 October 2006.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* (Figure 60, Plate 18). *Common passage migrant and localised winter visitor.* Recorded late September–May. Although confused by departure of winter visitors, spring passage probably late March–early May, peaking in April. Autumn migration mainly October–mid November, peaking mid October, with only a few over-wintering birds remaining late December. Earliest autumn sighting 29 September 2008, latest in spring 24 May 2013. Apparent spring migrants appeared from mid February (16 Mandria 15 February 2010, 11 Paphos SW 18 February 2010), with main spring passage in April (*eg* 37 Anarita park 2 April 2007). In wet springs large numbers were present at the Larnaca airport pools and salt flats (Richardson 2005–2011), which were only visited infrequently.

Plate 18. In breeding plumage, this Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* was at Mandria, Cyprus, 5 April 2012. © *G Reszeter*

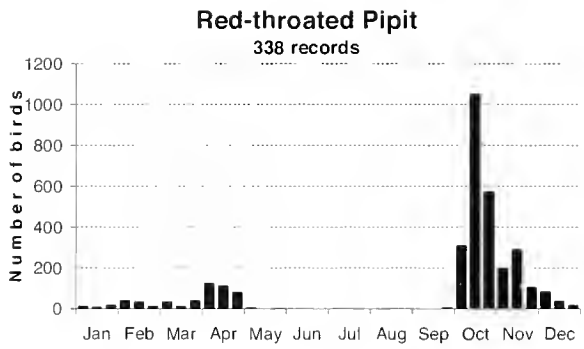
Autumn passage (2660 birds) 5.6 times spring's (470 birds). Largest numbers, 235 Paphos SW 18 October 2006 and 130 there 22 October 2006, and 125 Mandria 20 October 2006. 68% of records of two or more birds. There were 338 records (3234 birds), mean 9.6 birds/record. The 35th most frequently recorded migrant and 22nd most abundant.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* (Figure 61). *Fairly common passage migrant and winter visitor.* Recorded mid October–mid April. Spring passage could not be identified with certainty but appeared to be mainly mid–late March, while autumn passage was mainly early–mid November. Numbers appeared to decline after mid January. Peak passage late March and early November. It was found to be 2.7 times more common in autumn (*c*250 birds) than spring (*c*90 birds), contra Flint & Stewart (1992). This apparently follows migratory pattern in Israel (Shirihai 1996). Earliest autumn sighting 16 October 2013, latest in spring 19 April 2012. Largest numbers, 25 Paphos SW 19 December 2007, 21 Akrotiri salt lake east 16 January 2013 and 19 Akhna dam 12 November 2013. 57% of records single birds. There were 195 records (635 birds), mean 3.3 birds/record. The 47th most frequently recorded migrant and 44th most abundant.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (Figure 62). *Very common winter visitor, passage migrant and local breeding resident.* Residents recorded throughout year, with passage migrants and winter visitors present late October–early April. Peak early February probably represented spring passage. Few passage migrants/winter visitors remained after mid March. All sightings mid April–September probably of breeding residents. Earliest autumn arrival at a non-breeding site 12 October 2007, latest spring sighting at a non-breeding site 7 April 2013. 53% of records of 10 or more birds while only 10% singles. Largest numbers, 700 flying east at Kensington cliffs 5 December 2012, 280 Stavros tis Psokas valley 1 February 2010 and 230 Evretou dam 31 January 2012. There were 821 records (15 442 birds), mean 18.8 birds/record. The 12th most frequently recorded migrant and 10th most abundant.

European Serin *Serinus serinus* (Figure 63). *Common winter visitor, passage migrant and local breeding resident.* Recorded all months, but mainly as a passage migrant and winter visitor late October–early April. All sightings mid April–September at least of breeding birds. Spring migration was apparent mid February and early March, when 100s occurred in fodder fields and meadows along Paphos coast. There was little or no autumn migration and winter numbers erratic suggesting flocks moving within or even out of Cyprus. Earliest autumn migrant at a non-breeding site 18 October 2013, latest in spring 5 April 2011. Largest numbers: up to 380 Paphos SW 12–28 February 2011 with 820 there 6 March, 340 Paphos SW 20 January 2013, 230 Mandria 1 March 2012 and 210 Armou hills 1 March 2011. Winter/spring numbers four times autumn/winter's. 54% of records of six or more birds. There were 583 records (13 384 birds), mean 23 birds/record. The 22nd most frequently recorded migrant and 12th most abundant.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* (Figure 64). *Common passage migrant, winter visitor and breeding resident.* Present all year. Numbers increased from late January (including 107 on coast at Mandria 23 January 2012), suggesting winter movement on and off island, caused by weather and food availability (Flint & Stewart 1992). Many large flocks seen at known coastal migrant hot-spots, such as Mandria and Paphos lighthouse, throughout February and March, with peak mid March and large decline in early April, probably relating to passage migrants. In autumn, sightings peaked mid September–late October and again in mid December possibly representing passage migrants or waves of arriving winter visitors. There was no clear autumn peak or departure period. Largest numbers, 250 Akrotiri GP 22 February 2013, 200 Paphos lighthouse 27 October 2002 and 160 Mandria



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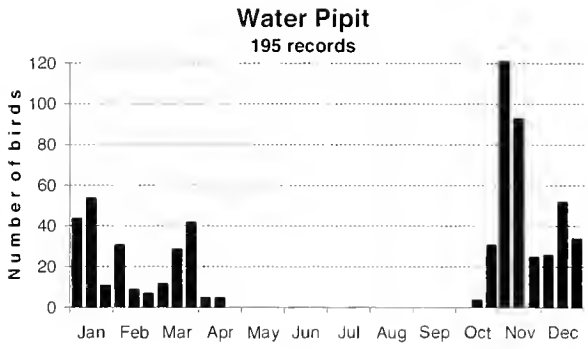

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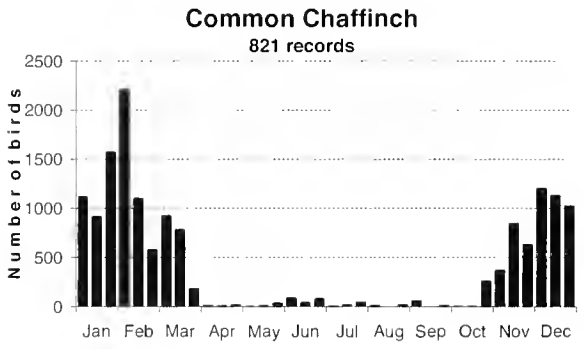

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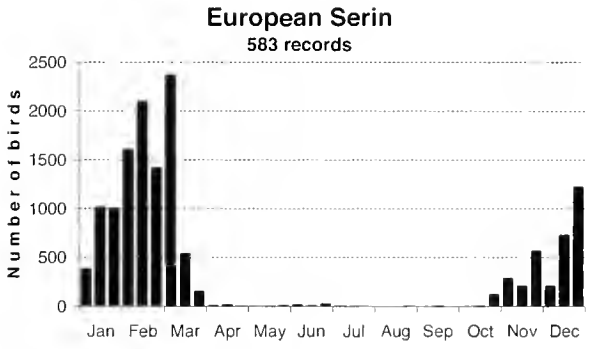

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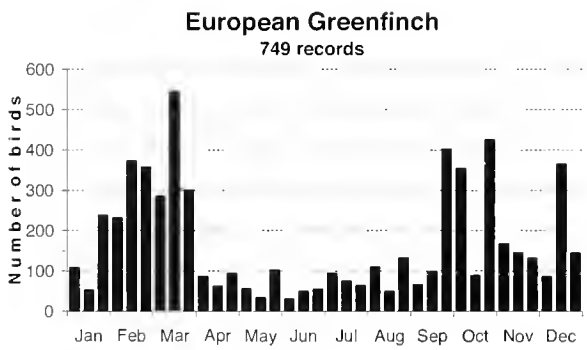

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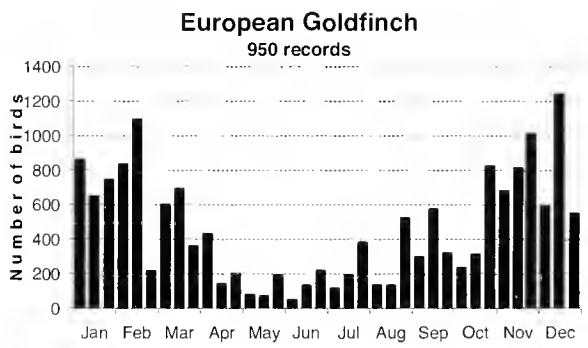

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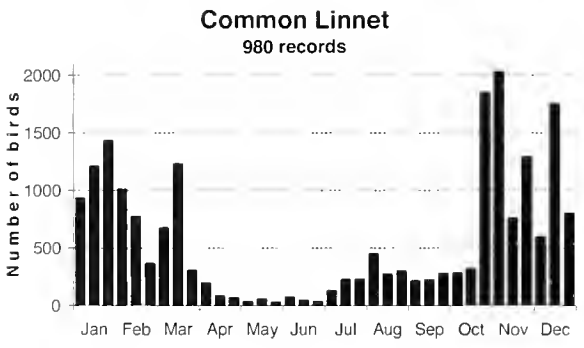

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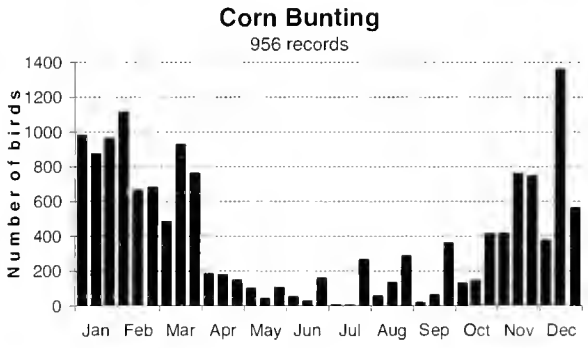

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Figures 60–67. Red-throated and Water Pipit, Common Chaffinch, European Serin, Greenfinch and Goldfinch, Common Linnet and Corn Bunting numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

9 February 2012. 60% of sightings of groups of 2–10 birds. There were 749 records (6113 birds), mean 8.2 birds/record. The 13th most frequently recorded migrant and 16th most abundant.

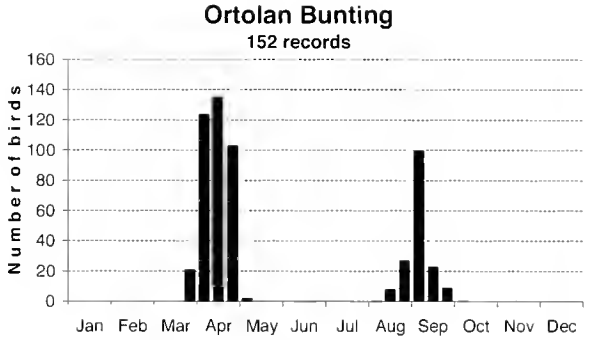
European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* (Figure 65). *Common passage migrant, winter visitor and breeding resident.* Present all year. Sightings increased from late January and there were many flocks of 100+ February–mid March, with peaks in mid February and mid March and a decline in mid April, presumably when migrants/winter visitors departed. In autumn, sightings away from breeding sites increased notably in late August, mid September and late October, suggesting waves of migrants or arriving winter visitors. The erratic nature of the histogram may also be a result of the species often occurring in mobile flocks, which were usually encountered by chance. Largest numbers, 300 Ezousas valley, Episkopi, 14 September 2006, 230 Choletria 12 December 2002, 200 came off sea at Mandria 8 April 2005 and 200 Paphos lighthouse 27 October 2002. 52% of sightings of groups of 10 or more birds. There were 950 records (18 689 birds), mean 20 birds/record. The 8th most frequently recorded migrant and 7th most abundant.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* (Figure 66). *Very common passage migrant, winter visitor and breeding resident.* Present all year. There was a complicated movement pattern. High counts mid January–early February, of 100s at coastal and inland sites mainly in the west, peaking in late January, closely matched counts by observers at other sites in the south of the island (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012) and may be attributed to passage migrants. The timing matches departure of winter visitors from Israel (Shirihai 1996) (and possibly the Nile delta and northern Egypt). A further wave of passage migrants moved through in March and April, peaking mid March. Generally only breeding birds present May–September. Numbers increased locally at Armou and Minthis hills mid July–August, peaking early August and being mostly immatures were probably dispersing local breeders, which corroborates Flint & Stewart (1992). There was a large influx of migrants and winter visitors late October–early November, with some further peaks late November and late December, confirming the general pattern from other observers (Gordon 2004, Richardson 2005–2012) and which might have been due to the arrival of passage migrants or winter visitors from different European populations (Clement *et al* 1993). Largest numbers, 700 Armou hills 26–28 Oct 2010, 390 Mandria 11 January 2006, 320 Timi beach, Paphos airport, 16 March 2008 and 240 Armou hills 21 January 2011. 60% of sightings of six or more birds (only 9% singles). There were 979 records (21 315 birds), mean 21.8 birds/record. The 6th most frequently recorded migrant and 6th most abundant.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* (Figure 67). *Common and widespread breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.* Present all year. Winter numbers apparently declined by early March, followed by a small surge of migration mid–late March. Recorded peaks early February (when in full song), with further peak mid March. Most migrants and winter visitors departed by early April and during this study flocks of post-breeding groups of residents (or breeding visitors) were found mainly at dams and wetland areas (including Evretou and Akhna dams) June–early September. Autumn arrival of passage migrants and winter visitors commenced mid September, steadily building to a November peak. The mid December peak was due to large winter flocks encountered in the Paphos foothills including 160 at Marathounta hills 14 December 2012, 148 at Minthis hills 16 December 2009 and 130 at Kato Arodes 12 December 2012. Such large groups are rather localised though not unusual in winter. This species' complex movement pattern is apparently similar to that in Israel (Shirihai 1996). Other large numbers include 190 Upper Xeros Potamos

valley 20 December 2002, 180 Armou hills 27 January 2003 and 170 Marathounta hills 15 January 2010. 50% of sightings of five or more birds together. There were 956 records (14 639 birds), mean 15.3 birds/record. The 7th most frequently recorded migrant and 11th most abundant.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* (Figure 68). *Common spring passage migrant, less frequent autumn.* Recorded late March–early May, mid August–September. A concentrated spring passage in April, with slight peak mid month. Main autumn passage briefer and more concentrated, with pronounced peak early September. Spring passage (385 birds) more than double autumn passage (165 birds). 61% of sightings of two or more birds. There were 152 records (550 birds), mean 3.6 birds/record. The 48th most frequently recorded migrant and 45th most abundant. **Spring**: earliest 25 March 2013, latest 6 May 2004. Largest numbers, 25 Koloni, Paphos, 6 April 2005 and 25 Akrotiri GP 25 April 2013. **Autumn**: earliest 12 August 2012, latest 22 September 2007. Largest number 40 near Rizokarpaso 8 September 2008.



