



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Egypt & Petra

15th April to 3rd May 2008



Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader Erik Forsyth

Tour Leaders: Erik Forsyth & Mark Beevers

Tour Summary

After enduring an hour of bumper to bumper traffic we arrived at the Gezira Sports Ground happy to be out birding in this relatively “green oasis” in the middle of the densely populated Cairo. The temperature was pretty hot to say the least and made for slow birding but by lunch we had recorded Mallard Duck, feral populations of colourful Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Eurasian Hoopoe, Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin, Winchat and a stunning Eurasian Wryneck much enjoyed by all present.

Back at our hotel near the airport we took a leisurely walk around the grounds. The gardens are a mixture of exotic trees and flowers and a welcome stopover for migrant birds to refuel before the final journey to their breeding grounds in the north. Highlights included a stunning male Collared Flycatcher, Meadow Pipit, Common Nightingale, Lesser Whitethroat and a male Woodchat Shrike. In the evening we enjoyed the first of many meals together.

Today we had a very early flight to Abu Simbel. Some of us enjoyed stunning views of the Abu Simbel Temple and Lake Nasser from the aircraft as we were coming in to land. After checking into our hotel we started birding in earnest. First off we visited a water treatment plant finding several smart White-tailed Wheatears on the powerlines. In the marshy areas we found a Common Snipe, a juvenile Bluethroat and a vocal Clamorous Reed Warbler. Thereafter we visited the shoreline at Lake Nasser and enjoyed scope looks at a hunting flock of White Pelicans, several Little Stints and our first of many Spur-winged Plover.



After lunch we visited the Abu Simbel Temples. This site has two massive temples, both of which were moved to higher ground in the 1960's when the Aswan Dam was built. The first temple is dedicated to the sun god Ra, although it was actually built to proclaim the greatness of Rameses II! The 100 feet high facade of the temple has four colossal seated statues of the Pharaoh, each 65 feet tall! Upon entering the temple we stepped into a beautiful colonnade hall and it seemed that every inch of the rock face was covered with hieroglyphs. The engravings told stories of ancient battles and of course boasted the powers of the Pharaoh. This temple also contained numerous sub-chambers where we especially enjoyed the many bird hieroglyphs. The second temple was built for Rameses' favourite wife, Nefertari (he had over 34 wives). The temple is dedicated to the goddess of love and beauty Hathur. This temple facade has six standing statues, four of Rameses and two of Nefertari. Though much smaller than the temple of Rameses II, this one is just as impressive.



Today we drove out of town to a camel station, just north of Abu Simbel to search for sandgrouse. The area did not disappoint and both Spotted and Crowned Sandgrouse were seen well. After this success we went out on Lake Nasser on a boat. Scanning the shorelines and bays we eventually were rewarded with close up looks at Yellow-billed Storks, Pink-backed Pelican and African Pied Wagtail all three species at their most northerly distributions in Africa. Other birds seen included Eurasian Spoonbill, Northern Shoveller and an impressive flock of 100 Greater Flamingoes.



An early morning search at the edge of Lake Nasser produced several Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail and our first lone White Stork. We then headed off to Aswan driving through the desert. At lunch we met our Egyptologist guide, Michael, who kept us captivated over the next few days. After checking into our cruise liner, we enjoyed a peaceful motorized felucca ride. On the banks of the Nile we saw the Mausoleum of Aga Khan in the distance, as well as a beautiful old monastery. Birding highlights included several sightings of Little Bittern, a group of the scarce wintering Ferruginous Pochard. In the late afternoon we visited the Nubian Museum. This superb museum was very informative and well presented.

After breakfast we set off to visit the impressive temple of Philae. First off we made a short visit to the Aswan High Dam, a remarkable structure, 3,6km wide and 111m high and completed in 1971 after 11 years of work. We then drove to a nearby jetty to catch our boat across to the island. This was one of the many temples which would have been inundated when the Aswan Dam was built, as a result this temple was relocated onto a piece of higher land which is now an island. The temple of Philae was dedicated to the goddess Isis. Philae means 'the end', signifying the (then) southernmost border of Egypt. This temple also became the very final bastion of ancient Egyptian religion and hieroglyphic usage as Christianity spread through the land during the Roman times. Here, we added the beautiful Nile Valley Sunbird to our ever-growing bird list. Later in the afternoon we began cruising down the Nile. In the evening, we stopped at Kom Ombo Temple. The main temple building consisted of two equal halves; one side was dedicated to the god Sobek (the crocodile god) and the other to Horus. We saw our first mummies here; well, crocodile mummies anyhow! This temple was extremely impressive and it was the first temple where we saw remains of original colour on the walls. It also contained one rather special hieroglyph scene displaying medical instruments used over 3,500 years ago. This evening on the boat was rather festive; cocktails were served and those of us who still had energy left played some fun Bingo.

Today we had an early start and set off to see the temple of Horus at Edfu. This temple was rather remarkable. It was exceptionally well preserved under the desert sands for hundreds of years, and rediscovered when a donkey fell through a hole in the sand! It is actually situated below ground level of the nearby town. This temple contains fabulous examples of embossed (raised) as well as engraved hieroglyphs. Here it seemed that no space was to be spared and every inch was decorated. Years later this temple was re-used by Coptic Christians who defaced many of the Egyptian gods and engraved their own signs on the temple walls. This afternoon our cruise liner had to wait in queue for our turn to go through the Esna Lock. At the lock we added a few good birds including Black-necked Grebe, Tufted Duck and Common Pochard.

This was the beginning of a long and exciting cultural day. We started off by visiting the Valley of the Kings. The valley is a desolate area that was used to hide the mummies and treasures of buried pharaohs, as tomb robbery was a huge problem even in ancient times. There is not much to be seen from the outside, but deep shafts lead to highly decorated burial chambers, most of which still failed to evade the robbers. The first tomb that we explored was that of Rameses III. It is one of the most elaborately decorated tombs in the valley. The walls are covered in numerous colourful hieroglyphs displaying scenes of the royal army. This tomb consists of many highly decorated chambers. The second tomb that we negotiated was that of Rameses I. It had a very short entrance hall, leading into a vast chamber containing a pink granite sarcophagus, and only this particular room contained hieroglyphs. The third tomb that we decided to visit was the tomb of Rameses IV. This tomb has a very long hallway that leads into a chamber where a world famous scene of the goddess Nut is painted on the ceiling. This chamber is highly decorated with simple yet colourful hieroglyphs and contains an enormous sarcophagus. Some of us were adamant to see the tomb of King Tut, the only



pharaoh's tomb that had evaded ancient robbers, and for some it was a very emotional, breathtaking experience. The birding highlight was a flock of attractive Trumpeter Finch coming to drink at a dish of water in the Valley of Kings.

