

AROUND THE REGION

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Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 34 (2) should be sent by 15 June to atr@osme.org.

AFGHANISTAN

A **White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus* at Delaram, Nimroz province, 7 Jun–8 Sep, was in an area where it is a scarce breeding species. **Painted Sandgrouse** *Pterocles indicus* has never been recorded in Afghanistan before so one reported at Delaram 18 Jun would be notable if substantiated. A **Snow Pigeon** *Lerwa lerwa* at Bagram 29 May was of interest though within the restricted range of this species in northern Afghanistan. A **Black Drongo** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, which is a scarce summer visitor, was at Jalalabad 22–24 May whereas the **Variable Wheatear** *Oenanthe picata* at Jalalabad 25 May was perhaps a more expected passage migrant.

AZERBAIJAN

A stunning migration of **Little Bustards** *Tetrax tetrax* was noted at Besh Barmag 7 Nov when 60 000 were counted while a total of over 15 **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* were counted there late Sep/early Oct. 400 **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyaetus* were on Mingechevir reservoir and in the Alazan delta area 5 Nov with a single **Baltic Gull** *Larus fuscus* at Besh Barmag 23 Oct although this species is not uncommon. A **Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor* on the steppes near Alazan delta 5 Nov showed characteristics of the form *L. e. homeyeri*. The first record of **Eurasian Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* for the Besh Barmag area was seen 3 Oct. Some 10 000 **Calandra Larks** *Melanocorypha calandra* were counted on the steppes near Mingechevir reservoir 5 Nov while six **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* at Besh Barmag 28 Sep was a notable record. A **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis* at Kizil Agach 3 Nov was unusual, being away from the localised breeding area in the Talsh mountains. A single **Richard's**

Pipit *Anthus richardi* and **Buff-bellied Pipit** *A. (rubescens) japonicus* were at Besh Barmag 7 Nov and 30 Oct respectively.

BAHRAIN

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* is not a common bird in Bahrain so one at A'Ali farm 16 Oct is of interest while an early juvenile **Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* at Refinery pond on 20 Aug was some distance from the nearest breeding area in Turkey or Azerbaijan. A **Lesser Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bengalensis* ringed on Al Jarim island 19 Jun 2009 was found dead at Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 24 May. There were several records of **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* including singles at Hamala research station 18 Jun and 4 Jul, Buhair 1 Jul and in fields in the north of the island 16 Oct. The arrival and build up of **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* numbers continued through the autumn to peak at over 200 at the main roost at Jasra 18 Nov.

CYPRUS

17 **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* at Asprokremmos dam 28 Nov was a good count while a **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* on Kanlikoy pond, near Nicosia, 29 Dec was only the fifth occurrence for the island. A **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* at Larnaca sewage works 24–28 Nov was the tenth record since 1995. The sighting of a **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis* on Meneou pools, near Larnaca, 20 Dec to year end constitutes the first record for Cyprus and the Middle East. A total of 327 **Scopoli's Shearwaters** *Calonectris (diomedea) diomedea* were noted flying west off Essentepe 11 Oct. **Baillon's Crane** *Porzana pusilla* is rare in winter so one at Phasouri reed beds 1 Dec is of note. Also noteworthy were two **Eurasian Dotterels** *Charadrius morinellus*

at Mandria 7–11 Oct and another at Spiros pool 24 Oct. **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* is not quite an annual visitor so singles at Akrotiri 15–16 Sep and Bishop pool 24–29 Sep were interesting records. The second and third records of **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* were singles at Larnaca sewage works 4 Jun and Phasouri reed beds 7 Oct. **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* is another scarce visitor but there were two at Akhna dam 29 Sep with another at Akrotiri salt lake 11 Nov.