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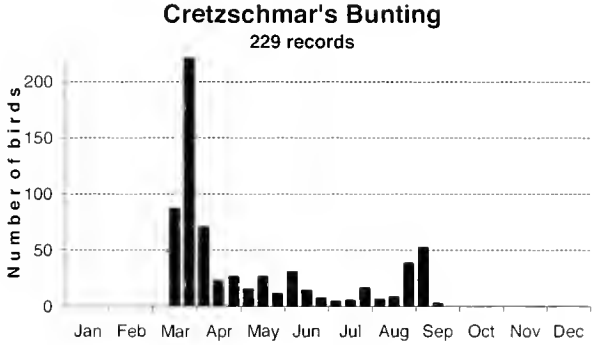

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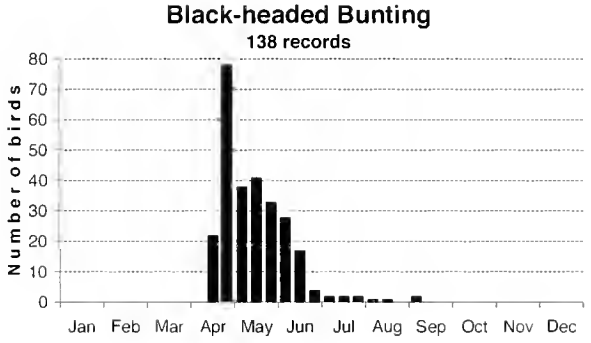

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Figures 68–70. Ortolan, Cretzschmar's and Black-headed Bunting numbers, December 2003–November 2013.

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* (Figure 69, Plate 19). *Common passage migrant and breeding visitor.* Recorded mid March–mid September. A spring peak late March, while autumn peak late August–early September. Post-breeding family parties seen drinking at perennial streams mid July–end August. Lower numbers recorded in autumn match that of Israel (Shirihai 1996) and suggest many overfly or bypass the region at this time. First spring sighting at a non-breeding site 12 March 2008, latest at a non-breeding site 30 April 2003. First autumn sighting away from known breeding areas, Aspro dam pools 3 August 2006, latest 15 September 2009 at cape Andreas. Largest numbers recorded 47 Marathounta hills 24 March 2011, 25 there 29 March 2011, 20 Agia Varvara 19 March 2005 and 20 Minthis hills 1 September 2009. Spring passage (430) almost four times that of autumn (114). 57% of sightings of 2 or more together. There were 229 records (678 birds), mean 3 birds/record. The 43rd most frequently recorded migrant and 42nd most abundant.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* (Figure 70). *Late spring passage migrant and breeding visitor.* Recorded late April–early September. Peak spring numbers late April,

Plate 19. Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*, a breeding visitor to Cyprus, was regularly encountered mid March–early September. This male was at Asprokremmos dam 5 April 2011. © *G Reszeter*

when many birds arrived and immediately started singing. Apart from one spring sighting at Akrotiri (see below) there was no obvious spring passage, although the presence of breeding visitors may have obscured this. Post-breeding departure very early, with very few records after June and autumn migration insignificant or mostly absent. The earliest spring sightings were on the Karpas and Akamas peninsulas 15 April 2006 and 15 April 2010 respectively, where they are known to breed. There was one sighting of a migrant at a non-breeding site, at Akrotiri GP 25 April 2013. The latest in autumn was 6 September 2004. Largest counts, seven Koilinia–Vretsia 4 June 2007, six Rizokarpaso–Golden beach 29 April 2013 and six Evretou 3 May 2006. 51% of sightings singles. There were 138 records (271 birds), mean 2 birds/record. The 50th most frequently recorded migrant and 48th most abundant.

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I am obliged for the support and encouragement I received from a number of friends and colleagues to produce this paper. Peter Flint helped a great deal in many ways and I am extremely grateful for the useful suggestions he offered, researching references, meticulously checking the accuracy of the text and for advising me on the interpretation of the histograms. All the bird photographs were kindly provided by George Reszeter whose excellent *www.birdsofeurope.co.uk* contains a large selection of useful Middle East bird images. In addition my thanks go to Geoff Welch for checking migration patterns of Masked Shrike in Turkey and to Guy Kirwan who also helped in this regard. Maja Tarka provided useful insight on migration patterns of Great Reed Warblers using geolocators. Dave & Jan Walker and Marny Willis kindly provided me with their winter Cyprus Wheatear sightings while Peter Clement advised on other wheatear matters. I would also like to acknowledge my wife Sylvie who, when not accompanying me during my surveys, remained patient during my daily absences.

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Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* in the United Arab Emirates: the first and second national records

MARK SMILES

On the morning of 31 October 2013, I was bird-watching with visiting birder Jimmy Kirby at Wamm farms, Dibba, in Fujairah emirate on the east coast of the UAE. This site is one of the few remaining places in the UAE to have irrigated fodder fields, making it an important stopping point for migrating birds and it has a good record of attracting rarities. As we were driving along the road towards the farm gates, a medium-sized white-winged bird flew across the road in front of the car, passing over at a height of *c*3 m and landed in long grass just over the fence of Fujairah goat farm. It recalled an *Ardeola* heron, but, in the fleeting glimpse obtained, the jizz did not fit and we could not immediately identify it. On entering the farm, we quickly located the area where it was seen to land and found it in a small open patch in the long grass. The bird was wary, but confiding, and allowed us to get into a position where we could see the bird clearly and obtain photographs (Plate 1). The bird was easily identifiable as a Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*. It remained completely motionless for *c*3 or 4 minutes, gradually relaxing before flying to a nearby puddle on one of the farm tracks, where it remained for about an hour. Despite a thorough search later in the afternoon and following day by other birders, it was not seen again.

Plate 1. Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* at Wamm farms, UAE, 31 October 2013. © *Mark Smiles*

Plate 2. Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* at Zakher lake, UAE, 30 November 2013. © *Mike Barth*

A month later, on 28 November 2013, Gregory Askew found a second Pheasant-tailed Jacana (Plates 2 & 3) whilst birding at Zakher lake, a large wetland amongst the sand dunes on the outskirts of Al Ain, Abu Dhabi emirate, roughly 180 km south of the first sighting. The bird stayed for 13 days, feeding along the shoreline at the western end of the lake and was often seen aggressively chasing waders, especially Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus*, if they approached too closely. It was last reported 10 December 2013.

Identification of the species is very straightforward and it is unlikely to be confused with any other bird within the region; however, aging of these birds is complicated by a lack of detailed plumage information available in the literature. Comparison of photographs of both birds confirms them to be different individuals, both presumed to be first-winter birds due to the rufous tone to the crown; adults apparently show a blackish crown in non-breeding plumage. Both UAE records were duly accepted by the Emirates Bird Records Committee as the first and second national records.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana is common and widespread throughout the Indian subcontinent and eastwards through southeast Asia, southeast China and Taiwan, the Malay peninsula, southern Borneo and the Philippines. Breeding occurs June–early September in northerly populations, and during wet or monsoon months in India and southeast Asia. It is the only jacana with established migratory patterns, although the routes taken are unknown. It is almost entirely a passage migrant and winter visitor between October–May/June in peninsula Malaysia, and also, in much lower numbers, in Sumatra, Java and Oman. Vagrants have been recorded in Bali, northwest Australia, Japan, South Korea and parts of Arabia (Jenni & Kirwan 2013).

Within the Arabian peninsula the Pheasant-tailed Jacana is remarkably rare outside of Oman. There have been over 730 records in Oman and the species is described as a locally fairly common winter visitor early November–late May in the south of the country, occasionally over-summering (Eriksen & Victor 2013). There are 2 records of breeding in

Plate 3. Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* at Zakher lake, UAE, 30 November 2013. © *Mike Barth*

the south (Jennings 2010). By contrast, the most recent record from northern Oman was 2005. In Qatar, there is a single record of two birds wintering January–May 2006 (QBRC 2013, J Buchan pers comm) and there are only five records of Pheasant-tailed Jacana in Yemen, including Socotra (Brooks *et al* 1987, R Porter pers comm), with the latest record being on Socotra in January 2014, the same month that the second national record for Saudi Arabia was found 24 years after the first in 1990 (Stagg 1994, J Babbington pers comm). It is interesting that the UAE birds occurred in the same winter as these latest records from Saudi Arabia and Socotra.

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Identification of the best sites around the gulf of Iskenderun, Turkey, for monitoring the autumn migration of Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* and other diurnal raptors

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Monitoring raptors along migration corridors can be used to assess changes in population size. The Balkan population of the endangered Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* is declining rapidly, but no trend information exists of the larger adjacent population in western Turkey. In September 2013, we explored 13 localities around the gulf of Iskenderun, southern Turkey, to establish whether long-term migration monitoring would be possible in the area. We found that the small hills north of the gulf of Iskenderun were consistently better for observing migration than locations at the Belen pass, southeast of the gulf. Long-term raptor monitoring should be established at three points north of the gulf of Iskenderun near the villages of Sarimazi and Selimiye. If attended by 2–3 observers mid August–mid October, these observation points would likely allow monitoring of the majority of Egyptian Vultures migrating around the eastern coast of the Mediterranean sea. Summing observations at the 13 localities, we counted 552 Egyptian Vultures with a peak between 10 and 24 September. In addition, we observed >50 000 individuals of 24 other raptor species, with Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk, European Honey Buzzard, and Short-toed Snake Eagle being the most common.

INTRODUCTION

Many raptor species around the world are declining (Chaudhary *et al* 2012, Thiollay 2006, Virani *et al* 2011), but monitoring population changes of raptors can be logistically difficult because most have large home ranges and breed at very low densities in sometimes remote localities. For migratory species, counts at migratory bottlenecks can provide useful indices of population size for a given region, and require much lower effort than breeding season surveys covering large areas (Bednarz *et al* 1990, Farmer *et al* 2007, Lewis & Gould 2000).

The fall migration of diurnal raptors from western Palaearctic breeding grounds to wintering regions in Africa or Arabia follows several migration corridors to cross or bypass the Mediterranean sea (Cameron *et al* 1967, Corso 2001, Evans & Lathbury 1973, Lucia *et al* 2011, Porter & Willis 1968). Many raptors breeding in eastern Europe and western Turkey use the migratory corridor that passes around the western edge of the Black sea and the eastern extent of the Mediterranean. Along this flyway, well-known migratory bottlenecks exist at Burgas bay (eastern Bulgaria), the Bosphorus (Turkey), Eilat (Israel), Suez (Egypt) and in southern Turkey (Frumkin *et al* 1995, Michev *et al* 2011, Porter & Beaman 1985, Safriel 1968, Sutherland & Brooks 1981). Monitoring raptors along this flyway can thus provide useful indices of the size of eastern European and western Turkish populations for several species (Leshem & Yom-Tov 1996).

One species for which information about population size and trend is urgently needed is the Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*. This species breeds in the Balkans and in Turkey, and strong population declines have been reported from the Balkan countries (Andevski 2012, BirdLife International 2008, Nisbet & Smout 1957). While the size of the breeding population is relatively well known for Bulgaria, Greece and FYR Macedonia, very little information exists about the size of the breeding population in Turkey (Andevski 2012). Because Egyptian Vultures from eastern Europe and western Turkey

migrate to Africa via the migration route around the eastern Mediterranean sea (Meyburg *et al* 2004), a raptor migration monitoring station along this corridor could potentially provide useful indices of Egyptian Vulture population size for the Balkan and western Turkish populations.

In September 2013 we conducted exploratory work in northern Hatay province, southern Turkey, with the aim of identifying a suitable location for a census station where Egyptian Vulture migration could be monitored consistently over many years. We used historic information about raptor migration at Belen pass in the Amanos mountain range, Hatay province (Cameron *et al* 1967, Can 2001, Sutherland & Brooks 1981), combined with information on satellite-tracked Egyptian Vultures migrating from Bulgaria and Greece (http://lifeneophron.eu/en/map.html, accessed 5 April 2014) to identify potentially suitable locations, and conducted raptor migration counts to assess the relative suitability of several sites. This work provides guidance on where and how raptor monitoring could be implemented that would allow trend estimation for Egyptian Vultures breeding in the Balkans and western Turkey.

METHODS

Selection of potential raptor migration monitoring sites

Sutherland & Brooks (1981) and Cameron *et al* (1967) described several locations where they had observed concentrated raptor migration: Belen pass (locations 8 and 9 in Figure 1), Sariseki (locations 6 and 7 in Figure 1), and the mountain slopes above Dörtyol (location 12 in Figure 1), and we spent at least two days at each of these locations. In addition, we used the information from eight satellite-tracked Egyptian Vultures (http://lifeneophron.