Next we were off to the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. This was a magnificent sight, though it has been damaged, the greater part of it still gives justice to its former beauty. Here we could also see beautiful hieroglyphs and large areas still had brilliant color remnants. Before lunch we visited the Colossi of Memnon, famed for their haunting chanting but now silent after an ancient repair job went wrong! After lunch on the boat we transferred to our hotel on the nearby Crocodile Island and commenced birding. The island is excellent for birds due to its well watered lawns and abundance of plants. Here we had excellent close looks at many stunning Nile Valley Sunbird, scope views of Senegal Thick-knee, a male Little Bittern, two pairs of Red Avadavat and crippling looks at Fan-tailed Warbler to end off a fabulous afternoons birding.

An early morning birdwalk around our hotel produced a fine male Eurasian Golden Oriole and good looks at Black-shouldered Kite. After breakfast we visited Karnak; few sights in Egypt are as impressive as this colossal temple complex. It was built in the time of Rameses III, and is the largest temple complex ever built in antiquity. It consists of three main temples, smaller enclosed temples, and several outer temples. We paid a quick visit to a papyrus factory, before visiting the Temple of Luxor. This temple has been used for religious purposes up to present times. During the Christian era, the huge hypostyle hall was converted into a Christian church. Then for centuries it was buried under the sand, and the buildings of Luxor town crept closer. Today one can see a mosque, which is still in use, built on top of a section of the original temple. We then headed off by convoy to Hurghada arriving in the early evening. Common Kestrel and Barn Swallow were the only notable bird species.

Early morning birding around our resort produced several migrating Eurasian Marsh Harrier, the jewel-like Common Kingfisher and a fine Pied Wheatear. We then visited the nearby Abu Sher Mountains. Straight away we connected with a male Levant Sparrowhawk as well as several Eurasian



Sparrowhawk, Common and Long-legged Buzzards. Good looks were had of Garden Warbler, Blackcap and Greater and Lesser Whitethroat at a small pond. A Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush was much appreciated sitting in a nearby bush. It was then off for a snorkeling trip to Gifton Island. Much admired en route were Brown Booby, Western Reef Heron, White-eyed and Sooty Gull. After a few hours on the popular Gifton Island we headed back to Hurghada finding a feeding tern flock containing mainly Common and Little Terns and four of the much sought after White-cheeked Tern, a breeding migrant to the Red Sea.

This morning we birded the golfcourse at our resort finding Tawny Pipit and many Yellow Wagtails. After breakfast we revisited the Abu Sher Mountain range adding a fine pair of Barbary Falcon, Black Stork and a fine Eurasian Roller. From Hurghada we caught a short flight to the Sinai Peninsular at Sharm El Sheik. After a break at our hotel, we birded the nearby sewage plant until



dark adding Rufous-tailed Shrike and heaps of Red-throated Pipit and Yellow Wagtails. Unexpected were singles of Common Teal, Garganey and Northern Pintail to add to our growing list. After breakfast we visited the Ras Mohammed National Park, a world renowned Marine Reserve. Here we had excellent close looks at Osprey as well as the stunning Common Kingfisher and an unexpected Namaqua Dove. The snorkeling however was incredible. Just off the beach, the reef dropped off forming a sheer cliff face filled with amazing corals and bright fish. For most of us this was one of the highlights of the trip!



An early morning visit to the Sewage Plant produced 3 new species for our tour, Isabelline Wheatear, Greater Short-toed Lark and a female Red-backed Shrike. Just before we headed back to the hotel we enjoyed excellent looks at four Crowned Sandgrouse. After lunch at St Katherine we drove to Wadi Fieran visiting an orchard in search of new species. Entering the orchard we immediately saw Spectacled Bulbul which proved to be common. It took a fair bit of searching before we found our other targets: the inconspicuous Blackstart and a pair of splendid Palestine Sunbird. From here we had a short

visit to the Seven Sisters Nunnery before searching some nearby cliff-faces at dusk for Hume's Tawny Owl without success.

Early this morning we birded the area alongside the St Katherine Monastery. Great birds here included sixteen Sand Partridge, a pair of Streaked Scrub Warblers, Tristram's Starling, a pair of Desert Larks and a few Sinai Rosefinches including several stunning males. After breakfast we headed back to the monastery for an outside tour as it was closed to the public for the Easter Holidays. The monastery was built in a Greek Orthodox style in 337 AD. Later it was converted into a fort, to protect it against raiders. This monastery is considered a very holy place to Coptic Christians who perform an annual pilgrimage here. It is believed to contain a descendant of the original Burning Bush, and it is built at the foot of Mt Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Around midmorning we headed to Ain Sukhna via Suez. A comfort stop at the end of Wadi Fieran produced Spotted Flycatcher and Common Redstart. At Suez, we crossed back into Africa and after a long day we arrived in the late afternoon at our hotel.

Ain Sukhna is a well-known raptor migration point where thousands of birds use the thermals of the nearby Bir Abu Darag Mountain range to migrate across the desert into Israel. This area lived up to its reputation. Today, we saw hundreds of raptors. First off we birded a wetland near our hotel finding Eurasian Marsh Warbler, Black-eared Wheatear and a lone White Stork. By 09:00am only a few Common Buzzards and Black Kites had passed over so we decided to head for St Paul's Monastery further down the coast. Here we enjoyed good looks at Egyptian Vulture, Booted and Short-toed Eagles, Common Buzzard, Black and White Storks. Smaller numbers of Steppe and Lesser Spotted Eagle and a lone Honey Buzzard was noted. After lunch we searched a coastal dunefield finding our two target birds: Cream-coloured Courser (well spotted Rick) and Greater Hoopoe Lark. After this success we drove to Suez. A few sandbars and rocky outcrops held Black-bellied Plover, Slender-billed and Lesser Black-backed (Baltic) Gulls as well as Swift, Little and Lesser Crested Terns. Eventually the deafening noise of the traffic and the chance of a clean toilet drove us back to the hotel!

