

# Checklist of the birds of the Socotra Archipelago

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July 2013

Prepared for BirdLife International, Environment Protection Authority, Friends of Socotra, Ornithological Society of the Middle East and all those interested in the wildlife of these wonderful islands.

Please send records to: [RFPorter@talktalk.net](mailto:RFPorter@talktalk.net) or [qamhem@yahoo.com](mailto:qamhem@yahoo.com) for inclusion in the SocotraBirds data base.

The taxonomic order, English names and scientific names are those adopted by the Ornithological Society of the Middle East [www.osme.org](http://www.osme.org) and *Birds of the Middle East*

## Key:

**Vagrant:** a species recorded 5 times or less.

Species in **BLUE CAPITALS** have internationally important populations on Socotra  
**Text in red gives BirdLife International/IUCN Red list status**

### **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

Passage migrant

### **Harlequin Quail** *Coturnix delegorguei*

Status uncertain; vagrant or occasional breeding visitor.

### **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

Vagrant

### **Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus*

Vagrant

### **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Winter visitor & passage migrant

### **Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Rare winter visitor

### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Vagrant

### **Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Winter visitor & passage migrant

### **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Winter visitor & passage migrant

### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
Vagrant

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*  
Vagrant **Globally Near Threatened**

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*  
Vagrant

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus*  
Recorded offshore; status uncertain

**PERSIAN SHEARWATER** *Puffinus persicus*  
Breeding visitor; offshore throughout year.

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*  
Recorded offshore; status uncertain

**JOUANIN'S PETREL** *Bulweria fallax*  
**ENDEMIC** Breeding visitor; present offshore throughout the year.  
**Globally Near Threatened**

**Wilson's Storm Petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*  
Summer visitor to offshore waters

**White-bellied Storm Petrel** *Fregetta grallaria*  
Recorded offshore; but true status uncertain

**Black-bellied Storm Petrel** *Fregetta tropica*  
Recorded offshore; but true status uncertain

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
Vagrant; may have bred

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*  
Winter visitor

**RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD** *Phaethon aethereus*  
Breeds; offshore throughout the year

**Western White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*  
Vagrant

**African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*  
Vagrant

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
Rare visitor

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*  
Vagrant

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*  
Rare visitor; may breed.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*  
Status uncertain; probably an uncommon resident breeder

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*  
Winter visitor and possibly present throughout the year.

**Malagasy Pond Heron** *Ardeola idae*  
Vagrant **Globally Endangered**

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant; may breed.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala*  
Vagrant

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Western Great Egret** *Ardea alba*  
Uncommon winter visitor

**Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*  
Vagrant

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor*  
Vagrant

**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*  
Vagrant

**MASKED BOOBY** *Sula dactylatra*  
Breeds; offshore throughout the year

**BROWN BOOBY** *Sula leucogaster*  
Breeds; offshore throughout the year

**Reed Cormorant** *Microcarbo africanus*  
Vagrant

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
Vagrant

**SOCOTRA CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*  
Resident and probably winter visitor. **Globally Vulnerable**

**African Darter** *Anhinga rufa*  
Vagrant

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*  
Resident breeder

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius*  
Vagrant  
(See also NOTE below)

**EGYPTIAN VULTURE** *Neophron percnopterus*  
Resident breeder. **Globally Endangered**

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
Vagrant

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus*  
Vagrant **Globally Near Threatened**

**Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*  
Vagrant

**SOCOTRA BUZZARD** *Buteo socotraensis* .  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder  
**Globally Vulnerable**

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
Resident breeder

**Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis*  
Vagrant or rare passage migrant

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*  
Vagrant

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*  
Resident breeder

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*  
Vagrant

**Macqueen's (Houbara) Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueenii*  
Vagrant. **Globally Vulnerable.**

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*  
Vagrant

**Corncrake *Crex crex***

Vagrant

**Little Crane *Porzana parva***

Vagrant

**Baillon's Crane *Porzana pusilla***

Vagrant

**Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana***

Vagrant

**Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea***

Vagrant

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Uncommon visitor; has bred at least once.

**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra***

Vagrant

**Common Crane *Grus grus***

Vagrant

**Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus***

Vagrant

**Crab-plover *Dromas ardeola***

Vagrant

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Resident and probably winter visitor & passage migrant

**Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus***

Vagrant

**Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

Resident breeder & winter visitor

**Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius atrifrons***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*  
Vagrant

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*  
Vagrant

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*  
Vagrant

**Pin-tailed Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*  
Vagrant. **Globally Near Threatened**

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant  
**Globally Near Threatened**

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*  
Vagrant

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*  
Vagrant

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*  
Vagrant

**Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Red Knot *Calidris canutus***

Vagrant

**Sanderling *Calidris alba***

Uncommon winter visitor & passage migrant

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta***

Vagrant

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Uncommon winter visitor & passage migrant

**Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus***

Vagrant

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant

**Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus***

Passage migrant in offshore waters

**Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor***

Resident breeder

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

Vagrant

**BROWN NODDY *Anous stolidus***

Breeding summer visitor; present offshore throughout year

**Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris***

Vagrant

**Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei***

Vagrant

**Common Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus***

Vagrant

**White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus***

Rare visitor. **Globally Near Threatened**

**SOOTY GULL *Larus hemprichii***

Resident & winter visitor

**Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans***

Rare winter visitor

**Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus***

Uncommon winter visitor

**Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Steppe Gull *Larus barabensis***

Uncommon winter visitor

**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica***

Rare winter visitor & passage migrant.