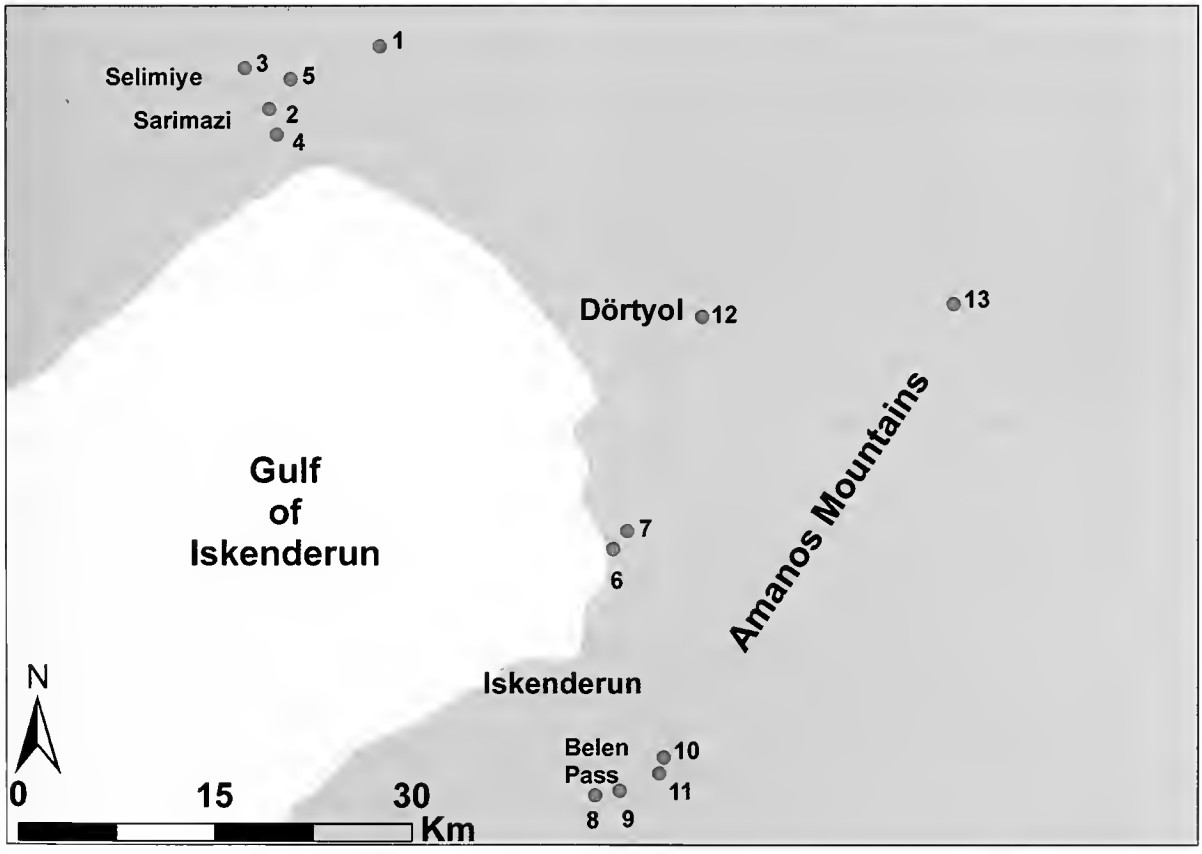

Figure 1. Locations of observation points explored near the gulf of Iskenderun during September 2013. Coordinates for locations are presented in Table 1. Locations 2, 3, and 4 are the observation points that we recommend for long-term monitoring.

eu/en/map.html, accessed 5 April 2014) to identify likely good observation locations. The spatial separation between individual tracks was minimal at the northwestern tip of the gulf of Iskenderun, but birds appeared to cross the Amanos mountain range at various places (Figure 1). Although locations provided by satellite telemetry may contain location error of several hundred metres, and the precise flight path of birds is unknown when a location is only obtained every 2–4 hours, the satellite tracks provided useful guidance that supported previous observations in the area. Additional monitoring locations were identified based on our field observations, local topography and ease of access (Table 1).

Field data collection

After identifying potential monitoring stations, we used standard raptor migration monitoring guidelines (Bildstein *et al* 2007, Bildstein *et al* 2008, Farmer *et al* 2007) to record migratory raptors passing these locations. We monitored raptor migration 30 August–26 September 2013 between 09.00 and 17.00 h local time by scanning the sky and the horizon with the naked eye and 8 or 10× binoculars. We recorded all passing raptors with the exception of Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, because we observed mostly local breeders of this species. Local residents of other species that did not appear to migrate were also excluded. We recorded different age classes only for Egyptian Vulture, which was the focal species of this field study. Passing raptors were recorded continuously, and entered as hourly totals into a database.

We recorded cloud cover, temperature, wind speed and direction and barometric pressure for every 1 hour monitoring period using a handheld weather station (Kestrel 2500). In addition, we recorded the number of observers and the actual observation effort for every 1 hour monitoring period (excluding periods where weather or other conditions rendered observations impossible). Observer effort was allocated in accordance with an *a priori* expectation of migration volume, with 1–5 observers present at different monitoring stations. Birds that could not be identified with binoculars were identified using 30–60× spotting scopes, or were recorded as 'unidentified raptors' (Hull *et al* 2010). On days when multiple locations were monitored simultaneously, care was taken to avoid double-counting of Egyptian Vultures by matching time and location of flight paths from detailed observer records. It was not possible to record detailed flight trajectories for more abundant species, so we attempted to prevent double-counting large flocks by direct radio communication between adjacent observation points.

Data analysis and presentation

The goal of our exploratory work was to identify the most suitable monitoring locality for Egyptian Vulture migration. Therefore, much effort was spent locating potential monitoring sites, and counting passing raptors at different locations on different days. Because of the irregular monitoring schedule, all data collected must be seen as minimum numbers of birds migrating through the region. Due to the variable nature of migration, with very strong migration occurring during favourable weather (Mandel *et al* 2011, Shamoun-Baranes *et al* 2006), comparisons between sites that were surveyed on different days are potentially confounded because some sites may have appeared 'poor' because they were surveyed during 'poor' conditions. We attempted to monitor migration for several days at each site to avoid misjudging sites based on low sampling effort.

RESULTS

We explored 13 different potential monitoring locations that provided good observation opportunities (Figure 1). They ranged in elevation from 123–1696 m (Table 1). The best observation sites for Egyptian Vultures (Plate 1) were north of the gulf of Iskenderun,

Table 1. Coordinates (decimal degrees, WGS84 datum), elevation, observation effort (duration of observations) and total number of migrating raptors observed in autumn 2013 at 13 different locations near the gulf of Iskenderun, Turkey (Figure 1).

location	latitude °N	longitude °E	elevation (m asl)	effort (h)	no. raptors
1	37.02	36.06	464	30.4	5527
2	36.97	35.99	218	123.0	18 934
3	37.00	35.97	265	77.1	2516
4	36.96	35.99	207	94.7	30 642
5	36.99	36.00	174	8.3	1065
6	36.67	36.22	123	3.0	7
7	36.68	36.23	350	3.2	15
8	36.50	36.21	904	24.7	3533
9	36.51	36.23	1125	6.0	154
10	36.53	36.26	1451	3.0	3
11	36.52	36.26	1696	1.3	35
12	36.83	36.28	855	7.0	239
13	36.84	36.46	1477	1.5	35

where we also observed the highest migration volume of all raptors combined (locations 2 and 4, Table 1). Birds appeared to approach from the west or southwest, and clearly avoided the water crossing over the gulf. Because the landscape north of the gulf is fairly flat with a few rolling hills, birds flew at low to intermediate altitudes (<1000 m) and were generally easy to detect as they utilised updrafts or thermals over dark surfaces like volcanic rock or dark agricultural fields.

Plate 1. Juvenile Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* above Sarimazi, Hatay, Turkey, September 2013. © *Georgi Gerdzhikov*

A total of 552 Egyptian Vultures were observed (366 adults, 149 juveniles, 37 immatures) over the one month of our observations. The most commonly recorded raptor species were Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina*, Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* and European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* (Table 2). For most species our count exceeded the numbers recorded by Sutherland & Brooks (1981) at Belen pass in 1976, despite considerably lower monitoring effort (Table 2).

The rate at which Egyptian Vultures passed observation points situated along or in the Amanos mountain range was generally lower than north of the gulf. We observed Egyptian Vultures crossing the mountain range at four different places (locations 8, 11–13, Table 1, Figure 1), including passes and ridges exceeding 1500 m in elevation. The observation point with the highest number of Egyptian Vultures per unit time was along the road between Hassa and Dörtyol (location 13, Table 1, Figure 1), where we observed 16 Egyptian Vultures in a single afternoon on 8 September. The pass was situated at 1477 m, and birds approached from the WNW, flying 200–400 m above ground. Unfortunately,

Table 2. Summary of observed raptors at Belen pass in 1976 (Sutherland & Brooks 1981) and 2000 (Can 2001) and at our observation sites around the gulf of Iskenderun in 2013 (this study). Note that due to different locations and observation effort (given in hours) differences in numbers between years cannot be interpreted as changes in population size.

Species	Scientific name	2013 (383 h)	2000 (440 h)	1976 (689 h)
Lesser Spotted Eagle	*Clanga pamarina*	22 197	14 041	3875
Levant Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter brevipes*	15 701	2739	2951
European Honey Buzzard (Plate 2)	*Pernis apivarus*	11 354	9627	15 971
Short-toed Snake Eagle (Plate 3)	*Circaetus gallicus*	6257	1648	727
Common Buzzard	*Butea butea*	4010	1434	207
Booted Eagle	*Hieraaetus pennatus*	1028	89	588
Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	556	56	506
Egyptian Vulture	*Neaphran percnapterus*	552	45	874
Red-footed Falcon	*Falca vespertinus*	243	0	2
Western Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginasus*	143	26	31
Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Plate 4)	*Accipiter nisus*	73	41	11
Eurasian Hobby	*Falca subbutea*	71	6	11
Long-legged Buzzard	*Butea rufinus*	37	0	2
Peregrine Falcon	*Falca peregrinus*	32	9	0
Montagu's Harrier	*Circus pygargus*	16	6	27
Eastern Imperial Eagle	*Aquila heliaca*	5	0	0
Bonelli's Eagle	*Aquila fasciata*	4	0	3
Great Spotted Eagle	*Clanga clanga*	4	2	0
Eurasian Griffon Vulture	*Gyps fulvus*	2	5	15
Pallid Harrier	*Circus macraurus*	2	0	4
Saker Falcon	*Falca cherrug*	2	0	1
Lesser Kestrel	*Falca naumanni*	1	4	0
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*	1	0	0
Western Osprey	*Pandian haliaetus*	1	2	6
Steppe Eagle	*Aquila nipalensis*	1	0	0
Hen Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	0	11	1

the road leading to that pass from the gulf was in extremely poor condition and we were unable to visit this site again. It is therefore unclear whether this pass is a regularly used migration flyway through the mountain range.

Weather played an important role in determining the location of raptor concentrations. On sunny days with no cloud cover very few birds flew through the Belen pass, but when clouds obscured the top of the mountain range to the north, many more birds migrated through the pass. The influence of weather was also apparent on the northern side of the gulf of Iskenderun, where migration usually followed the coastline, but on days with heavy clouds occurring over the sea, migration volume was much higher at the site 8 km inland (location 3, Figure 1) than at the site near the coast (location 4, Figure 1).

Phenology of the most common species

The apparent peaks in migration of the two most numerous species were separated by about three weeks. European Honey Buzzards were most abundant at the end of August and early September (Figure 2), but our monitoring may have missed the actual peak of this species. In late August most European Honey Buzzards migrated towards the southeast, but there was a notable second peak at the end of September, with many European Honey Buzzards migrating southwest. This second peak coincided with the peak migration of Lesser

Spotted Eagles, which reached a maximum on 25 September with 6854 birds passing (Figure 2). Levant Sparrowhawks showed a phenology similar to Lesser Spotted Eagles, with most birds migrating at the end of September. The species was recorded in tight, whirling flocks of up to 770 individuals. Egyptian Vultures were recorded throughout our 4-week monitoring period, with a fairly broad migration peak spanning from 10–24 September, and a maximum of 81 birds on 12 September (Figure 2).

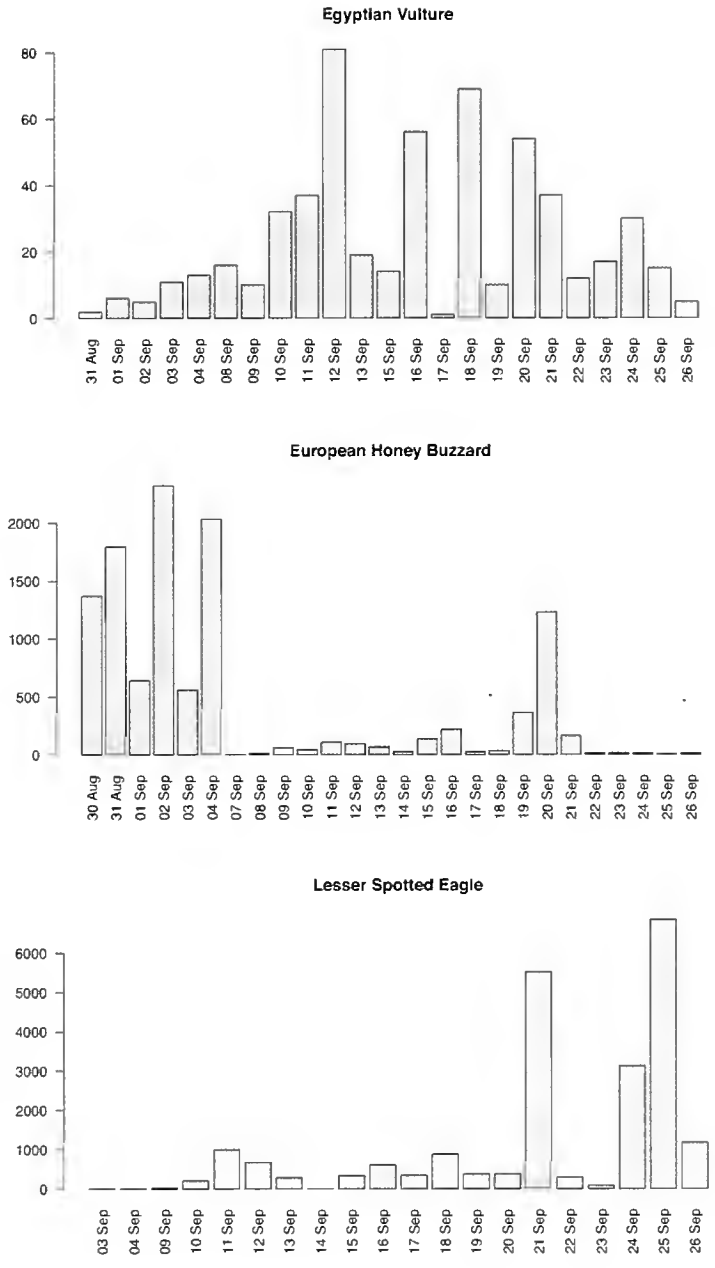

Figure 2. Migration phenology of Egyptian Vulture, European Honey Buzzard, and Lesser Spotted Eagle around the gulf of Iskenderun in September 2013. Numbers indicate daily totals for each species. Note that observation effort and location varied between days.

DISCUSSION

Potential for long-term raptor monitoring

We found raptor migration at the gulf of Iskenderun to be most concentrated around the northern extent of the gulf, rather than at Belen pass. Cameron *et al* (1967) and Sutherland & Brooks (1981) were aware that an unknown proportion of birds traversed the mountain range either via other mountain passes or at very high altitudes above Belen pass, and they noted that during clear and cloudless conditions the visible migration was substantially lower. Can (2001) reported a similar pattern with some days of very heavy migration at Belen pass followed by days without any visible migration and highly variable migration volume. The sites where we made our observations at the northern end of the gulf exhibited much lower daily fluctuations in migration volume, and therefore appeared to be much less susceptible to stochastic weather influences than observation sites located in the mountains.