Starting early today, we birded through the Eastern Desert at Wadi Hagul en route to Cairo. Here we had close looks at a male Collared Flycatcher, Greater Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher,



Common Redstart and Mourning Wheatear. Driving slowly along the desert road we eventually found our target bird...a fine male Hooded Wheatear. Afterwards we headed to Abassa, east of Cairo where we enjoyed a birdy few hours. Here we had excellent looks at a confiding Senegal Coucal, prolonged flight views of a female Painted Snipe, Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, stunning looks at White-throated Kingfisher and for a few, Streaked Weaver. Traveling to our hotel in the late afternoon we were struck by the beauty of the Giza Pyramids through the city smog. In the late afternoon Blackbird were found singing in the garden.

This morning, we visited the wetlands of El Fayoum that teemed with waders and herons. Many of the waders were attaining their full breeding plumage and the highlight was finding several summer-plumaged Spotted Redshank as well as superb views of Little Tern, Marsh Sandpiper, Dunlin and several Curlew Sandpiper. After an early lunch we made our way to the world-famous Great Pyramids at Giza. These three pyramids are the burial place of three pharaohs, father (Cheops), son (Khafre), and grandson (Menkaure). They are also sized in this order, as the son respected his father by building a slightly smaller pyramid. The first pyramid that we explored was that of Cheops. This 321 foot



tall stone structure is truly remarkable. One cannot exactly grasp the sheer size of this pyramid from mere pictures; standing beside it leaves one feeling breathless. Some folks visited the recently discovered solar boat, a truly spectacular ceremonial boat that was wonderfully preserved in the sands next to the pyramid. This 101ft long boat was used for symbolic purposes; it was destined to take the king into the afterlife. The second pyramid appears to be larger than that of Cheops, but this is because it is placed at a slightly higher elevation. This pyramid still shows remnants of the marble outer layer that once covered all three pyramids. Some of us were brave enough to hike through the narrow shaft at the base of the pyramid to the very heart of the structure, where Khafre was buried. What an experience! Instead of going up close to the third and smallest pyramid, we went to the view-point from where we could see all three of the Great Pyramids in a panoramic view. We next visited another celebrated structure; the Sphinx. One enters this area through the Temple of the Sphinx. It is here where the embalming ceremony for the king Khafre was held. One then walks through the various chambers and out into an open area where you are almost startled by the alluring Sphinx. It was truly fantastic!

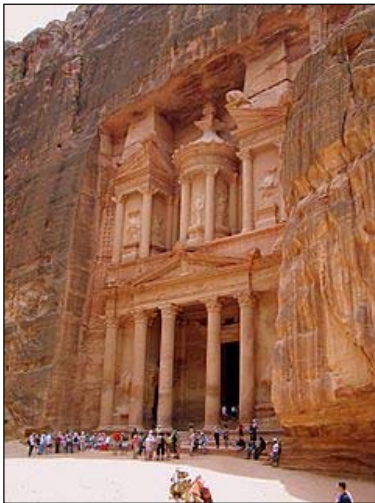
Our first stop was the famous 'Zoser's Step Pyramid'. This was the very first pyramid to be built. The king wanted a more elaborate tomb than his predecessors, so he hired the best architect of the time, Imhotep. This genius built six layers of tombs one on top of another. The final product was this fabulous step pyramid, the first of over 100 pyramids built in ancient Egypt! Here Mark, Erik and Dave spent a good hour scanning the nooks and cracks looking for the fabled Pharaoh Eagle Owl. Unfortunately renovations to this famous site the owls have moved home. Our visit to the Egyptian Museum was also fascinating. After a guided tour of the highlights, we had an hour to roam around on our own. The collection of ancient artifacts, consisting of over 120 000 exhibits, was truly remarkable. The room containing the fabulous death mask and jewelry of Tutenkhamun was a favourite and the less squeamish of us ogled over 3 000 year old mummies of several pharaohs and queens. It was very difficult to select our favorite artifacts, there was simply too much from which to choose! Afterwards we enjoyed lunch at a restaurant on a stationary boat on the Nile. In the late afternoon we flew to Jordan, staying in the capital, Amman.

Today we drove down to the Dead Sea at Suwayma for birding. Our local guide David was very



knowledgeable pointing out the history and sites of this area. Here we could look across from Suwayma and clearly see Jericho and Jerusalem in Israel. In this area Thrush Nightingales and Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin were commonly seen feeding before migrating north to their breeding grounds. A pair of Eurasian Thick-knee were also admired as they flew around calling and we had flight views only of Desert Finch. After lunch we wet our feet in the Dead Sea before heading south to Petra. Arriving in the late afternoon at our hotel situated on a mountain we enjoyed panoramic views of the ancient city below.

An early start birding around our hotel produced good looks at both Mourning and a fine male Finch's Wheatear wintering here from the north, a female Montague's Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Eurasian Linnet and Eurasian Greenfinch. After breakfast we headed for the city of Petra. Petra in Jordan is one of the world's most remarkable antiquities and regarded as the most astounding ancient city left in the modern world. This ancient capital of the Nabataeans' housed an estimated 30,000 people in its heyday and was manually hewn from the blood-red cliffs of the sandstone Sharrah Mountains. Petra flourished as a vast trading city and controlled a large part of the "Incense Route" thus profiting from the trade between the Greeks, Persians, Medes and Egyptians. The Nabataean's were at their peak from the 3rd century before Christ until the 1st century after Christ when Petra was annexed by the Romans. Several earthquakes and the rerouting of the main trade routes sidelined Petra until it was finally abandoned and remained hidden and forgotten for many centuries until its dramatic rediscovery in the early 19th century by German explorer Johann Burckhardt. Petra's intricately carved multistory temples and buildings became familiar to many people when it was used as the set for Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade and from the cover of National Geographic Magazine. This is without a doubt, the most "must-see" site in the entire Middle East.



The journey to the ancient city starts off with a kilometer walk to the Siq entrance. Some people walked, others decided to be cowboys and cowgirls and took a guided horse ride down the path. The Siq is a two-kilometer long narrow crevasse through tall canyon walls. The rock is sandstone that has many varieties of dramatic colour patterns. Here and there are rock carvings, tombs and statues of gods. At the end of this very long tunnel of rock one sees blaze of pink sandstone, and then it appears...the first glimpse of the impressive Treasury. This stone-carved building is approximately 88 foot tall and is extremely well preserved considering the soft sandstone from which it was hewn. The Treasury was built from the top to bottom; this may explain how they were able to carve such tall structures without modern tools. There is not much to see in the small hollow chambers inside this building, the main attraction is the elaborate facade.