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

Rare winter visitor & passage migrant

**Swift Tern *Sterna bergii***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**SAUNDERS'S TERN *Sternula saundersi***

Breeding summer visitor

**BRIDLED TERN *Onychoprion anaethetus***

Breeding summer visitor

**Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus***

Passage migrant

**Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii***

Vagrant

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

Winter visitor & passage migrant

**White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa***

Passage migrant

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

Uncommon passage migrant

**White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus***

Rare passage migrant

**Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus***

Vagrant

**Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii***

Resident breeder



**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia* forma *domestica*  
Resident; introduced

**Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis*  
Resident breeder

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*  
Vagrant

**Bruce's Green Pigeon** *Treron waalia*  
Resident breeder

**White-browed Coucal** *Centropus superciliosus*  
Resident breeder

**Pied Cuckoo** *Oxylophus jacobinus*  
Vagrant

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus*  
Vagrant

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*  
Uncommon passage migrant

**SOCOTRA SCOPS OWL** *Otus socotranus*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*  
Vagrant

**European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*  
Vagrant

**Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius*  
Vagrant.

**Nubian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus nubicus*  
Resident breeder

**Himalayan Swiftlet** *Aerodramus brevirostris*  
Vagrant

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*  
Vagrant

**FORBES-WATSON'S SWIFT** *Apus berliozi*  
Breeding visitor; present most of year

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis*  
Vagrant

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*  
Vagrant

**Abyssinian Roller** *Coracias abyssinicus*  
Vagrant

**European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*  
Passage migrant. **Globally Near Threatened**

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*  
Vagrant

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus*  
Passage migrant

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*  
Vagrant

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*  
Vagrant

**Daurian/Turkestan Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus/phoenicuroides*  
Vagrant or rare passage migrant

**SOUTHERN GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius meridionalis*  
Resident breeder

**Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris*  
Vagrant

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*  
Vagrant

**House Crow** *Corvus splendens*  
Arrived on boat in 1996; bred.  
Eradicated in 2009

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*  
Vagrant or rare visitor

**Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis*  
Resident breeder

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*  
Rare passage migrant

**Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps*  
Resident breeder

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*  
Rare passage migrant

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Passage migrant

**Pale Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta*  
Resident breeder

**Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*  
Vagrant

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*  
Vagrant

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*  
Vagrant

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*  
Vagrant

**Eurasian Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*  
Vagrant

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*  
Vagrant

**SOCOTRA CISTICOLA** *Cisticola haesitatus*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder. **Globally Near Threatened**

**SOCOTRA WARBLER** *Cisticola incanus*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*  
Rare winter visitor & passage migrant

**Desert Whitethroat** *Sylvia minula*  
Vagrant

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*  
Vagrant

**Ménétriés's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea*  
Vagrant

**Abyssinian White-eye** *Zosterops abyssinicus*  
Resident breeder

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*  
Vagrant

**Somali Starling** *Onychognathus blythii*  
Resident breeder

**SOCOTRA STARLING** *Onychognathus frater*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder

**Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus atrogularis*  
Vagrant

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*  
Vagrant

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*  
Vagrant

**Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus*  
Vagrant

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*  
Vagrant

**Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*  
Vagrant

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*  
Rare winter visitor

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*  
Vagrant

**SOCOTRA SUNBIRD** *Chalcomitra balfouri*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder

**SOCOTRA SPARROW** *Passer insularis*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder

**ABD AL-KURI SPARROW** *Passer hemileucus*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder. **Globally Vulnerable**

**Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava spp*  
Passage migrant

**Black-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) feldegg*  
Vagrant

**Yellow-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) lutea*  
Status uncertain; probably rare passage migrant or vagrant

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
Vagrant

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*  
Uncommon winter visitor & passage migrant

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*  
Winter visitor & passage migrant

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*  
Rare passage migrant

**LONG-BILLED PIPIT** *Anthus similis*  
Resident breeder

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*  
Vagrant

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*  
Vagrant

**SOCOTRA GOLDEN-WINGED GROSBEAK**

*Rhynchostruthus socotranus*  
**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*  
Vagrant

**Cinnamon-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza tahapisi*  
Resident breeder

**SOCOTRA BUNTING** *Emberiza socotrana*

**ENDEMIC** Resident breeder.  
**Globally Vulnerable**

**NOTE**

**Black Kite** In addition to Yellow-billed Kites which have been specifically identified, black kites (probably *Milvus migrans*) have also been recorded as vagrants.

**Brown/South Polar Skua**  
*Stercorarius antarcticus/maccormicki*  
(species not determined)  
Vagrant

**UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS**

**(For the following species no details or descriptions have been provided; they are listed here for completeness)**

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*  
African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*  
Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*  
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*  
Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*  
Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*  
Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*  
Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*  
Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*  
Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*  
Hume's Tawny Owl *Strix butleri*  
Common Swift *Apus apus*  
Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*  
Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*  
Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*  
Little Rock Thrush *Monticola rufocinerea*