In addition, our observations at other mountain passes (locations 10, 12, 13, Figure 1) indicate that Egyptian Vultures cross the Amanos mountain range at several places, and counts at a single pass will therefore only capture a proportion of the migration. Because the proportion that is monitored may vary annually with weather conditions, long-term trends would be obscured by weather differences and highly variable migration volume recorded between years. The locations on the northern side of the gulf are therefore more suitable for long-term monitoring, as the horizontal displacement of migratory raptors

Plate 2. Flock of European Honey Buzzards *Pernis apivorus* above Sarimazi, Hatay, Turkey, September 2013. © *Georgi Gerdzhikov*

under varying weather conditions is small (<15 km) and fewer observation points (3) could likely cover the vast majority of the migratory flyway under a range of different weather conditions. Our choice of observation locations may explain why we observed 5–10 times as many Lesser Spotted Eagles, Short-toed Snake Eagles *Circaetus gallicus* and Levant Sparrowhawks as Sutherland and Brooks in 1976 at Belen pass (Table 2).

Raptor monitoring to detect changes in population size must be consistent over a period of at least 10 years (Lewis & Gould 2000). Based on our pilot work in 2013 it is unlikely that observations from a single location can adequately capture the raptor migration passing around the gulf of Iskenderun. Because raptors can cross the Amanos mountain range at different places, and weather will cause variation in migration travel routes, the most practical approach that will facilitate long-term comparisons would be to monitor the relatively narrow corridor on the northern side of the gulf of Iskenderun. We therefore recommend that future raptor monitoring efforts occur at three points around the villages of Sarimazi and Selimiye north of the gulf of Iskenderun (locations 2–4, Figure 1). These three points are separated by 2.0 km and 3.5 km, and permanent simultaneous monitoring of all three locations would facilitate the observation of a very large proportion of the migration volume under various weather conditions, similar to other migration monitoring stations (see Vansteelant *et al* 2014).

The length of the fall migration monitoring period will be determined by the focal species for which the monitoring is designed. Our pilot work did not cover the entire migration period for the Egyptian Vulture and several other species. We recommend that the time window to monitor the majority of the Egyptian Vulture migration would

Plate 3. Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* at Belen pass, Hatay, Turkey, September 2013. © *Georgi Gerdzhikov*

Plate 4. Juvenile Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* above Sarimazi, Hatay, Turkey, September 2013. © *Georgi Gerdzhikov*

span about two months, starting around mid August and extending into mid-late October (Sutherland & Brooks 1981), but future work may provide information to refine this period.

Recording the migration of all raptor species during this migration period is feasible if there are sufficient observers at each of the three observation points. To add other soaring birds, such as storks, pelicans, spoonbills *etc* to the species inventory may either distract observers or may require additional observers. During peak times, when migration is intense (European Honey Buzzard early September, Lesser Spotted Eagle late September) it may be useful to exclude from the monitoring low priority species that pass in large numbers (European Honey Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Lesser Spotted Eagle), if the key goal of the monitoring is to obtain an accurate count of Egyptian Vultures. We recommend that staffing levels at observation sites reflect the species selected for long-term monitoring, but that during peak migration periods each site is staffed by at least three observers. Thus, the long-term monitoring we recommend for estimating population trends of Egyptian Vultures and a number of other raptors will require 10 observers for a period of two months annually.

Comparison of migration patterns recorded in 1976 and 2013

Because observation locations, methods and survey effort differed between our study and previous work, direct comparisons of total numbers cannot be interpreted as changes in population sizes of individual species. Nonetheless, we can draw some general conclusions from comparing the numbers of raptors observed at Belen pass in 1976 (Sutherland & Brooks 1981) and in the wider region in 2013 (this study). For most species, our survey recorded a larger number of birds despite lower observation effort (Table 1), which may be mostly due to many birds not migrating through Belen pass under certain

weather conditions. However, for two species, European Honey Buzzard and Egyptian Vulture, we recorded substantially fewer birds.

The lower number of European Honey Buzzards observed in our study is most likely the result of our observations commencing rather late (29 August), and our focus on exploration for good observation sites during the first part of September. European Honey Buzzards are known to migrate relatively early and the migration peak around the Black sea as well as at the Bosphorus is in late August and early September (Michev *et al* 2011, Nisbet & Smout 1957, Porter & Willis 1968, Vansteelant *et al* 2014) and in the first half of September in Israel (Leshem & Yom-Tov 1996) and Egypt (Hilgerloh *et al* 2011). Our survey may have missed a substantial proportion of the migration of European Honey Buzzards due to our late start date.

For the Egyptian Vulture, our numbers allow two broad conclusions. First, the much lower number of Egyptian Vultures recorded during this study compared with the number recorded at Belen pass in 1976 is in line with studies in the Balkans that have documented a strong population decline of the species over the past decades (Andevski 2012, Nisbet & Smout 1957). Second, despite this population decline in the Balkans, the number of observed Egyptian Vultures in 2013 vastly exceeded the number of known territorial pairs in FYR Macedonia (22), Bulgaria (26) and Greece (12) (LIFE+ Project 'The Return of the Neophron' unpubl data). Thus, we conclude that the Egyptian Vulture population in western Turkey is substantially larger than that occurring in the Balkans, and this is consistent with the findings of Cameron *et al* (1967) in the mid 1960s. We highly recommend that more intensive studies such as migration, breeding territory and nest monitoring are undertaken to elucidate the size and demographic parameters of the Egyptian Vulture population in western Turkey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the support of villagers and the military police in Hatay, Osmaniye and Adana provinces. Abdullah Öğünç and Mustafa Özer provided logistical support and guidance in identifying suitable monitoring locations. This work was initiated and financially supported by the LIFE+ project "The Return of the Neophron" (LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152) funded by the European Union and co-funded by the AG Leventis Foundation. We appreciate helpful comments on an earlier draft of this manuscript by G Hilgerloh and M McGrady

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Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*: first record for Qatar

NEIL G MORRIS

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* has long been anticipated as an addition to the Qatar avifauna. It is a regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor in the adjacent Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Most efforts to locate Crested Honey Buzzards in Qatar have concentrated on the few large date palm plantations, given that the species has a tendency to use such plantations as roosting places when on migration. Qatar's foremost birding site, Irkaya farm, is relatively well-watched by Doha birders, so this spring I decided to concentrate on the underwatched northern tip of the Qatar peninsula. The north coast strandline, mangroves and the nearby greenery of Al Shamal park are proven migration hotspots. With a strong wind—southerly, easterly or northwesterly—migrants can appear in large numbers at the tip of the peninsula along the northern coastal plain. However, Qatar birders rue the fact that large birds of prey are extremely scarce in the country. It is likely that these travel southeast (autumn) and northwest (spring) along and inland of the Saudi Arabian coast, rarely wandering north up the Qatar peninsula.

In previous days, the Al Shamal area had been full of migrants, though my only large raptor of the spring, other than a harrier or two, had been a single Black-eared Kite *Milvus* (*migrans*) *lineatus* just south of the northern headland. On 13 May 2014, I was doing my usual early morning circuit of Al Shamal park when I spotted a large raptor circling low just outside the park. I quickly took some photographs (the first of which was taken at 08.18 h) before the bird disappeared behind trees. I quickly left the park and relocated the bird soaring over the local football stadium *c*1 km away. In the absence of hills, this was presumably the best bet for a bit of early morning lift. I took my final photograph of the bird at 08.22 h, after which it climbed high out of sight.

On inspecting the images on the back of my camera, I confirmed my impression of six long fingers and pale carpal areas. The wings looked spot on for Crested Honey Buzzard. But having not seen the species in the field before (except for some brief views of a sitting bird in Sri Lanka), I was concerned that the tail showed a classic European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* pattern of two narrow basal bands with thicker terminal band. So I put the

Plates 1 & 2. A Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, Al Shamal area, Qatar, 13 May 2014. © *Neil G Morris*

news out as a 'possible' and sent an image from the camera's LCD to Jamie Buchan and Simon Tull. Both responded positively in favour of Crested Honey Buzzard. On returning to my apartment later that day, I took a better look at the photographs on my monitor (Plates 1, 2). Six long fingers, rather broad, bulging and blunt wings, and pale carpal patches indeed looked good. I had originally aged the bird as a juvenile in the field (given the tail pattern) but with better images realized there was significant moult in the wing. So I re-aged the bird as an adult/sub-adult (third calendar year plus). And on consulting Svensson (2009) I found a perfect illustration of my bird, labeled as 'adult female'. The text reassured me that adult female Crested Honey Buzzards can have very similar tail patterns to adult European Honey Buzzards. The bird was not seen again. It is the first record for Qatar and has been accepted into category A of the Qatar List by the Qatar Birds Records Committee (www.QatarBirds.org).

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Neil G Morris tarsiger@ntlworld.com

From the Rarities Committees

Ian Harrison (compiler)

Observers who have had a country first record accepted by a rarities committee are encouraged to write it up as a note or paper for publication.

CYPRUS

BirdLife Cyprus Rarities Committee members: Colin Richardson (chair), Melis Charalambides, Stavros Christodoulides, Jeff Gordon, Hugh Buck, Nigel Cottle. A full list of Cyprus birds requiring rarity descriptions and rare bird report forms are available from Colin Richardson at richar@cytanet.com.cy to whom claims should be sent. The committee has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 36(1).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*. One drake Fresh Water lake south 9–13 March 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). Sixth record.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*. Three Bishop's pool 10 December 2013 (Peter Chambers, Alan Turtle). Ninth record since 2000.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*. One Oroklini marsh 10 October–23 November 2013 (Chris Stavrou). 23rd record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. 11 cape Kiti 22 March 2013 (Johannes Honold). Largest group on record.

Laughing Dove *Stigmatopelia senegalensis*. One Mia Milia WTP 19 October 2013 (Nick Pegler). Some escapes occur but this was assessed as wild and accepted as the fifth record.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*. One Limassol port road 24–26 March 2014 (Colin Richardson). 24th record.

Southern (Arabian) Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis aucheri*. One Mandria 16–18 March 2014 (Alan Crane). Third record.

Southern (Saharan) Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis elegans*. One Akrotiri gravel pits 10 April 2014 (Colin Richardson). Sixth record.

Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris*. One Rizokarpaso 21 March 2014 (Nick Pegler). Tenth record.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*. One cape Greco 23 March 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). A very rare discovery of a wandering individual from the mainland of the non-endemic race.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One ringed Polis reed-beds 23 October 2013 (Alan Crabtree, Mel Preston) and one Mandria 25 October 2013 (Colin Richardson). 12th and 13th records.

Mountain Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus sindianus lorenzii*. One ringed Kouklia 2 April 2013 (Chris & Denise Lamsdell). Second record.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*. One Agia Napa sewage works 23 March 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). Tenth record since first recognised in Cyprus in the 1970s. The *variegatus* type is more often recorded.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*. One Akhna dam 20 September 2013 (Mark Easterbrook). 23rd record since the 1990s.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*. One Marathounta hills 15 January 2013 (Colin Richardson). 11th record.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus*. One Larnaca sewage works 12 March 2013 (Johannes Honold). First record. This accepted claim precedes the previous first record mentioned in *Sandgrouse* 36(1) which now becomes the second record and which involved different birds at the same location.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. 20 Troodos 12–13 February 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). 12th record since the 1990s.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*. One Troodos 22 February 2013 (Mattias Bull). Sixth record.

EGYPT

The Egyptian Ornithological Rarities Committee comprises Sherif Baha El Din (chair), Frédéric Jiguet (secretary), Wed Abdel Latif Ibrahim, Richard Bonser, Andrea Corso, Pierre André Crochet, Andrew Grieve, Richard Hoath and Manuel

Schweizer. Official external advisers are Istvan Moldovan, Ahmed Riad and Mary Megalli. Claims should be sent to eorc.secretary@gmail.com. See also www.chn-france.org/eorc/eorc.php?id_content=1 where claim forms can be downloaded. Since the last report, in *Sandgrouse* 35(1), 39 records were considered, 27 of which have been accepted and 12 considered as not proven. The updated checklist of the Birds of Egypt now includes 453 species: 436 in category A (including seven observed only in the Halaib Triangle), 11 in category B and six in category C. EORC's third report was published online (www.chn-france.org/upload_content/eorc_report_9.pdf) March 2014 and the following is a summary.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*. One Abassa fish ponds, 5 May 2012 (Phil Abbott *et al*). Second record.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*. One adult or near-adult, Zaraniq, North Sinai, 17 September 1980 (Uffe Gjol Sørensen, Ib Krag Petersen). First record.

Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi*. Nine individuals Ras Matarma, Red sea, 15 July 2012 (Mohamed Ibrahim Habib). Second record. Breeding colony of 20–25 pairs discovered there 25 July 2013 (Mohamed Ibrahim Habib, Pierre André Crochet, Richard Bonser *et al*)

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*. Two birds Abu Simbel 3 April 2012 (Richard Bonser, Josh Jones *et al*). One individual there 1 August 2013 (Fred Vanhove, Raphael Lebrun). The discovery of two singing individuals in Abu Simbel village December 2010 was the first record of this species for Egypt and the Western Palearctic. These birds were present at the site throughout 2012, with a single individual remaining into 2013.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*. A flock of at least 25 individuals near Sandafa in Mniya governorate 21 March 2012 was seen by a group of observers. Since then, the presence of the species has been confirmed by numerous observers and photographs, with 61 individuals on 3 February 2013 (Samuel Progin *et al*). These sightings confirm the survival of the species in Egypt where it was believed to be extinct until recently. It is important to look for the species in other areas where it was historically known (Fayoum depression–Qena).

Daurian Shrike *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*. Details of accepted *isabellinus* records: female Shams Alam, Marsa Alam, 15–17 March 2008 and a male there 17 March 2008 (Olof Jönsson). Two males Hamata, 17 March 2008 (Olof Jönsson). Female photographed Shams Alam, Marsa Alam, 30 April 2008 (Kari Haataja). Two males Marsa Alam, 13–16 March 2009 (Massimiliano Dettori *et al*). One male Isis island, Aswan, 6 February 2011 (Dick Hoek). Female/immature Aswan, 5 November 2011 (Dick Hoek, Mary Megalli). Male east of Edfu, 17 January 2013 (Kari Haataja *et al*). The taxon appears to be annual or almost annual in Egypt. In future only claims of Turkestan Shrike *L. i. phoenicuroides* (not yet recorded) will be considered by EORC.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*. One El Gouna 27–31 March 2012 (Edwin Winkel). Second record, first being two birds north of Naama Bay October 1990.