Our guide then took us further into the old city and it was amazing to see how many rock-cut tombs there were. We all went to a nice little restaurant for lunch after which our antiquities guide was happy to send us on our own way. Some people just explored more of the main area, some people shopped, some climbed up to the high viewpoint from where the entire area could be seen. There are also structures built when the Romans took over the area, the original stone pathway is still there, and the Roman amphitheatre is quite impressive. While walking in Petra birds seen included Fan-tailed Raven, Blue Rock Thrush as well as the much sought after Pale (Sinai) Rosefinch. After lunch we drove back to Amman in time to catch our international flights home, so ending an exciting antiquities and bird-filled tour.

Photo credits (in order of appearance): Sinai Rosefinch (Ron Huffman), Queen Hatshepsut's Temple in the Valley of



the Kings, Nile River Cruise and Abu Simbel Temple (Erik Forsyth), Nile Valley Sunbird, Gifton Island in the Red Sea, Crowned Sandgrouse (Ron Huffman), Pyramid of Cheops at Giza and The Treasury at Petra (Erik Forsyth).

Annotated Checklists of Birds and Mammals

Birds: nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. F. Clements *Birds of the World: A Checklist* 5th Edition (2000) Ibis Publishing Company, with updates to July 2005. Any deviations from Clements are indicated by square brackets and explained in taxonomic notes. Extensive research has been conducted into potential splits.

Mammals: nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. Kingdon *The Kingdon Fieldguide to African Mammals* (1997) Academic Press.

BIRDS (196 species)

Grebes Podicipedidae

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Three birds were seen on our visit to Abassa.

Black-necked Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

Five birds were scoped at our lock crossing at Esna.

Shearwaters Procellariidae

Sooty Shearwater

Puffinus griseus

A single bird was found amongst rafts of floating White-eyed Gulls at Hurghada.

Pelicans Pelecanidae

Great White Pelican

Pelecanus onocrotalus

Two flocks were seen at Lake Nasser.

Pink-backed Pelican

Pelecanus rufescens

Two birds were found on Lake Nasser was a good find at their most northern distribution in Africa.

Boobies Sulidae

Brown Booby

Sula leucogaster

Three birds were found resting on beacons and another amongst White-eyed Gulls at Hurghada.

This species has a breeding population on offshore islands in the Red Sea.

Cormorants & Shags Phalacrocoracidae

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Small numbers were seen at Aswan.

NOTE: The resident white-breasted African subspecies P. c. lucidus is regarded by some authorities to be a distinct species; White-breasted Cormorant.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Gray Heron

Ardea cinerea

Regularly recorded at most wetland sites and along the Nile River with highest daily count of 30+ at Lake Nasser.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Commonly recorded on our Nile cruise with a high count of 30 between Edfu and Luxor.

NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands A. p. bournei is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.

Western Reef-Egret

Egretta gularis



A singleton was seen at Lake Nasser and thereafter recorded daily at Hurghada and at Ras Mohammed NP.

NOTE: Clements used to lump Little, Western Reef E. gularis and Madagascar's Dimorphic Egret E. dimorpha into a single species. Clements has now placed E gularis as a full species, Western Reef-Egret, which we recorded in Egypt.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Regularly recorded at water bodies with highest number being 200+ on our Nile boat cruise.

NOTE: Clements lumps Little and Madagascar's Dimorphic Egret E. dimorpha into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted.

Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

Regularly recorded at most wetland sights and along the Nile River where we recorded a high count of 200+ between Edfu and Esna.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Regularly recorded throughout Egypt in small numbers with highest number being over 300 in breeding colonies at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret (which is what we recorded in Egypt) and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret E. coromanda. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Striated Heron

Butorides striata

Small numbers were seen on at Aswan, Crocodile Island, on our Nile boat trip and near Abassa.

NOTE: This species group is treated by Clements as 2 species, the nominate Striated Heron and Little Green Heron of North America (B. sundevalli Lava Heron of the Galapagos has recently been lumped into Striated Heron.) Other authorities lump all three forms into a single species, called Green-backed Heron (as per Handbook of Birds of the World.)

Black-crowned Night-Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Regularly recorded on the Nile with highest count of 50+ at Luxor and at Hurghada and at Sharm El Sheik, Abassa, El Fayoum and around Cairo.

Little Bittern

Ixobrychus minutus

This skulking species was seen well during our tour, five birds were seen on our motorized Felucca ride at Aswan at Crocodile Island and a high total of ten at Abassa.

Storks Ciconidae

Yellow-billed Stork

Mycteria ibis

Five birds were seen at Lake Nasser. This is the only site in Egypt where they are regularly recorded.

Black Stork

Ciconia nigra

A singleton was seen migrating north Abu Sher, Hurghada whilst watching migrating raptors. A further thirty-nine were seen at St Paul's Monastery south of Ain Sukhna.

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

Two birds were seen at Lake Nasser, a flock of 150+ were seen migrating north on our Nile boat cruise between Edfu and Esna and our final sighting was at Ain Sukhna where two birds were present at a wetland.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Small flocks were seen at Lake Nasser, during our Nile boat cruise with further sightings at Abassa and Lake Fayoum.

Eurasian Spoonbill

Platalea leucorodia

One flock of thirty were seen at Lake Nasser, with a further sighting of a singleton at Hurghada.

Flamingos Phoenicopteridae

Greater Flamingo

Phoenicopterus ruber

100 birds were seen feeding in the shallows at Lake Nasser, which included several juveniles.

NOTE: The Greater Flamingo (P. roseus) and the Caribbean Flamingo (P. ruber) are now considered monotypic



species according to Clements.

Swans, Geese & Ducks Anatidae

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiacus

Commonly seen on the shoreline of Lake Nasser. In Egypt this species is only found in the south of the country around Abu Simbel

Eurasian Wigeon

Anas penelope

A fine male bird was seen at Sharm el Sheik.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

A singleton was found at Sharm el Sheik.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

A singleton was seen in Cairo.

Northern Pintail

Anas acuta

Three were seen at Sharm el Sheik.

Garganey

Anas querquedula

A single male was found at Sharm el Sheik.

Northern Shoveler

Anas clypeata

Up to twenty+ daily at Lake Nasser.

Ferruginous Pochard

Aythya nyroca

Four birds were flushed from reedbeds at Aswan and seen the following day.

Common Pochard

Aythya ferina

Six birds were seen at the lock at Esna.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Two birds were found at the lock at Esna.

