

Marsa Alam & Southern coast – June 3/10th 2010



Yellow-throated Sparrow Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

I have spent a week in the Brayka Bay resort in Marsa Alam, Egypt, a very nice resort where I have been before last year.

There are a lot of green fields and nice gardens and also sheltered areas with trees where birds can feed and hide.

Besides spending a "normal" holiday (but always with my binoculars) my intention was to twitch the Lappet-faced Vulture in Bir Shalatin and the Crab Plover that I did not find in Hamata or in any expected site along the coast south of Marsa Alam.

I was not expecting to see migrating passerines but surprisingly a small amount of them were still on their route up north.

Best birding hours were, of course, early in the morning when everything was still quiet, while I spent the daytime hours for some sea-watching or walk outside the hotel to find more species as raptors or larks.

The temperature was between 30 to 36°C and visibility was always excellent.

The bird guides used were:

- Collins Bird guide (Lars Svensson)
- Birds of the Middle East (R.F. Porter, S. Christensen, P. Schiermacker-Hansen)

List of species seen:

Brown Booby* - (*Sula leucogaster*)

One adult fishing just in front of Wadi El Gemal reserve on June 7th

Striated Heron - (*Butorides striatus*)

One adult in Wadi El Gemal mangroves, *ssp brevipes*, on 7th

Squacco Heron - (*Ardeola ralloides*)

Seen daily in Brayka Bay resort – adults and immatures max 2 per day + 1 adult in Wadi El Gemal



Squacco Heron - Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Cattle Egret - (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Seen daily at the resort – max 6 together

Western Reef Heron - (*Egretta gularis*)

White and dark phase seen in the lagoon of the resort – seen daily 1-2 birds



Western Reef Heron – Wadi Lahami, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

White Stork - (*Ciconia ciconia*)

One adult bird flying over the resort on June 8th

Black Kite - (*Milvus migrans*)

One immature bird seen on June 6th flying low just outside the resort.

Egyptian Vulture - (*Neophron percnopterus*)

One adult + 1 juvenile in Bir Shalatin on the 7th

Lappet-faced Vulture* - (*Torgos tracheliotus*)

Six birds seen in Bir Shalatin – 3 feeding on dead camel + 3 flying over



Lappet-faced Vulture - Bir Shalatin, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Steppe Eagle - (*Aquila nipalensis*)

One subad. flying north above the resort on the 4th

Osprey - (*Pandion haliaetus*)

One bird seen daily at resort + 2 in Wadi Lahami and Wadi El Gemal.

Sooty Falcon * - (*Falco concolor*)

One very swift adult hunting doves just before dusk on the 4th at resort

Lanner Falcon - (*Falco biarmicus*)

Three specimen recorded.



Juvenile Lanner Falcon – June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Kentish Plover - (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

One juvenile/female seen on the 7th in Wadi El Gemal

Greater Sand Plover - (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)

Five birds in Wadi El Gemal

Spur-winged Plover - (*Hoplopterus spinosus*)

Three couples in the resort – 1 very aggressive couple with 3 adorable pulli + 1 with eggs.



Spur-winged Plover ad. + pullus - Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Common Sandpiper - (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

One single bird outside the resort in Marsa Alam on the 9th

Sooty Gull - (*Larus hemprichii*)

Seen daily in small groups – bigger numbers close to Shams Alam trash dump.

White-eyed Gull - (*Larus leucophthalmus*)

Common – seen daily in small groups – about 100 birds seen around Shams Alam trash dump on the 7th.



White-eyed Gulls, Shams Alam outside the hotel, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Caspian Tern - (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Seen daily passing in front of the resort – up to 5 birds on the 4th

Sandwich Tern – (*Sterna sandicensis*)

One bird among Lesser Crested Terns on the 8th close by the resort.

Lesser Crested Tern - (*Sterna bengalensis*)

Common – seen daily in small flocks passing by or fishing – up to 30 birds on the 8th

Common Tern - (*Sterna hirundo*)

Seen 3 birds on the 4th and 2 on the 8th

White-cheeked Tern - (*Sterna repressa*)

4 adults fishing in mixed flock with Common and L. Crested Terns on the 4th

Spotted Sandgrouse - (*Pterocles senegallus*)

1 male along the road close to Berenice on 7th

Rock Dove - (*Columba livia*)

Seen daily outside the resort in small flocks

Eurasian Collared Dove - (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common in the resort

Laughing Dove - (*Streptopelia senegalensis*)

Very common in the resort and seen everywhere where trees were

Namaqua Dove - (*Oena capensis*)

One cute tiny female seen on the 10th at resort, very shy.



female Namaqua Dove - Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Pallid Swift - (*Apus pallidus*)

2 birds flying over the resort on the 5th

European Bee-eater - (*Merops apiaster*)

Common – seen daily up to 50 birds on the 6th



European Bee-Eaters, Wadi El Gemal, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Sand Martin - (*Riparia riparia*)

Two birds seen, on 5th and 4 on the 10th, among Barn Swallow and Bee Eaters.

Rock Martin - (*Ptyonoprogne fuligula*)

A pair seen daily; nesting in abandoned building close to the resort.

Barn Swallow - (*Hirundo rustica*)

Seen daily, all females.

Red-rumped Swallow - (*Cecropis daurica*)

One bird seen on the 5th at resort and 1 on the 10th close to the airport.

Common House Martin - (*Delichon urbicum*)

Five birds seen on the 5th

Tawny Pipit - (*Anthus campestris*)

One in Wadi Lahami.

Yellow Wagtail - (*Motacilla flava*)

One female *ssp feldegg* at resort seen on the 9th and 10th

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin* - (*Cercotrichas galactotes*)

One adult seen at resort on 5th and 6th



Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin - Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Common Redstart - (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

One female on the 4th at resort and 2 males on the 8th at resort as well.

White-crowned Wheatear - (*Oenanthe leucopyga*)

A couple seen everyday feeding in the gardens and nesting outside the resort + 1 juvenile at resort.



White-crowned Wheatear - Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

Eurasian Reed Warbler - (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Four birds seen on the 6th at resort.

Marsh Warbler - (*Acrocephalus palustris*)

Two birds on the 5th

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler - (*Hippolais pallida*)

Seen almost daily up to 3 birds at resort + 1 in Marsa Hemira with 2 Upcher's Warbler.

Upcher's Warbler - (*Hippolais languida*)

Two in Marsa Hemira mangroves with 1 Olivaceous Warbler – seen very well to appreciate the difference between the two species in size and color.

Garden Warbler - (*Sylvia borin*)

Seen daily at resort – up to 2 birds.

Lesser Whitethroat - (*Sylvia curruca*)

Only 2 on the 4th at resort.

Common Whitethroat - (*Sylvia communis*)

One on the 5th and 1 on the 8th at resort – both females/1st summer.

Eurasian Golden Oriole - (*Oriolus oriolus*)

One female/1st summer in Wadi Lahami mangroves.

Masked Shrike - (*Lanius nubicus*)

A couple seen daily at resort – no signs of nesting.

Brown-necked Raven - (*Corvus ruficollis*)

Very common – tens seen in Bir Shalatin.

Yellow-throated Sparrow - (*Petronia xanthocollis*)

The highlight of this trip as if accepted is the 1st record for this species in Egypt.

One singing male seen on the 5th; 6th and 9th at the resort or just outside it on Palm, Eucalyptus or Acacia tree.

Call very similar to House Sparrow. Very shy.



Yellow-throated Sparrow - Marsa Alam, June 2010 - © Massimiliano Dettori

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