Basalt Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens warriae*. One 15 km south of Port Ghalib, 31 January 2012 (Charly Farinelle). First record.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*. Records as follows: one Sharm el Skeikh sewage pools, 10 December 2010 (Jan & Erlen Landsverk). One female west Aswan, 5 February 2012 (Dick Hoek). A male and female Shams Alam, Marsa Alam, 31 March 2012 (Alain Rouge). Adult male and first summer male Marsa Alam, 7 April 2012 (Richard Bonser). Immature Sharm el Skeikh sewage pools, 21 September 2012 (Olof Jönsson). Female/immature Abu Simbel, 15 January 2013 (Kari Haataja *et al*). These records of eight individuals bring the accepted records total to 11 individuals. Claims are no longer required for consideration by EORC. Citrine Wagtail is best considered as a rare but probably regular migrant in Egypt, September–April.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus* (*rubescens*) *japonicus*. Two birds Naama Bay sewage works, Sharm el Sheikh, Sinai, 28–29 November and 5 December 2005 (Colin Bradshaw, Celia Bryce). First record. This is the third record examined by EORC, and predates the two records of 2009 and 2010–2011. There is at least one previous record from the late 1990s which has not yet been submitted to EORC.

Records considered not proven (see website for more detailed comments): Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (one Hurghada 4 April 2010, photos suggest hybrid *P. apivorus* × *P. ptilorhynchus*), Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* (two winter plumage birds Sharm el Sheikh 19 November 2012), Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (two adults Hurghada 12 September 2008), Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* (Port Saïd 25 August 2012), Brown-throated Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola* (Suez 20 April 1990), Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* (one Nabq reserve Sharm el Sheikh 25 November 2012), Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* (one King's island Luxor 14 January 2013), Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis* (one Marsa Alam 10 September 2011, Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (one St Katherine, Sinai 5 October 2011), Daurian Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (male Marsa Alam 29 February 2008), Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer* (one St Katherine, Sinai 19 August 2009).

ISRAEL

The Israel Rarities and Distribution Committee comprises Avner Cohen (secretary), James P Smith, Barak Granit, Rami Lindroos, Killian Mullarney, Eyal Shochat, Eran Banker and Tomer Landsberger. Claims should be sent to Avner Cohen at israbirding@gmail.com. See also www.israbirding.com/irdc where claim forms can be downloaded.

JORDAN

The Jordan Bird Records Committee comprises Fares Khoury (secretary), Richard Porter, Ian Andrews, Feras Rahahleh and Khaldun Al-Omari. Claims should be sent to Fares Khoury at avijordan2000@yahoo.com. JBRC has accepted the following records since the last report, in *Sandgrouse* 35(1).

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*. One 1cy Aqaba, 5 October 2008 (T Haraldson). Fourth record. Three previous records in Aqaba (1990–1992, I Andrews); this record precedes the one in Azraq 2012, which is the fifth record.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*. One Aqaba bird observatory 24 March 2000 (Gabor Wichmann). Seventh record; the record from the same locality in 2006 becomes the eighth record.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristris*. Two west Amman 17 April 2013 (S Shama, F Khoury). First confirmed record; an introduced species probably originating from escapees. One (photo of shot bird, unknown locality) June 2013. Second record. One Amman international airport, 12 August 2013 (L Al-Moghrabi). Third record.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. One Dana 21 March 2000 (G Wichmann, U Lindinger, W Lindinger, F Khoury). Fifth record (most records are from this locality).

KUWAIT

The Kuwait Ornithological Rarities Committee comprises Mike Pope (chair), AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan (secretary), Pekka Fagel, Oscar Campbell (external adjudicator), Peter Kennerley (external adjudicator), Brian Foster (honorary member). Claims should be sent to AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan at alsirhan@alsirhan.com.

OMAN

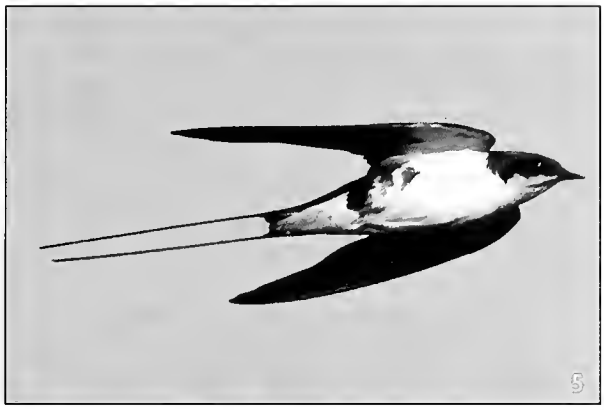
The Oman Bird Records Committee comprises Jens Eriksen (recorder), Ian Harrison, Dave Sargeant, Graham Searle, John Atkins, Peter Cowan, Simon Tull, Waheed Al Farsi, Zahran Al Abdulasalam, Manal Al Kindi. Claims should be sent to Jens Eriksen at hjoman@gmail.com from whom claim forms can be obtained. OBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 36(1).

Black-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta tropica*. One off Ras Al Hadd 15 August 2013 (A A de la Torre, Plates 1 & 2). Third record.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*. One East Khawr and Khawr Rawri 13–18 November 2013 (K H Ateeq *et al*, Plate 3). Sixth record.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*. One Al Ansab wetland 17 April 2014 (H & J Eriksen). First record.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*. One Al Ansab wetland 29 October 2013–17



Plates 1 & 2. Black-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta tropica* 15 August 2013, Ras Al Hadd, Oman. © *A A de la Torre*

Plate 3. African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Dhofar, Oman, 18 November 2013. © *H & J Eriksen*

Plate 4. Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* Al Ansab wetland, Oman, 17 April 2014. © *H & J Eriksen*

Plates 5 & 6. Wire-tailed Swallows *Hirundo smithii* 26 December 2013, Khawr Taqah, Oman. © *S De Schutter*

April 2014 (M Al Amri *et al*, Plate 4). Fifth record.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*. Two Khawr Taqah 26–28 December 2013 (S De Schutter, Plates 5 & 6). Eighth record.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedulla albicilla*. One Wadi Darbat 5–9 January 2014 (J Jensen). Fourth record.

QATAR

Qatar Rare Birds Committee members: Jamie A Buchan (recorder), Neil G Morris and Simon J Tull. Claims should be sent to Jamie Buchan at jamie_buchan@yahoo.com. As of 1 January 2014, the Qatar List

defines a rarity (which requires a rare bird report to be submitted) as a taxon that has been recorded on no more than twenty occasions in the wild in Qatar. Accepted records:

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*. Two immatures Al Khor 22 January 2014 (S Price). Seventh record.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*. One Abu Nakhla 22–31 January 2014 (NG Morris, JA Buchan). First record.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. One adult female Al Shamal park 13 May 2014 (NG Morris). First record.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus (migrans) lineatus*. One Al Shamal 7 May 2014 (NG Morris), three Fuwairit 18 May 2014 (NG Morris). Fourteenth and fifteenth records.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*. One Irkayya farm 20 April 2014 (S Price). Twelfth record.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. One adult Dhukan area 14 June 2014 (W Hodgkinson, NG Morris, S Price, G Saunders, SJ Tull). Third record.

Corncrake *Crex crex*. One Al Shamal park 9–11 May 2014 (NG Morris, SJ Tull). Seventh record.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*. One of the grey-headed forms Sheraton park, Doha corniche 5 to 29 September 2012 (NG Morris). Originally accepted into category D, now upgraded to category A based on the recent pattern of records from nearby in the region. This becomes the first record of any swamphen taxon other than the resident localized breeder African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*. One Irkayya farm 18–22 February 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one Irkayya farm 6 March 2014 (NG Morris), one Hassad Food Company farm 25 March 2014 (NG Morris). Twelfth–fourteenth records.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*. One adult male Al Mafjar 16 March 2014 (NG Morris). Twelfth record.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*. Six Ras Al Shindwee 17 January 2014 (NG Morris, G Saunders, SJ Tull). Second record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. One pale phase juvenile Simaisma 14 January 2014 (NG Morris), one pale phase Al Wakrah 30 January 2014 (S Price), one pale phase adult Fuwairit 26 April 2014 (NG Morris). Fifth–seventh records.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*. One Ras Al Shindwee 17 January 2014 (NG Morris, G Saunders, SJ Tull), one Jazirat Al Ghanim 21 February 2014 (A Everester). Tenth and eleventh records.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*. Two Irkayya farm 3 April 2014 (NG Morris). Twelfth record.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*. One Al Shamal park 7–11 May 2014 (NG Morris), one Al Ruwais outskirts (livestock farm) 7 May 2014 (NG Morris). Third and fourth records.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. One Sealine beach resort 5 May 2014 (NG Morris), one Al Shamal park 15–18 May 2014 (NG Morris). Sixth and seventh records.

Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia minula*. One Irkayya farm 23 February 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one Irkayya farm 2 April 2014 (NG Morris). Sixth and seventh records.

Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea*. One Irkayya farm 14 March 2014 (D Kumar Pushpangadhan), one Irkayya farm 17 March 2014 (NG Morris), one Irkayya farm 1 April 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one Irkayya farm 2 April 2014 (NG Morris), two Irkayya farm 3 April 2014 (NG Morris, S Price). Sixth–tenth records.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*. One Sealine beach resort 5 May 2014 (NG Morris), up to three Al Shamal park 7–13 May 2014 (NG Morris, SJ Tull), one Ras Al Shindwee 7 May 2014 (NG Morris). Seventh–ninth records.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*. One Abu Samra 29 March 2014 (S Al Aseeri, NG Morris), two Umm ash Shubrum 22 April 2014 (S Al Aseeri). Tenth and eleventh records.

'North Caspian' Stonechat *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*. One male Irkayya farm 22 January 2014 (NG Morris). Fifth record.

Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*. One male and female Doha golf club 17 March 2014 (S Price), one female Irkayya farm 17–18 March 2014 (NG Morris), one female Sealine beach resort 1 April 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one male Doha golf club 7 April 2014 (S Price), one male Irkayya farm 18 May 2014 (NG Morris). Tenth–fourteenth records.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus (novaeseelandiae) richardi*. Two Irkayya farm 6 March 2014 (NG Morris), one Irkayya farm 29 March 2014 (NG Morris). Third and fourth records.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Emirates Bird Records Committee comprises the following voting members: Oscar Campbell (chair), Mark Smiles (secretary), Simon Lloyd, Huw Roberts, Neil Tovey and Tommy Pedersen (UAE bird recorder). Ahmed Al Ali and Peter Hellyer are non-voting members. Records are circulated and assessments published three times per year according to the timetable outlined at www.uaebirding.com/ebrc.html. Decisions on assessments, plus EBRC's constitution and information about the assessment process and downloadable report forms are all available at the same location. Claims, preferably on the report forms, should be sent to ebrcuae@gmail.com or to Tommy Pedersen at 777sandman@gmail.com. The UAE Bird Checklist, in both short and annotated forms, is available at www.uaebirding.com/uaechecklist.html together with recently published reports for 2010, 2011 and 2012. EBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 36(1).

Plate 7. Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* Mushrif Palace gardens, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 16 April 2014. © *OJ Campbell*

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*. One adult Al Qua'a fodder field 5 April 2014 (S Young, G Askew). Sixth record (although there are several recent outstanding submissions).

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*. Two Nakhali 10 February 2014 (L McGillewie) and two in nearby Tijarah desert 18 February 2014 (K Hyland). Fourteenth record; previous 2013.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. Two immatures Fujairah port beach 18 April 2014 (SP Lloyd). Sixth record; previous 2012.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. One adult Kalba corniche 19 April 2014 (K Al Dhaheri). Fifteenth record; previous 2012.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*. One Umm Suqeim park 28 March 2014 (B Al Qasimi). Fourth record; previous 2012.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*. One Mushrif NP 3 January–14 March 2014 (H Druid *et al*). Seventh record; previous 2012.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One Abu Dhabi Royal Stables 31 January–1 February 2014 (OJ Campbell, A Ward). Thirteenth record; previous 2013.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One male showing the characters of nominate *P. o. ochruros/P. o. gibraltariensis*, Wadi Bih, 24 January 2014 (SP Lloyd, OJ Campbell). Third record. Following this record, the previous two records (from Jebel Dhanna, January 2011 and December 2012–January 2013) have been reassessed and are now regarded as showing the characteristics of nominate *P. o. ochruros/P. o. gibraltariensis*, rather than *P. o. gibraltariensis*.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*. One Mushrif Palace gardens 16–23 April 2014 (OJ Campbell *et al*, Plate 7). Sixth record; previous 2013.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following assisted in the compilation of this review: Colin Richardson (Cyprus), Frédéric Jiguet and Sherif Baha el Din (Egypt), Fares Khoury (Jordan), Jens Eriksen (Oman), Neil Morris (Qatar), Oscar Campbell, Mark Smiles and Tommy Pedersen (United Arab Emirates).

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News & Information

Dawn Balmer (compiler)

CYPRUS

Illegal bird trapping tops the agenda

Twenty-six delegates from conservation NGOs in twenty countries met in Nicosia in May for a flyway conservation workshop organised by BirdLife International, supported by MAVA foundation and hosted by BirdLife Cyprus. Illegal bird trapping was among the major topics for discussion at a workshop, "Capacity development for flyway conservation in the Mediterranean—developing a sustainable network of NGOs delivering flyway conservation in the Mediterranean". This was within the framework of the BirdLife Migratory Birds and Flyways programme. The overall goal is to achieve long-term outcomes for flyway conservation in the Mediterranean region by establishing and strengthening a dynamic network of conservation NGOs who are working effectively with local people, national governments and the international community, to better protect key species, sites and habitats on the Africa–Eurasia flyway. At the workshop, BirdLife Cyprus presented for the first time its strategic action plan addressing the persistent and serious issue of illegal trapping in Cyprus. The plan is the result of two workshops held in 2013 by BirdLife Cyprus and supported by MAVA Foundation, with the involvement and recommendations of over 30 representatives of various stakeholders, a crucial step forward in facing the problem of illegal bird trapping in a joint and coordinated effort.

Hundreds of millions of migratory birds pass through the Mediterranean twice-yearly. However, many key stop-over and non-breeding sites are seriously threatened and under-protected; hunting and bird trapping are widely out of control (undermining conservation efforts elsewhere on the flyway), and there is an emerging threat from the rapid expansion of power infrastructure (wind and solar energy, expansion of transmission lines), notably posing a collision and electrocution threat to soaring birds (*eg* birds of prey, storks, pelicans). The situation is compounded by limited public and political support for conservation, a strong hunting and trapping culture in some countries, rapid infrastructural development jeopardising natural habitats, the current global economic crisis and shaky democratic structures. These urgent issues at the heart of the flyway need robust civil society organisations and coordinated conservation action, especially as government environment agencies are often underfunded and marginalised. The proposed strategic objectives of the project discussed at the workshop were to reduce illegal killing and hunting threats to migratory birds; to reduce the impact of energy sector infrastructure on migratory birds; to conserve key stop-over and non-breeding sites for migratory birds; to ensure capacity and sustainability for coordination and implementation of conservation activities to protect migratory birds. (Source BirdLife Cyprus)

GEORGIA

Batumi raptor counters wanted

The Batumi Raptor Count seeks interested bird watchers to participate in the count to record the fantastic migration of raptors along the eastern Black sea flyway. In autumn 2014, the 7th Batumi raptor count will take place 17 August–16 October. See www.batumiraptorcount.org for more information.