Osprey Pandionidae

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Singletons were seen at Lake Nasser. A resident pair were seen at our resort at El Gouna and four+ on our trip to Gifton Island, Hurghada. A further sighting of a three birds was at Ras Mohammed NP.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures Accipitridae

European Honey Buzzard

Pernis apivorus

A single bird was seen near Ain Sukhna.

Black-shouldered Kite

Elanus caeruleus

Sightings of three birds in the farmlands to and from the Valley of the Kings and three birds around Cairo.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

This Inter-African migrant breeds in Egypt and is often considered a distinct species, Yellow-billed Kite *M. parasitus*. This raptor was recorded on most days of the tour with highest numbers being over 80+ migrating in the Ain Sukhna area.

NOTE: Clements treats Yellow-billed and Black Kite as one species.

Egyptian Vulture

Neophron percnopterus

First recorded at Abu Simbel where we recorded a single bird. A further eleven birds mainly adults were seen migrating near Ain Sukhna.

Short-toed Eagle

Circaetus gallicus

Four birds were seen migrating north near Ain Sukhna.

NOTE: This superspecies, consisting of three species, Short-toed *C. gallicus*, Beaudouin's *C. beaudouini* and Black-breasted *C. pectoralis* Snake-Eagle, is often considered a single species, which is then named Short-toed Snake-Eagle.

Western Marsh-Harrier

Circus aeruginosus



First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings on the Nile, twenty birds were seen migrating north over Hurghada and lastly a singleton was seen near Ain Sukhna.

Montagu's Harrier*Circus pygargus*

A female of this species was seen by a few on our boat trip to the Temple of Philae.

Levant Sparrowhawk*Accipiter brevipes*

Three males were recorded at Hurghada.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

25+ were found migrating along the Abu Shir Mountain range at Hurghada, others were seen at Sharm El Shiek and at Ain Sukhna where we had two.

Eurasian Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

500+ birds was made on our "raptor watch" day in the Ain Sukhna area. Smaller numbers were seen migrating elsewhere in Egypt at Hurghada and three en route to Petra in Jordan.

NOTE: The subspecies which we mostly encountered is the northern breeding B. b. vulpinus, sometimes regarded as a separate species; Western Steppe Buzzard, from the nominate Common Buzzard and three other incipient groups in eastern Asia. Clements does not as yet recognise any of these splits.

Long-legged Buzzard*Buteo rufinus*

Three birds were seen well near Hurghada.

Lesser Spotted Eagle*Aquila pomarina*

Three birds were seen with other migrating raptor species near Ain Sukhna.

Note: Race hastata of Lesser Spotted Eagle is raised to species level, Indian Spotted Eagle A. hastata.

Steppe Eagle*Aquila nipalensis*

Three of these large birds were seen with other migrating raptor species near Ain Sukhna.

NOTE: The Western Steppe Eagle A. n. orientalis which we recorded, may be split from the Eastern Steppe Eagle A. n. nipalensis. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Booted Eagle*Aquila pennatus*

Pale morph individuals were seen amongst migrating Common Buzzards at the Abu Shir Mountains, Hurghada with a further sighting of 12 birds at Ain Sukhna.

Falcons & Caracaras Falconidae**Eurasian Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

Regularly recorded, almost daily, in small numbers throughout Egypt and Jordan.

NOTE: Some authorities split this species into Common Kestrel, F. tinnunculus which we observed (occurring in East Africa and the Palaearctic region) and Rock Kestrel, F. rupicolus which occurs in Southern Africa. Clements does not as yet recognize these splits.

Sooty Falcon*Falco concolor*

We had excellent looks at two birds in flight on our Nile boat cruise between Edfu and Esna. Just recently arrived from their wintering grounds in South-east Africa or Madagascar.

Lanner Falcon*Falco biarmicus*

A single bird was seen hunting at a reedbed in Hurghada.

Barbary Falcon*Falco pelegrinoides*

We enjoyed two excellent views of birds drifting on the wind at the Abu Sher Mountains at Hurghada.

Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

A singleton was seen flying above Petra before drifting north.

Pheasants & Quails Phasianidae**Sand Partridge***Ammoperdix heyi*

We enjoyed excellent scope looks at 16 birds during our tour of St Katherine's Monastery.

Cranes Gruidae

Common Crane*Grus grus*

A singleton was found at a wetland at Hurghada.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae**Purple Swamphen***Porphyrio porphyrio*

Fairly common on the Nile River where the highest count of twenty birds were made between Edfu and Esna.

NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is currently in taxonomic review and several forms are expected to be recognised as distinct species. The form we recorded would then become African Swamphen (P. madagascariensis.) Other forms to be recognised may include Indian Swamphen (P. poliocephalus,) Philippine Swamphen (P. pulverulentus) and Eastern Swamphen (P. melanotus).

Common Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

Seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt with the highest count of 200+ on the Nile cruise between Edfu and Luxor.

Eurasian Coot*Fulica atra*

Three birds were seen at the lock at Esna.

Painted-Snipe Rostratulidae**Greater Painted-snipe***Rostratula benghalensis*

We enjoyed prolonged flight views of a female bird at Abassa.

Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

Seen at scattered wetland sites with highest count being 33 at the Sharm Sewage plant.

Thick-knees Burhinidae**Senegal Thick-knee***Burhinus senegalensis*

First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Aswan, Luxor and at El Fayoum.

Eurasian Thick-knee*Burhinus oedicephalus*

Two birds were flushed in a Tamarisk "forest" at the Dead Sea in Jordan.

Coursers & Pratincoles Glareolidae**Cream-colored Courser***Cursorius cursor*

A single bird was spotted by Rick while birding the desert near Ain Sukhna.

Collared Pratincole*Glareola pratincola*

Four birds were seen at Lake Nasser.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae**Spur-winged Plover***Vanellus spinosus*

The commonest wetland lapwing occurring at virtually every wetland, the highest count being over 25 on our drive between St Katherine and Ain Sukhna.

Black-bellied Plover*Pluvialis squatarola*

Five birds were seen at Suez.

Common Ringed Plover*Charadrius haiticula*

Recorded at Lake Nasser, Hurghada and El Fayoum.

Snowy (Kentish) Plover*Charadrius alexandrinus*

Two at Hurghada and a further six at Ras Mohammed NP.

Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae

Common Snipe

A single bird was flushed at a wetland near Suez.

Note: New World race delicata of Common Snipe has been raised to species level, Wilson's Snipe Gallinago delicata.

*Gallinago gallinago***Eurasian Curlew**

A quite unexpected bird was found El Fayoum.

*Numenius phaeopus***Spotted Redshank**

We enjoyed good scope looks at 8 full breeding plumaged birds at El Fayoum.

*Tringa erythropus***Common Redshank**

A single bird was found at Hurghada.

*Tringa totanus***Marsh Sandpiper**

A single bird was heard calling and then seen at El Fayoum.

*Tringa stagnatilis***Common Greenshank**

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with our first sighting at Lake Nasser.

*Tringa nebularia***Green Sandpiper**

A singleton was recorded at Hurghada.

*Tringa achropus***Wood Sandpiper**

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with our first sighting at Lake Nasser.

*Tringa glareola***Common Sandpiper**

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt.

*Actitis hypoleucos***Little Stint**

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with highest counts being 100+ at El Fayoum.

*Calidris minuta***Curlew Sandpiper**

Five birds were seen at ponds in the El Fayoum area including several in stunning breeding plumage.

*Calidris ferruginea***Dunlin**

Two birds were seen in smart breeding plumage at El Fayoum.

*Calidris alpina***Ruff**

A singleton at Lake Nasser, twenty at Abassa and a high count of 300+ on our day trip to El Fayoum.

*Philomachus pugnax***Gulls Laridae****White-eyed Gull**

This strikingly marked gull was only recorded at the Red Sea where it was common and seen daily with highest count of over 500 birds at Hurghada and a singleton at Ain Sukhna.

*Larus leucophthalmus***Sooty Gull**

Six+ birds were seen at Giftun Island, Hurghada.

*Larus hemprichii***Lesser Black-backed (Baltic) Gull**

Two on Lake Nasser, ten on the Nile and fifteen at Hurghada.

*Larus fuscus fuscus***Black-headed Gull**

Recorded in good numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt with 200+ on our Nile boat cruise between Esna and Luxor.

*Larus ridibundus***Slender-billed Gull**

First recorded at Hurghada where we had ten birds daily, 100+ Suez and a high count of 300 at El Fayoum where they breed.

*Larus ichthyaetus***Terns Sternidae****Gull-billed Tern**

Recorded daily at Lake Nasser, the Nile River and at Sharm Sewage Plant.

*Sterna nilotica***Caspian Tern**

Four seen on the Red Sea at Hurghada, ten at Ras Mohammed NP and four at Suez

Sterna caspia

Lesser Crested Tern*Sterna bengalensis*

Two birds were seen at Suez.

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

200+ on our boat trip of Hurghada and thirty-five at Suez.

White-cheeked Tern*Sterna repressa*

We were happy to find four birds in a mixed tern flock off Hurghada. A breeding migrant to the Red Sea.

Little Tern*Sterna albifrons*

Thirty at Hurghada, two at Suez and four at El Fayoum.

Greater Crested Tern*Sterna bergii*

Two at Hurghada.

Whiskered Tern*Chlidonias hybridus*

Recorded at scattered localities throughout Egypt with a high count of 1000+ on our Nile boat trip between Edfu and Luxor.

White-winged Tern*Chlidonias leucopterus*

First recorded at Aswan and then 200+ on our Nile boat cruise between Aswan and Kom Ombo and a further sighting of a singleton at Sharm Sewage Plant.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae**Spotted Sandgrouse***Pterocles senegallus*

Up to six birds were watched at a Camel feeding station near Abu Simbel. We had excellent scope views as they fed quietly in the desert.

Crowned Sandgrouse*Pterocles coronatus*

Seven seen at the Camel feeding station, Abu Simbel. Later we had close views of four birds next to the road at Sharm el Sheik.

Doves & Pigeons Columbidae**Rock Pigeon***Columba livia*

Commonly seen at scattered localities throughout the trip. Many of the birds seen in the Sinai were truly wild and pure-bred Rock Pigeons and can be safely ticked by the purist!

Eurasian Turtle-Dove*Streptopelia turtur*

Seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt with a high count of flocks totaling 150+ daily heading north at Hurghada.

Eurasian Collared-Dove*Streptopelia decaocto*

First recorded at Sharm El Sheik with further sightings at Suez, El Fayoum and in Jordan.

Namaqua Dove*Oena capensis*

A female was found in the mangroves at Ras Mohammed NP. A good find by Devra.

Laughing Dove*Streptopelia senegalensis*

Commonly recorded, almost daily, at many scattered sites throughout Egypt and high counts of 30+ birds on several days.

Parrots Psittacidae**Alexandrine Parakeet***Psittacula eupatria*

Four birds were seen at the Gezira Sports Ground in Cairo.

Rose-ringed Parakeet*Psittacula krameri*

Fifteen birds were recorded at Gezira Sports Ground in Cairo.

Cuckoos & Coucals Cuculidae**Senegal Coucal***Centropus senegalensis*

We had excellent looks at a single bird at Abassa at its most northern distribution in Africa.



Nightjars Caprimulgidae**Egyptian Nightjar***Caprimulgus aegypticus*

Heard only at Abu Simbel.

Swifts Apodidae**Common Swift***Apus apus*

Five birds were seen heading north of Saqqara Pyramid.

Pallid Swift*Apus pallidus*

Recorded at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high count of 1000 birds in the Luxor area.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Common Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis*

Three of these beauties were watched as they hunted along the beach at Hurghada and two at Ras Mohammed NP.

White-throated Kingfisher*Halcyon smyrnensis*

Ten at Abassa where we were treated to good views of this stunning bird, one of Egypt's most colorful. A further bird was heard calling at Saqqara Pyramid.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

Commonly recorded at wetland sites throughout Egypt and highest count being 50+ on our Nile boat cruise between Edfu and Luxor.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Little Green Bee-eater***Merops cyanophrys orientalis*

Small numbers of these colorful birds were seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Jordan. Our highest daily count of ten was obtained at Crocodile Island.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater*Merops persicus*

First seen at Crocodile Island with further sightings at Abassa and El Fayoum.

European Bee-eater*Merops apiaster*

Recorded almost daily throughout Egypt and Jordan. Our highest count was of 150 birds seen migrating at Aswan.

Rollers Coraciidae**Eurasian Roller***Coracias garrulus*

Singletons were seen at Hurghada and at Sharm el Sheik.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops*

Small numbers seen on almost every day of the tour, at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Jordan. Several were breeding and observed to be carrying food and disappearing into nest holes.