ISRAEL

Champions of the Flyway

On 2 April 2014, a 24 hour bird race was held, based in Eilat. *Champions of the Flyway* is not just about bird racing, it is about celebrating bird migration and raising funds to protect the amazing spectacle for generations to come. Every race team raised funds through sponsorship. Nearly $60 000 has already been raised through the race. The teams had achieved a remarkable cumulative total of 249 species, representing more than half

the birds on the Israel list and twelve more than during the entire Eilat Birds Festival in 2013. Leading the field with 169 species were The Palestine Sunbirders, a team of collaborating Palestinian and Israeli birders. Recognizing the advantage they held with their considerable local knowledge and experience, they magnanimously shared the coveted title *Champions of the Flyway* with the highest scoring international team, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology eBirders who saw 165 species. The International team in second place was The Digital Stringers with a very creditable 159 species and, in third, the Birding Frontiers team recorded 155. For more information about this wonderful event please see www.champions-of-the-flyway.com. The next Champions of the Flyway race will be held on 25 March, 2015.

JORDAN

Visiting Aqaba Bird Observatory

a) To visit the observatory requires only a ticket, which costs 7 Jordanian dinars for a day. Tickets are obtainable from the tourist information office in Aqaba and from some of the main hotels.

b) The observatory is closed on Fridays and open other days from 08.00 h. Last entry is at 15.00 h and visitors must leave by 16.00 h. However, groups of five or more can stay longer but only by prior arrangement with the manager.

c) To access the observatory, head out of Aqaba on the airport road. Just short of the airport there is a left turn, sign-posted to Eilat. At this turning there is also a signpost to the observatory. Follow the Eilat road for a few hundred metres to a military checkpoint (you are not yet at the border checkpoint). Have the observatory ticket and passport ready for inspection. After the checkpoint, continue for *c*1 km towards the border and the crossing into Israel. The observatory entrance is on the left, about 400 m before the border checkpoint.

d) At the observatory, report to the visitor centre, which is the first building you come to after the entrance.

e) The observatory manager is Eng. Feras Rahahleh. His contact details, as of late March 2014 are:

tel: +962 3 205 88 25, fax: +962 3 205 88 27, mobile: +962 7 979 90 450, PO Box 2227 Aqaba (Jordan), feras.rahahleh@rscn.org.jo, www.facebook.com/aqababirds. Contact Feras before visiting, for any updates to the above. Check also the RSCN website www.rscn.org.jo/

LEBANON

SPNL newsletter

The May 2014 issue of *Wings and Waves*, the newsletter of the Society for the Protection of Wildlife in Lebanon (SPNL) in conjunction with Birdlife Lebanon and Birdlife International is available at www.spnl.org/wings-waves-spnls-newsletter-may-2014/. Topics include agricultural practices in the Rift valley/Red sea flyway region and an article on Hima Anjar, a wildlife sanctuary and refuge to the Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*.

OTHER

Wildlife Middle East News

The April 2014, vol 7(1), issue contains an article on satellite tracking of Socotra Cormorants *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* breeding on Siniya island and can be downloaded from www.wmenews.com/lists/lt.php?id=YUkHAgBQAVMZV1BJAw0LAQU%3D.

Zoology in the Middle East

Volume 60, issues 1 and 2 have been published in 2014. *Zoology in the Middle East* is now published by Taylor & Francis both as online edition and in print version. Please visit the journal's new web site at www.tandfonline.com/toc/tzme20/current#.UZ8HgJ3wCih. Issue 2 includes two papers concerning birds in the OSME area, "On the diet of the Pharaoh Eagle Owl *Bubo ascalaphus* (Savigny, 1809), in Qatar, with an overview of its feeding habits" and "Paddyfield Pipit (*Anthus rufulus*) in south-eastern Iran: a species new to the Middle East".

Phoenix 30—the final issue

Phoenix 30 was published in January and is the last issue that will be produced. The main articles include a new species of owl from Oman *Strix omanensis*; first breeding record of Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* in Bahrain; first breeding for Oman of Black-headed Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava feldegg* at Sohar; Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* movements between Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan; Saja/Umm Ar-Rimth protected area central Saudi Arabia: important for birds; Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* in the Farasan islands, Saudi Arabia; Ringed White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* found on Bahrain in 1942 finally tracked down; Collared Pratincoles *Glareola pratincola* in Saudi Arabia lacking white trailing-edge to wing; Pharaoh Eagle-Owl *Bubo* [*bubo*] *ascalaphus* breeding in Mahazat as-Sayd protected area, central Saudi Arabia; Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*—another summer record from Saudi Arabia; Rub al Khali records; an unexpected influx of Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* in the UAE; observations on Southern Red Bishops at two sites in the UAE; Socotra in August—ABBA Survey 48; phenology of Pallid Scops Owl *Otus brucei* vocalisations in Oman; Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* breed for third consecutive year in Al Wathba, UAE and first breeding in Arabia of the Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*.

Phoenix 30 is 24 pages including 6 pages of colour photos and artwork. If you would like a copy (or any back issues) please contact Mike Jennings (arabianbirds@dsl.pipex.com). Please note that whilst *Phoenix* newsletter has finished the ABBA project will continue to collect and share data on Arabian birds. *Phoenix* 30 includes instructions on how to submit records to the project. The ABBA project plans to introduce a new web site on all issues relating to Arabian birds. Very many thanks to all those who have contributed to *Phoenix* since 1985. (Contributed by Mike Jennings)

Birds in Kabul

A selection of photographs of birds, including birds in the hand, taken in Kabul are available online at https://plus.google.com/photos/111130877792127075748/albums/6000726468277380513. (Contributed by Mark Mallalieu)

Simon Aspinall Wildlife Education Centre

Simon Aspinall, who died from motor neuron disease in 2011, made a very important contribution to ornithology and conservation in the Middle East and was a great supporter of OSME. When in the UK he lived in Cley, Norfolk and in his honour a wildlife education centre is being built at Cley nature reserve (Norfolk Wildlife Trust NWT). The education centre is a major part of NWT's vision for Cley marshes, which has included the purchase of Pope's marsh (an area of grazing marsh, pools and reedbeds to the east of the existing reserve). NWT has been fundraising for two years and has now met its £2.6 million target, thanks to a wonderful grant of £1.5 million from the UK's Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Many others contributed, including Nature Iraq in the spirit of brotherhood for global wetland conservation and the Emirates Bird Records Committee.

On 16 May 2014 the first turf for the centre was cut by Simon's father, Jack, along with the NWT chairman, Martin Shaw and HLF's Philip Venning. For those who know Cley the new education centre will sit behind the visitor centre and will have panoramic views across the marshes and reedbeds to the North sea. It will be a multifunctional building, giving flexibility for visitors, community groups, classes, workshops and exhibitions. When the centre opens spring 2015, NWT will embark on a new education programme for schools and young people which will include such subjects as 'wildlife filmmakers for the future' and 'careers in conservation'. Being named after Simon, the centre will also feature flavours from the Middle East.

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Around the Region

Ian Harrison & Chris Lansdell (compilers)

Records in *Around the Region* are published for interest only; their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. All records refer to 2014 unless stated otherwise.

Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 37 (1) should be sent by 15 December to atr@osme.org.

CYPRUS

An **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus* Asprokremmos dam 19–20 Jun only the fourth record since 1958 while a drake **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* Fresh Water lake south 9–13 Mar was the sixth record. Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** *Mergus serrator* at Agia Trias 15 Feb and three at Kermia 21 Mar—this species is not seen every year. A single **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* seen at Mandria 30 Mar. One **Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* Phasouri reedbeds 4–7 Apr was the only record of this occasional migrant. A single **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor* at Akrotiri gravel pits 25–27 Feb and 3 Mar. 19th record in the last ten years of **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* at Paralimni lake 24 Mar. 21st record and only sixth in ten years of **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Lady's Mile 14–23 May. A **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* Larnaca airport pool 1 Apr. Two **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* Akrotiri salt lake 10 Apr and two Akhna dam 17 Apr (possibly the same two birds cape Greco same date). A **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* cape Kormakiti 28 Apr (formerly scarce breeding resident of the dry central plain and only seventh record since 1993). 24th record of **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Limassol port road 24–26 Mar.

A **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* cape Greco 25–26 Mar (less than annual). Third record **Southern (Arabian) Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis aucheri* Mandria 16–18 Mar while a **Southern (Saharan) Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis elegans* Akrotiri gravel pits 10 Apr was the sixth record. Single **Steppe Grey Shrikes** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* at Pervolia 12–26 Feb and Rizokarpaso 21 Mar (10/11th records). Wandering individual from mainland of non-endemic race of **Coal Tit** *Parus ater* cape Greco 23 Mar. A **Brown-throated Martin** *Riparia paludicola* ringed at Polis reedbeds 1 May would be the first record if accepted; a bird there 12 May thought to be a possible **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* × **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* hybrid. Second record of **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* Armou 25 Apr and an **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* at Goudi 17 Apr (30th record). Single **Rose-coloured Starlings** *Sturnus roseus* cape Greco 22 Apr, Lara 29 May and Phasouri reedbeds 30 May. Best ever spring for **Siberian Stonechats** *Saxicola maurus* (until this year fewer than 20 records); eight records, males and females, 23 Feb–16 Apr, including three cape Greco 29 Mar. Male **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha* cape Greco 30 Mar and female there 13 Apr with another male cape Aspro 20 Apr, 21st–23rd records.

Fourth record **Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla alba personata* Mandria 1–3 Feb. **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* Mandria 22 Mar (one), Lara 16 Apr (two), Mandria 22–24 Apr (one) and two there 27 Apr. Fifth record **Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Paphos lighthouse 16 Apr. Ninth **Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus* Anarita park 30 Jan while four **Trumpeter Finches** *Bucanetes githagineus* cape Greco 7 May (30th record, 13th in last 10 years). Up to 20 **Yellowhammers** *Emberiza citrinella* Troodos 12–13 Feb (12th record since 1990s). Seventh record **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* Troodos 12 Feb. A **Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia* Pentadactylos 1 Feb—species probably annual Kyrenia range but only first record since 2008. A **Western Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* Mandria 3 Apr and another cape Greco 13 Apr.

EGYPT

A **Wahlberg's Eagle** *Aquila wahlbergi* near Ras Shuqeir, some 120 km north of Hurghada 3 May 2013. First for Egypt and new species for the Western Palaearctic list.

GEORGIA

Three Buff-bellied Pipits *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* feeding along Chorokhi river, Batumi, January. First record.

ISRAEL

The third **Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis* for Israel remained Agamon, Hula, through Jan/ Feb. Single **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* Eilat 10 Mar and another off Eilat's north beach 19–24 Apr. A **Smew** *Mergellus albellus* Bnei Yisrael reservoir, Golan Heights, 15 Jan. Two **Black-throated Divers** *Gavia arctica* off Eilat's north beach 27 Dec 2013 into 2014. A **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* off Eilat's north beach 15 Jan into February. A **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* Horvat Ner, mount Gilboa, 11 Jan, a **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* near Yotvata 29 Apr (second record, first 1979) and a **Ruppell's Vulture** *Gyps rueppellii,* first record, over Lakhish hills, southern Judean plains, 5 May. **Little Bustard** flock Kfar Ruppin increased during first half of Jan peaking at 32 birds. A **Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo* Agamon, Hula, 26 Apr into May. A **White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus* Hamadiya, Bet Shean valley, 7–11 Apr. A **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* at Yotvata, 28 Mar–April with two Uvda valley, south Negev, 8/9 Apr. Two **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* Agamon Hula, 20 May. A **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius hudsonicus* Nakhsholim beach, Carmel coast, 6 Feb into March, first record and for the Middle East. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* Km20 saltpans, Eilat, 11 May, tenth record and a **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* Eilat 10–13 Apr. An **Audouin's Gull** *Ichthyaetus audouinii* Nakhsholim beach, 14 Feb, two **Lesser Crested Terns** *Thalasseus bengalensis* off Eilat's north beach 26 Apr and up to three **White-cheeked Terns** *Sterna repressa* at that location April.

A **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* Neot Smadar 25–30 Mar. Four **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* lingered at Yotvata into April. Two **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Sde Boker 31 Mar while the **Hume's Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* remained in Tel Aviv throughout January, with another bird at Kfar Ruppin 11–17 Feb. Six **Black Scrub Robins** *Cercotrichas podobe* March Eilat–Hazeva, at Hai Bar nature reserve, Yotvata, 16–17 Mar, at Lotan, 17 Mar and Yotvata sewage treatment plant 23–25 Mar. Seventh record **Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* Neot Smadar 26–29 Mar. A **Kurdistan Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthoprymna* Palmakhim beach, south of Tel Aviv, 21 Feb, a **Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka* near Arad, north Negev, 28 Feb and a **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* at Rishpon, Mediterranean coast, 24 Mar. A **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Yotvata 17 Jan remained into February, a **Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* Eilat 11 Apr while the **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* remained at Acre until 18 Feb, when taken by a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*.

KAZAKHSTAN

Significant counts of **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*. On 22 May, *c*40 000 Zhumay lake, *c*15 km northeast of Korgalzyhn, Akmole region. Most gone 23 May (but strong winds and very choppy lake). On the more sheltered Saumalkal lake, *c*10 km west of Zhumay, 35 000 recorded and likely to have involved the Zhumay birds of the day before. On 7 Jun, at lake Balyksor, *c*3 km south of Korgalzhyn, *c*3500 **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genci* breeding on the main island. This shallow lake has been largely dry for a number of years but in the last two years water has been plentiful and created good breeding conditions again for gulls. A **Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* Shardara, south Kazakhstan area, 21 Jan. 2014 appears to be an irruption year for **Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*. Six near Donskoe, Karaganda oblast, central Kazakhstan 3 May with a male there 10 May and a pair 12 May. A pair 4 May near Araltobe, Aktobe region, a pair 15 May near Nursay village, west Kazakhstan and a pair near Zharaspai, Karaganda oblast, central Kazakhstan 1 Jun.

Masked Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) personata* recorded Kulanotpes, Karaganda region, 2 Jun (northerly record). Pair of **Desert Finches** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* probably breeding in a

garden Korgalzhyn village (seen several times). Sixth record **White-winged Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera* Kostanay 10 Jan and a **Spotted Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilla severtzovi* Dzhabagly village, south Kazakhstan, 12 Jan. First record **Blyth's Rosefinch** *Carpodacus grandis kotschubeii* Zhabagly, south Kazakhstan area, 12 Jan remaining until at least 9 Feb.

KUWAIT

A **Streak-throated Swallow** *Petrochelidon fluvicola* Jahra pool reserve still present 6 Apr, with possibly two birds present.