NOTE: Clements only recognises two species of Hoopoe; Eurasian U. epops and Madagascar U. marginata. One further species, is widely recognised namely African U. africana and a 4th is sometimes recognised, West/Central African U. senegalensis. We only recorded the nominate Palearctic form U. e. epops.

Woodpeckers & Allies Picidae**Eurasian Wryneck***Jynx torquilla*

We had an excellent look at a bird in Gezira Sports Ground. Rick found a single bird feeding in our hotel grounds the day before the tour.

Larks Alaudidae

Desert Lark*Ammomanes deserti*

Two near Wadi Fieran, six at St Katherine and a singleton at Wadi Hagul.

Greater Hoopoe-Lark*Alaemon alaudipes*

We had good looks at a single bird near Ain Sukhna while we were watching a Cream-colored Courser!

Greater Short-toed Lark*Calandrella brachydactyla*

A single bird was found at Sharm Sewage Plant.

Crested Lark*Galerida cristata*

Recorded almost daily at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Jordan.

Swallows Hirundinidae**Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)***Riparia riparia*

Large flocks were seen at several scattered sites, the largest numbers being 1000+ daily around our resort at Hurghada and at Sharm el Sheik.

Eurasian Crag-Martin*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Two birds were found at the Abu Sher Mountains at Hurghada.

(African) Rock Martin*Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

Regularly seen throughout Egypt and in Petra, Jordan with the highest numbers being 20+ on the rocky cliffs at Lake Nasser, Egypt.

*Note: Rock Martin and Pale Crag-Martin are merged into a single species: Rock Martin Ptyonoprogne fuligula. Race birwae is now considered synonymous with bansoensis; race rufigula now considered synonymous with fusciventris; race peloplasta now considered synonymous with pallida. del Hoyo et al. 2004. op. cit.***Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*Recorded on every day of the tour. The Egyptian race *r. savignii* which are a deep rusty reddish color were seen on several occasions at scattered sites and we observed flocks of migrating white-bellied Palearctic birds.*NOTE: This cosmopolitan species complex is likely to be split based on the Old World nominate form and its congeners which would become Eurasian Swallow H. rustica and the New World Barn Swallow H. erythrogaster. Further splitting within the group may also be done e.g. the distinctive H. r. savignii which breeds in the Nile Valley and would be named Egyptian Swallow. We recorded representatives of the Palearctic migrant Barn/Eurasian Swallow as well as reddish bellied resident birds on our Egypt tour. Clements does not as yet recognise any of these splits.***Red-rumped Swallow***Hirundo daurica*

Seen in small numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high count of 10+ at Hurghada.

House Martin*Delichon urbica*

Recorded in good numbers at scattered sites with a high of 50+ at Luxor.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae**White Wagtail***Motacilla alba*

Two birds were found at Sharm Sewage Plant.

African Pied Wagtail*Motacilla aguimp*

Two birds were seen at Lake Nasser, at their most northerly distribution in Africa.

Yellow Wagtail*Motacilla flava*Small numbers seen almost daily throughout Egypt with the highest numbers being 30+ at Abu Simbel The attractive and distinctive black-headed, waterside-dwelling *M. f. feldeggii* was frequently recorded during our tour.*NOTE: Some authorities have recently split the Yellow Wagtail complex into 2 full species, Eastern and Western Yellow Wagtail. Clements does not recognize this split as yet. The feldeggii race we observed may also be split off as Black-headed Wagtail.***Tawny Pipit***Anthus campestris*

Recorded daily in small numbers at the Hurghada golf course.

Tree Pipit*Anthus trivialis*

First recorded in Cairo with further sightings in Lake Nasser, Hurghada and at Ain Sukhna.



Meadow Pipit*Anthus pratensis*

Two seen at Lake Nasser and a singleton at Hurghada.

Red-throated Pipit*Anthus cervinus*

A singleton was heard and then seen in flight on the shoreline around Lake Nasser and 100+ daily at the Sharm Sewage Plant.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**Common Bulbul***Pycnonotus barbatus*

Seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt.

*NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognised as distinct species within the super-species. Several other forms (including ones which we recorded i.e. Egyptian Bulbul *P. arsiniae* and Dark-capped Bulbul *P. tricolor*) are likely to be recognised as distinct once genetic analysis and further study is completed*

White-spectacled Bulbul*Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Common at Wadi Fieran and several seen daily at Petra.

Thrushes & Allies Turdidae**Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush***Monticola saxatilis*

A juvenile at Hurghada, three birds at Ras Mohammed NP and further sighting at Ain Sukhna.

Blue Rock-Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

Two strikingly plumaged males were enjoyed inside the ancient city of Petra.

Eurasian Blackbird*Turdus merula*

First heard and then seen in Cairo with further birds seen in Petra, Jordan.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae**Zitting Cisticola***Cisticola juncidis*

Several birds were seen en route to the Valley of the Kings, at Crocodile Island and lastly at Abassa.

Streaked Scrub-Warbler*Scotocerca inquieta*

Good views were had of a pair at St Katherine.

Graceful Prinia*Prinia gracilis*

Commonly seen at wetland sites throughout Egypt. Our first birds were seen in Cairo.

Sedge Warbler*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A singleton was seen at Abu Simbel by Mark (guide only).

Eurasian Reed-Warbler*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Four birds were found at a small pool at Hurghada and two at a mall reedbed at Sharm Sewage Plant.

Marsh Warbler*Acrocephalus palustris*

Two seen at a wetland near Suez.

Great Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

A singleton was seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler*Acrocephalus stentoreus*

This large warbler was first heard and then seen at Abu Simbel with further sightings on our Nile boat cruise, at Crocodile Island, Luxor and El Fayoum.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler*Hippolais pallida*

A fairly common species seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt and Jordan where it is a breeding migrant.

*Note: Olivaceous Warbler is split into two species. Monotypic Western Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais opaca*, and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* with races *elaeica*, *reiseri* and *laeneni*.*

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

Good numbers were seen recorded in gardens on passage along the Red Sea.

Wood Warbler*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

We enjoyed good views of two birds in Cairo and singletons were recorded at Hurghada on two days.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

We had good views of several at Hurghada and St Katherine. It was common in Jordan where it is a breeding resident.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Two birds were recorded daily at Hurghada.

Greater Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Three in Cairo, two in Hurghada and a singleton at Wadi Hagul.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and the highest count being 25+ at Hurghada.

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Hurghada, Sharm el Sheik, Wadi Hagul and in Petra.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

Two stunning males were seen in our hotel grounds and two females at Gezira Sports Ground also in Cairo with a further male sighted at Wadi Hagul.

Thrushes, Chats & Allies Turdidae

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

We enjoyed excellent close looks at many birds in Tamarisk woodland at Suwayma, Jordan. Early May is the time to see good numbers here on passage.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Three birds were seen at our hotel grounds in Cairo with a further sighting at Hurghada.

Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*

Two in Cairo, two in Abu Simbel, a single bird in Ain Sukhna and common in Tamarisk woodland at Suwayma, Jordan.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

A juvenile was found at a wetland at Abu Simbel.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

First recorded at Hurghada with further sightings at Sharm el Sheik, Wadi Hagul and at Petra.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Several birds were seen in Cairo, Abu Simbel, Hurghada and at Crocodile Island, Luxor, Sharm el Sheik.

White-tailed (White-crowned Black) Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*

Common around Abu Simbel with further sightings at Aswan and on our drive between St Katherine and Ain Sukhna.

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*

A single bird was found in Wadi Hagul.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and the highest count being twenty+ at Ras Mohammed NP and at Sharm Sewage Plant.

NOTE: The North-West African race may be split off as Black-throated Wheatear O. seebohmi. The Palearctic migrant forms which we recorded would remain within the nominate group.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Two at Hurghada and female bird at Ain Sukhna.

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*



Two at Wadi Hagul and four at Petra.

NOTE: This extremely variable complex with an extensive range and many distinctive isolated populations is a perfect candidate for multi-splitting.

Black-eared Wheatear

Oenanthe hispanica

Several birds were seen throughout Egypt and a singleton at Petra in Jordan where it is a breeding migrant.

Isabelline Wheatear

Oenanthe isabellina

A single bird was found at Sharm Sewage Plant.

Finsch's Wheatear

Oenanthe finschii

A fine male was found opposite our hotel in Petra. A short distance migrant from the north.

Blackstart

Cercomela melanura

Two were seen at Wadi Fieran and Russ found a single bird in Petra.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectarinidae

Nile Valley Sunbird

Hedydipna metallica

A pair were admired on our visit to the Temple of Philae. We particularly enjoyed our first sighting of a male in stunning plumage displaying to a female at a nest. A further 30+ birds were seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

Palestine Sunbird

Cinnyris oseus

After a long search, we were relieved to find a pair and enjoyed long looks in Wadi Fieran.

Orioles Oriolidae

Eurasian Golden Oriole

Oriolus oriolus

We enjoyed good scope looks at a male on Crocodile Island, Luxor with further sightings at Hurghada, Sharm el Sheik and at St Katherine.

Shrikes Laniidae

Red-backed Shrike

Lanius collurio

A female was seen at Sharm el Sheik and three birds were seen in Jordan.

Rufous-tailed Shrike

Lanius isabellinus

A singleton was seen on two days at the Sharm Sewage Plant.

Southern Gray Shrike

Lanius meridionalis

A singleton was seen at El Fayoum.

NOTE: This complex which used to be lumped with Northern Shrike L. excubitor is being considered for further splitting. These splits would include the nominate Southern Gray Shrike, the migrant Steppe Shrike (L. pallidirostris) and Saharan Shrike (L. leucopygos) which is the form we recorded in Egypt during our tour. Clements recognises the split from Northern Shrike but not the further splits of the Southern Gray Shrike group.

Masked Shrike

Lanius nubicus

Seen in small numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Petra with a high count of 4+ at Suwayma, Jordan where it is a breeding migrant.

Woodchat Shrike

Lanius senator

First seen in Cairo with further sightings at Suwayma, Jordan, where it is a breeding migrant.

Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae

Eurasian Jay

Garrulus glandarius

Four birds were seen in flight while we were driving from Amman to Suwayma.

House Crow

Corvus splendens

Encountered at Ain Sukhna and Suez where they were common.

Hooded Crow

Corvus corone

Commonly seen throughout Egypt and Jordan.



Note: Carrion Crow is split into two species. Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* and Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*. The race *orientalis* of Hooded Crow, from central and eastern Asia, overlaps locally with *C. cornix* in Siberia with only limited hybridization, suggesting that it also is a separate species.

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*

Regularly encountered at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Jordan, the highest count being 80+ between Luxor and Hurghada.

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*

Five+ birds were seen on our visit to the ancient city of Petra.

Starlings Sturnidae

Tristram's Starling *Onychognathus tristramii*

Ten were seen on the walls of St Katherine's Monastery and four at our lunch stop at the Dead Sea.

Eurasian Starling *Sturnis vulgaris*

Three birds were seen briefly on streetlights as we traveled through Cairo.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common and seen daily throughout the tour.

Weavers & Allies Ploceidae

Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*

Two male birds were seen briefly on our visit to Abassa. A feral population.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

Indian Silverbill *Eodice malabarica*

Two birds were at Suwayma by Mark (guide only).

Red Avadavat *Amandave amandava*

Two pairs were seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

Siskins, Crossbills & Allies Fringillidae

Pale (Sinai) Rosefinch *Carpodacus synoicus*

Ten were seen at St Katherine, including two stunning males and four birds were seen at Petra in Jordan.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Recorded at our hotel in Petra.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Five birds were seen at our hotel in Cairo.

Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Seen on both days at Petra.

Trumpeter Finch *Rhodopechys githaginea*

Five birds were watched drinking from a bowl placed on a wall in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor.

Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

Two birds were heard and seen in flight at Suwayma, Jordan.

Buntings Emberizidae

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Miliaria caesia*

A singing male was enjoyed by all at Petra in Jordan.



Mammals & Reptiles (4 species)

Dogs & Allies Canidae

Red Fox

Vulpes vulpes

We had excellent looks at an individual hunting at St Katherine and two were seen at Saqqara Pyramid.

Rats Muridae

Brown Rat

Rattus norvegicus

A few were seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

Bats Chiroptera

Geoffrey's Tomb Bat

Taphozous perforatus

Up to 10 were seen at Kom Ombo Temple at sunset.

Crocodiles Crocodylia

Nile Crocodile

Crocodylus niloticus

We were lucky to see two at Lake Nasser one of which was at least 4m long and the other 50cm.

Rockjumper Birding Tours CC

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Registration number 2001/059480/23

PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa

Tel: +27 33 394 0225

Fax: +27 88 033 394 0225

Tel (USA & Canada) toll free: 1-888-990-5552

Email: info@rockjumperbirding.com

Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com

Website: www.rockjumperbirding.com