LEBANON

A **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* 8 Feb Al Barouk mountain (may have been shot in March).

OMAN

Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* with a **Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus* A'Shuweimiyah 12 Feb. A number of **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* records—one Khawr Rouri 20 Jan, one Mughsayl 21 Jan, two Khawr Rouri 11 Feb, five (two adults, three juveniles) there 22 Feb and a lingering juvenile there 12 Apr. 510 **Abdim's Storks** *Ciconia abdimii* Raysut sewage treatment plant 10 Feb and 1200 **Western White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* there 14 Feb. An **African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Hadbin 19 Jan and possibly the same bird East Khawr 8 Apr–at least 6 Jun (these records may refer to the single bird at East Khawr and Khawr Rouri 13–18 Nov 2013). Sixth record. 71 **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* Khawr Ghawi (part of a winter waterbird survey conducted along entire Omani coastline). First record of **Cinnamon Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*, an adult male, Al Ansab wetland 17 Apr. 194 **Western Reef Herons** *Egretta gularis* along intertidal zone north of Luqbi 13 Feb while 129 Khawr Ghawi 15 Feb. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Sohar 4 Jan. A **Eurasian Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* and a **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* (fourth record) Tawi Atayr 10 Jan. Two adult **Great Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* Ras Sidrah 17 Feb accompanied by a sub-adult **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* (both species very unusual in this area—accompanying them were two **Bonelli's Eagles** *Aquila fasciatus*, more normally seen in the area). One, probably two **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* Sharbitat 13 Feb (had this pair been displaced by the major road construction along the coastal cliffs east of A'Shuweimiyah and seeking new territory?). A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* Al Ansab wetland 7 Apr and juvenile **Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* Sharbitat 17 Jan.

A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* A'Shuweimiyah 19 Jan while the fifth and sixth records of **Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea* were at Mughsayl 21 Jan and Raysut sewage treatment plant 14 Feb. A **Great Stone-curlew** *Esacus recurvirostris* Shinas 1 Feb. 13 **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* Jarziz farm 18 Feb and 2160 **Grey Plovers** *Pluvialis squatarola* Khawr Ghawi 15 Feb. A **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*, a rare spring migrant, Jarziz farm 18 Feb. Two **Long-billed Dowitchers** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Khawr Rawri 9 Feb. A **Slender-billed Curlew** *Numenius tenuirostris* claimed Barr Al Hikman 10 Apr though no details received by OBRC. Six **Small Pratincoles** Khawr Taqah 20 Jan. A roosting flock of 2536 **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyaetus* Ras Sidrah 17 Feb and a **Common Gull** *Larus canus* Liwa 26 Jan. 247 **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* Ras Bintawt 17 Feb. A **Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Al Ansab wetland 30 Apr while two **Saunders's Terns** *Sternula (albifrons) saundersi* there 4 May (unusual for these species to be inland). 26 **Whiskered Terns** *Chlidonias hybrida* there 4 May. A **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* and eight **Arctic Skuas** *Stercorarius parasiticus* off Liwa 26 Jan.

A **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* Qitbit 24 Jan with another Al Ansab wetland 4 May. Two **African Collared Doves** *Streptopelia risoria* Mudday 8 Feb with four there 27 Feb. An **Omani Owl** *Strix omanensis* seen central Al Hajar mountains 25 Jan while one seen there 4 Feb and another heard. An **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* Khawr Taqah 20 Jan and a **Little Swift** *Apus affinus* Sohar 5 Apr. Fifty **European Rollers** *Coracias garrulus* East Khawr 16 Apr, the largest groups for some years. A **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Sayh plateau 20 Apr. 15 **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Mudday 27 Feb and five Qitbit 28 Feb. **A Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus*

inornatus Dawqah farm 23 Jan and one Qitbit 24 Jan with a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei*. Four **Barred Warblers** *Sylvia nisoria* Jebel Harim, Mussandam, 20 Apr, the highest number for a few years. This winter has been a good 'thrush' winter. A **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* Sayq plateau 8 Feb. Eight **Black-throated Thrushes** *Turdus atrogularis* Sal Ala 14 Feb. A **Dusky Thrush** *Turdus eunomus* Qitbit 20 Jan–1 Mar (fifth record) and four **Song Thrushes** *Turdus philomelos* Sal Ala, Mussandam, 15 Feb. 18 **Mistle Thrushes** *Turdus viscivorus* Sayq plateau 8 Feb, a remarkable new maximum and the eighth record. Seven **Common Nightingales** *Luscinia megarhynchos* Sayh plateau 20 April and a **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata* Wadi Hinna 20 Jan and another on the same day Wadi Darbat. A **Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* Wadi Darbat 5 Jan and one Dawqah farm 23 Jan (fourth and fifth records).

QATAR

Surprisingly, the only **Garganey** *Anas querquedula* of the spring were a female Abu Nahkla 21 Feb and a male there 29 Mar. At least half a dozen pairs of **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* bred at two sites this year. Migrating **Little Bitterns** *Ixobrychus minutus* moved north along the coast at Al Wakrah 30 Apr and Al Mafjar 9 May, while up to five **Striated Herons** *Butorides striata* have been in residence at Al Mafjar since 7 May. **Western Cattle Egrets** *Bubulcus ibis* were noted at Abu Nahkla (one) 29 Jan, Sealine beach resort (two) 1–5 Apr and Lekhdaira (five) 11 May. **Montagu's Harriers** *Circus pygargus* were decidedly scarce with just four records involving two or three birds. Likewise, only four **Lesser Kestrels** *Falco naumanni* Irkayya farm 25 Mar–5 May. A **Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus* Sealine beach 1 Apr and 18 **Crab-plovers** *Dromas ardeola* Al Khor 23 Jan. **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* peaked at 12 Irkayya farm 3 Apr, with at least one pair raising a single fledgling at another site (third breeding record). A pair of **Swift Terns** *Thalasseus bergii* was courting Al Khor 24 Mar. One **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* Irkayya farm 3 Apr with four Sealine beach resort 1 May. An extremely early **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Al Khor 23 Jan. **Lilith Owl** *Athene (noctua) lilith* in good numbers with at least two known breeding pairs raising five young. Two **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* Irkayya farm 24 Jan, along with five (over-wintering?) **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius*.

Passerine migration appeared to start and peak two or more weeks later than last spring. For example, day counts of shrikes peaked at 46 **Red-backed** *Lanius collurio* 15 May, eight **Daurian** *L. isabellinus* 18 Mar, 38 **Turkestan** *L. phoenicuroides* 3 Apr, 18 **Lesser Grey** *L. minor* 11 May, three **Woodchat** *L. senator* 9 Apr, three **Masked** *L. nubicus* 7 May. 13 **Eurasian Golden Orioles** *Oriolus oriolus* at Sealine beach resort 5 May. Scarcer migrants included six **Red-rumped Swallows** *Cecropis daurica* Irakayya farm 3 Mar. Other migration peaks included 40 **Willow Warblers** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Ras Al Shindwee 11 May. Two **Siberian Chiffchaffs** *Phylloscopus (collybita) tristis* Irkayya farm 17 Mar (status of taxon in Qatar unclear) and two **Sedge Warblers** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Al Shamal park 18 May. A minimum of 45 **Marsh Warblers** *Acrocephalus palustris* Sealine beach resort 1 May (at least 25 in the same bush). Single **Eastern Orphean Warblers** *Sylvia crassirostris* Irkayya farm 14 Mar and Sealine beach resort 1 Apr. One **Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* Al Shamal park 7 May while single **Eastern Nightingales** *Luscinia (megarhynchos) golzii* Irkayya farm 3 and 9 Mar, Sealine beach resort 5 May and Al Mafjar 7 May. Six **White-throated Robins** *Irania gutturalis* Irkayya farm 26 Mar together with 12 **Common Redstarts** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. The last **Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* of the winter at Irkayya farm 3 Apr, with a maximum of 3 there 19 Mar. Wheatears of all species were seemingly scarce this spring, with peaks Irkayya farm of 24 **Northern Wheatears** *Oenanthe oenanthe* 3 Apr, three **Red-tailed Wheatears** *Oenanthe chrysopygia* 23 Feb, 50 **Pied Wheatears** *Oenanthe pleschanka* 3 Mar and nine **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears** *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* 19 Mar. Six **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrushes** *Monticola saxatilis* north coast 1 May with single **Blue Rock Thrushes** *Monticola solitarius* Irkayya farm 23 Feb, 19 Mar and 29 Mar. 60 **Spotted Flycatchers** *Muscicapa striata* north coast 11 May.

Citrine Wagtails *Motacilla citreola* Abu Nahkla 22 Jan (one) and 6 Mar (two), Irkayya

farm 24 Jan (one) and Hassad farm 26 Mar (two). A **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* Irkayya farm 14–29 Mar and a **Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* there 14 Mar. Several hundred **Red-throated Pipits** *Anthus cervinus* descended on Irkayya farm 3 Apr. A maximum of three **Ortolan Buntings** *Emberiza hortulana* Sealine beach resort 5 May, while single male **Eastern Cinereous Buntings** *Emberiza* (*cineracea*) *semenowi* Irkayya farm 17 and 23 Mar, Doha MIA park 22–29 Mar and a female Irkayya farm 30 Mar.

SAUDI ARABIA

The wintering **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* remained at Tabuk wetlands until at least 14 Feb. A **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* Al Fanateer marina, Jubail, 15 Feb and five **Black-headed Herons** *Ardea melanocephala* Sabya waste water lagoons 21 Jan. Three overwintering **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus,* adult female and two second calendar year birds, remained together at Dhahran hills until 8 Mar at least with another Jubail 5 Mar and four migrating over 'Phil's' fields near Sabya 4 Apr. A pair Dhahran 8 Jun–at least 14 Jun only the third summer record. An adult **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus vociferous* Dhahran hills 20 Apr (Plate 1), second record for Eastern province. A sub-adult **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina* Sabkhat Al Fasl (SAF) 21 Feb (probably third record for Eastern province). Summer record of a 2nd calendar year **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* SAF 31 May–13 Jun at least. A **Small Buttonquail** *Turnix sylvaticus* near Sabya 2 Apr in the same fields where found 2013. Adult **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* SAF 15 Feb, one Dhahran hills 1 Jun and a juvenile SAF 8–13 Jun at least (Plate 2). Three **White-tailed Lapwings** *Vanellus leucurus* Dhahran hills spray fields 22 Feb (Plate 3) and another SAF 7 Mar while a **Eurasian Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* at Al-Khobar corniche 3 Jan. The second record of **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* was north of Al Hair, Riyadh, late Jan 2014 for a single day. Second record of **Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* SAF 12 Jan and **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus* at two sites near Jizan 20–21 Jan.

A male **Dideric Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx caprius* mount Sudah, Asir mountains, 6 Jun. A **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Udhailiyah mid Jan–2 Feb and the wintering bird remained SAF until 5 Apr at least. A **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*

Plate 1. Adult Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus vociferous* 20 April 2014, Dhahran, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © *Jem Babbington*

Plate 2. Juvenile Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* 7 July 2014, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © *Jem Babbington*

Plate 3. White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus* 22 February 2014, Dhahran, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © *Jem Babbington*

Al Fanateer marina, Jubail, 24 Jan. Group of four **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* on migration Dhahran hills 15 Apr. A **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* trapped and ringed SAF 25 Apr and group of eight **Eurasian Penduline Tits** *Remiz pendulinus* Wadi Al Haski near Qbah, Hail province, 11 Jan. **Blanford's Short-toed Larks** *Calandrella blanfordi* near Abha 30 Mar. A **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* Dhahran hills spray fields 26–27 Apr and a **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Duffi park, Jubail, 15 Feb. Two **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus* (*novaeseelandiae*) *richardii* pivot irrigation fields of Qaryat Al Ulya 29 Mar. A **European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Dhahran hills spray fields 1 Feb while a female **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* was there 8 Apr. Note: a **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* 36 km south of Al Qouz, Makkah province, 20 Jan, potential new species for Saudi Arabia, was seen briefly from a moving car (details ruling out other Drongo spp not received).

TURKEY

The 2013/2014 winter was very mild in general though some short periods of low temperatures pushed waterfowl south to the Black sea coastland. Several **Red-breasted Geese** *Branta ruficollis* appeared; seven İğneada Longozu 31 Jan, a single lake Terkos and seven Rumelifeneri near Istanbul 1 Feb, one Hersek lagoon 1–2 Feb, a long staying single Kızılırmak delta 9 Feb–15 Mar and a single Rize Çayeli 3 Feb. **Greater Scaups** *Aythya marila* at Meriç delta, İğneada Longozu, Kocaeli Kefken, Samsun harbour and Trabzon Araklı 25 Jan–11 Feb. Other waterfowl highlights: a single **Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* İstanbul Şile 7 Jan, three **Velvet Scoters** *Melanitta fusca* and 11 **Black Scoters** *Melanitta nigra* Yeşilırmak delta 17 Jan and a **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* Karacabey Dalyan Gölü 3 Feb with two Samsun Kurupelit marina 1 Jan–6 Feb. Following the recent well observed and long staying **Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* in Samsun, a single appeared in the west at Sapanca Gölü 27 Jan during mid-winter waterfowl counts. Two single migrant **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Kastabala Valley 14 Mar and Bozova near Şanlıurfa 15 Mar. The pair that breeds at the latter location were present at the nest this

spring. Single **Rough-legged Buzzards** *Buteo lagopus* Manyas Kuş Gölü 3 Feb and the Black sea coast near Ağaçlı Gölü (İstanbul, Eyüp) 21 Feb. A pair of **Lanner Falcons** *Falco biarmicus* 4 Feb near Iğdır cheered up over 50 national birders on a unique train expedition to the cold northeast.

Several sightings of **Great Bustards** *Otis tarda* gave hope for a better future; singles or pairs Sultansazlığı 4 Jan–31 May, Kulu Gölü 13 Apr, Kozanlı Gökgöl 19 Apr, Eskişehir Balıkdamı 19 Apr and Şanlıurfa 19 Jan. A **Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* Balık Gölü, Hatay, 23 Apr. A **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* Kastabala valley 2 Feb probably overwintered. The 13th record of **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* was a single Göksu delta 11 Apr. A **Eurasian Dotterel** *Eudromias morinellus* visited its traditional pasture near Riva and Karaburun along the Black sea coast 23 Mar–13 Apr. Several **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* Terkos Gölü and Ağaçlı 5/6 May and Manyas Kuş Gölü 19 Apr. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Karaburun 4 Feb probably came with the cold; usual passage migrants of this species were a single 1 Apr and four 12 May Göksu delta. A **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* Kulu Gölü 13–17 Apr was the fifth record. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* was off Rize 11 Feb. Two **Herring Gulls** *Larus argentatus* Samsun Kurupelit marina 30 Jan–4 Feb is the first documented record. A **Baltic Gull** *Larus fuscus fuscus* was present in the **Yellow-legged Gulls'** *Larus michaelis* breeding colony Oymapınar reserve near Antalya 15 Jun, suggesting a possible breeding record, possibly hybridizing with the other species. Wintering **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus* off Rize 11 and 18 Feb with a single off the sea of Marmara on the ferry transect Bandırma–Istanbul 14 Apr, observed by the seabird research team surveying shearwaters. 13 **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* roosted Yedikır Barajı 19 Jan.

A wintering **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* was near Bozova, Şanlıurfa, 24 Jan. At Birecik several sightings of **White-eared Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus leucotis*, notably two 13 Feb, and later 'up to tens' at tea garden and tree nursery; the origin of these birds, however, is still uncertain. A **Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata* singing Halfeti 30 May and a **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* Mağaracık beach, Antakya, 9 Apr. Strong southern winds blew a **Cyprus Warbler** *Sylvia melanothorax* west to Antalya Belek beach 19 Mar. In Ankara a **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* flew over Hacettepe University 5 Jun. There were three **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* Hatay 4 Jan–1 Feb. An **Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* stayed 15–25 Jan near Subaşı, Antakya. Four **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* Milleyha beach 4 Jan, and a maximum of nine there 1 Feb was the highest count. A **Lapland Longspur** *Calcarius lapponicus* İğneada Longozu 31 Jan.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

An **Eastern Greylag Goose** *Anser anser rubrirostris* Zakkher 17 Jan. Pelagic trip Khor Kalba 31 May yielded a **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis* (fourth record, Plate 4), while an earlier trip 19 Apr produced five **Sooty Shearwaters** *Puffinus griseus*. Five **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** *Puffinus carneipes* (11th record, Plate 5) were seen on the 31 May trip and eight **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax* (tenth record). The first two **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus* of the season were seen on a 7 Jun pelagic trip. Two **Masked Boobies** *Sula dactylatra* (20th record) were seen on 17 May trip. An **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus* Al Qua'a 5 Apr (seventh record) while the intermittent bird at Wamm farms since August 2009 present there 18 Apr. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Wamm farms 28 Feb (16th record). Two **Eurasian Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus* Nakkhali 10 Feb (14th record) and nearby 18 Feb when at least six **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos trachielotus* also present (a **Lappet-faced Vulture** Wadi Helo 21 Feb). A ring-tail **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* Al Qua'a fodder field 14 Feb together with the wintering **Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*. **Merlins** *Falco columbarius* Ras al Khor January and in two locations early February. A **Corncrake** *Crex crex* Emirates Palace 3 May, one Abu Dhabi island 13 May and one Jebel Dhanna 16 May. A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Al Barsha 7–11 Apr. A **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* overwintered Hamraniyah turf fields. **Great Knots** *Calidris tenuirostris* were at Khor al Beida and 13 Bhalghelam island (a hitherto unknown

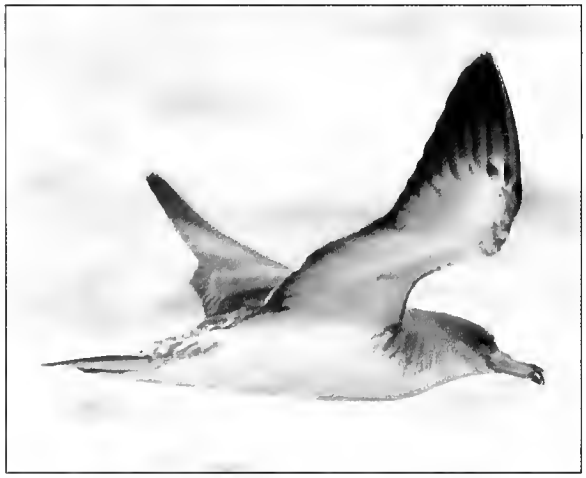

Plate 4. Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis* 31 May 2014 off Khor Kalba, UAE. © *Oscar Campbell*

Plate 5. Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* 31 May 2014 off Khor Kalba, UAE. © *Oscar Campbell*

wintering ground) 17 Jan. A **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* Hamraniyah turf fields remained until 7th Mar. Two **Black-legged Kittiwakes** *Rissa tridactyla* Fujairah 18 Apr (sixth record). An immature **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* (18th record) seen on the 31 May pelagic trip while a **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* was at Fujairah 19 Apr (15th record).

A **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* Al Awir 8 Apr (fifth record) while the seventh record of **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* was in Mushreef national park 3 Jan and remained until 11 Jan. Two **Little Swifts** *Apus affinis* Sila 18 Apr. 40 **Turkestan Shrikes** *Lanius (isabellinus) phoenicuroides* between Ghagah island and Mirfa 5 Apr while the spring's only **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* was at Green Mubazzarah 25 Mar. A **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* wintered Abu Dhabi island at Emirates Palace. 130 **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Lulu island 29 Mar while there were over 100 Yas island during February. Four **Savi's Warblers** *Locustella luscinioides* recorded in five days end of March/early April, first Mirfa 28 Mar, with birds the next day (Plate 6) in Green Mubazzarah and Mushreef palace gardens and finally another at Mirfa 1 Apr. 250 **Willow Warblers** *Phylloscopus trochilus* between Ghagah island and Mirfa 5 Apr. Thirteenth record of **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Royal stables, Abu Dhabi, 31 Jan. **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus humei* Wadi Bih 25 Jan and Safa

Plate 6. Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* 29 March 2014, Abu Dhabi, UAE. © *Mike Barth*

park 26 Jan, the latter remaining to at least 15 Feb. A small wave of **Thrush Nightingales** *Luscinia luscinia* commenced 7 May. **White-throated Robins** *Irania gutturalis* arrived in good numbers from 27 Mar, ten at Mamzar the highest count. The recent male **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* remained at Jebel Hafeet throughout January (Plate 7) until at least 14 Feb. A **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* showing the characters of *ochruros/gibraltariensis* (third record) Wadi Bih 25 Jan. 59 **Northern Wheatears** *Oenanthe oenanthe* between Ghagah island and Mirfa 5 Apr.

March saw the largest ever influx of **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* culminating in at least seven Mamzar 27 Mar. There were four Jebel Dhanna 6 Apr and six the following day. Latest ever record 2 May Abu Dhabi. Sixth record of **Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* Mushreef palace gardens 16 Apr and remained until 23 Apr. Two **Spanish Sparrows** *Passer hispaniolensis*, a species now very uncommon, were seen Wadi Tarabat 19 Apr. The **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* first seen in late November was located again Mushreef palace gardens, Abu Dhabi, early Feb and remained for most of the month and seen again there 29 Mar. The exceptional winter for **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* continued with one throughout January at Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi (for the third successive winter) and six Hamraniyah turf fields 25 Jan. The first **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza*

Plate 7. Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* January 2014 Jebel Hafeet, UAE. © *Huw Roberts*

(*cineracea*) *semenowi* Mirfa 1 Apr, singles Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, 4 and 10 Apr (different individuals).

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The Editor will consider for publication papers and notes on the birds of the OSME region. 'Russia' on the OSME region map refers to the Russian Federation's North Caucasus (to 45°N). Papers which additionally include birds in areas outside the OSME region or which are concerned with the birds of areas of which the OSME region, partially or completely, is an important part *eg* the Saharo-Sindian region or Siberian–African flyways, will also be considered. The Editor will give careful thought to the publication of mss concerning the birds of the following countries/areas close to the OSME region: **eastern half of Libya, arid/semiarid Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, 'Republic of Somaliland', 'Puntland State of Somalia', Kashmir, Tibet, Sinkiang and western half of Mongolia**. Please consult the Editor if in doubt about the suitability of material.

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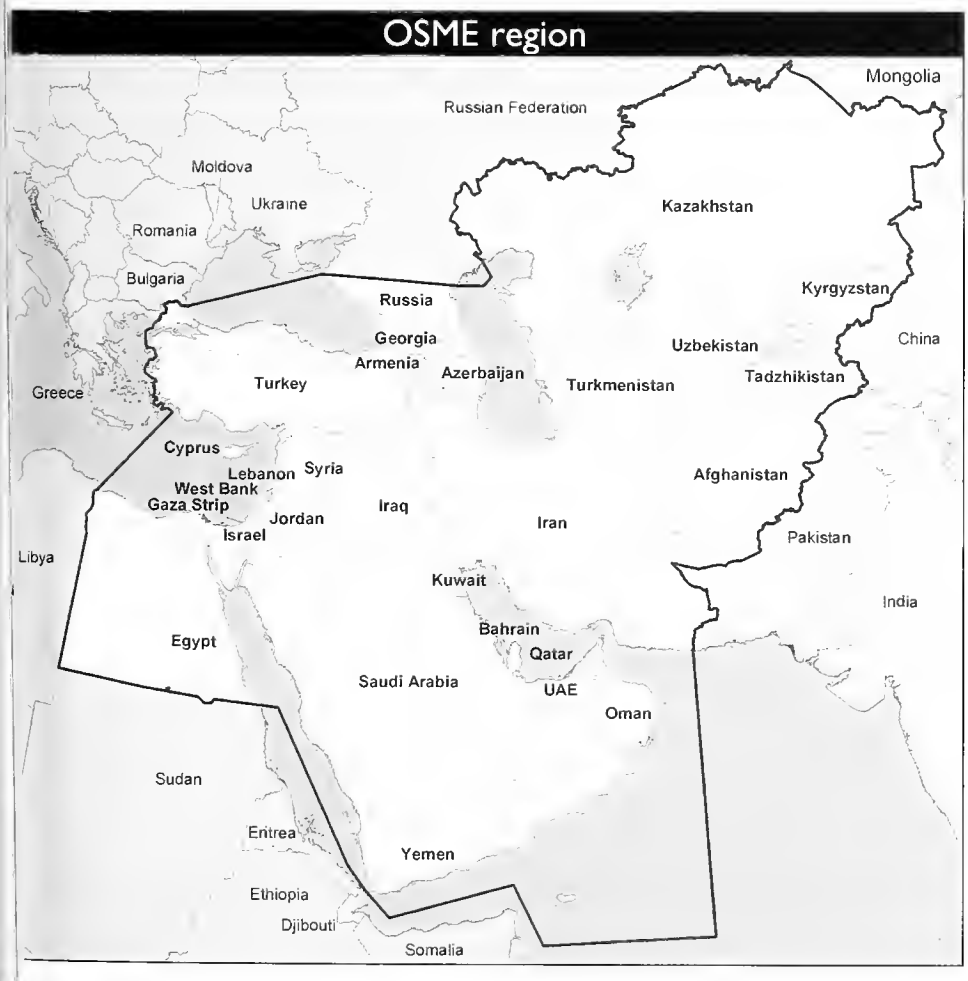

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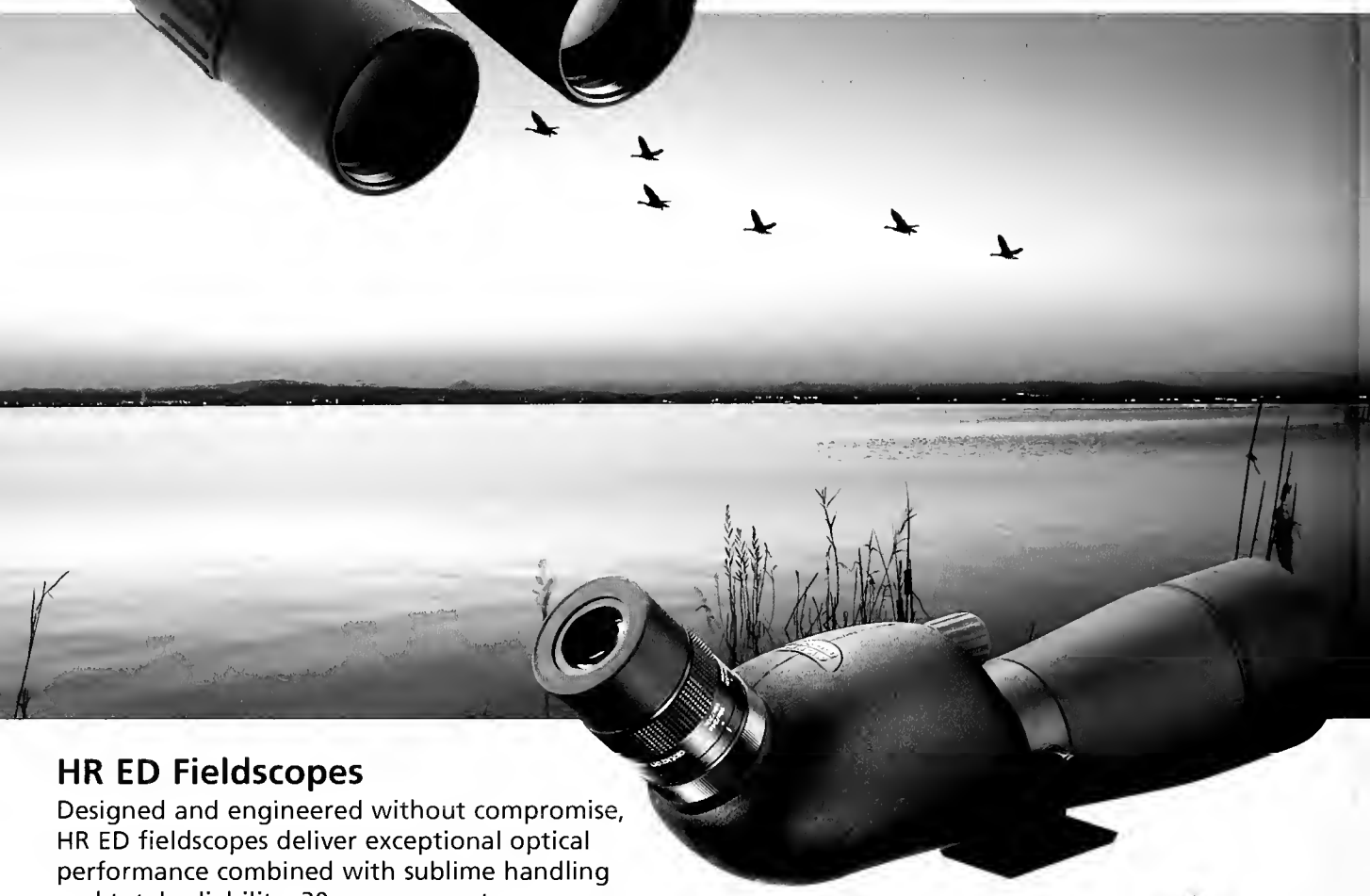

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