The **Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis* on the Karpas peninsula 8–9 Oct was only the third record whilst the largest flock of **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarpis melba* to be recorded were the 500 over Polis beach 3 Aug. Single **Steppe Grey Shrikes** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* at Paphos lighthouse 17 Nov and Mandria 26 Nov were the ninth and tenth records for the island whilst the appearance of a **House Crow** *Corvus splendens* at Apostolos Andreas, Karpas peninsula, 19 Sep was perhaps an unwelcome addition to the Cyprus avifauna. The **Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus* at Zakaki marsh 11 Nov was only the second record since 2004. **Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* is a rare winter visitor so one at Avagas gorge 4–17 Nov was of note. The **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* at Larnaca sewage works 23 Nov was the 15th occurrence. There was an immature **Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus* at Bishop pool 10 Sep. An **Eastern Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus (ochruros) phoenicuroides* at Mandria 24 Nov was the first occurrence of this form while a **Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka* at Armou 22–23 Oct was only the second record. Further interesting migrants were a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* at Agia Napa sewage works 11 Sep and a **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* at Larnaca sewage works 30 Oct with up to 15 **Rock Sparrows** *Petronia petronia* at Marathounta from 30 Dec. A good series of **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* at Mandria saw two 20–25 Sep, up to five 30 Sep–15 Oct and up to two 9 Nov–2 Dec. A **Blyth's Pipit** *A. godlewskii* on 10 Dec, also at Mandria, will constitute the second record if accepted. Eleven **Yellowhammers** *Emberiza citronella* around the Troodos weather station 26 Nov was only the sixth record since 2000.

EGYPT

Abu Simbel remains the main site to see **Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* with five there 21 Sep while the usual Red sea mangroves held **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* with singles at Hamata 30 Sep and Wadi Lahami 1 Oct. **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* is a species not often seen from land but one was off Marsa Alam 9 Oct. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* was at Sharm el Sheikh 10 Sep where there have been many recent sightings. **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos tracheliotus* continue to be found at Shelatein, where there were 20 on 2 Oct.

The best autumn site for **Crab-plovers** *Dromas ardeola* continues to be Hamata mangroves where there were 110 on 30 Sep. Small numbers of **White-tailed Lapwings** *Vanellus leucurus* at less usual Red sea locations included two at Shams Alam 28 Sep and two Marsa Alam 11 Oct. Three **Terek Sandpipers** *Xenus cinereus* were at Hamata 29 Sep, a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus* was noted at Wadi Natrun 17 Sep and a **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* was on El Gouna sewage lagoons 28 Sep.

There have been fewer **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* in recent autumns so 21 at Abu Simbel 21 Sep was a good count. **African Collared Doves** *Streptopelia risoria* have now been found in an additional area away from the Red sea with three at Sheikh Shazly 25 Sep while one of the two **Mourning Doves** *S. decipiens* recorded at Abu Simbel since 2010 was still present to 20 Sep at least. **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* continues to increase and spread north along the Nile with two at Qift 10 Oct while the camel market at Darauw held 41 on 27 Nov, a record count. Three **Hume's Owls** *Strix butleri* were heard calling in Wadi Feiran 5 Oct while 17 **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarpis melba* were reported from Aswan 21 Oct, an unusually large number. Two **Isabelline Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* were at Marsa Alam 12 Oct; this species now appears to be regular in small numbers along the Red sea. A potential first record for Egypt was the **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* photographed at Shams Alam hotel 22 Sep. A **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cyprica* was at New Kalabsha, lake Nasser, 27 Oct and a **Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* was reported from a less usual area in the Western

desert, Bur al Nuss, 17 Oct. There was a notable count of 1410 **Spanish Sparrows** *Passer hispaniolensis* at Aswan 11 Nov. A **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* was a good sighting at St Catherine 6 Oct while a more rarely recorded **Striolated Bunting** *Emberiza striolata* was at Wadi Feiran 4 Oct.

IRAN

Two **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* at Karun fish ponds, Shushtar, Khuzestan province, 18 Dec continues the run of records there since 22 Jan 2004 and this species now seems well established as a breeding species further south in Iran. A **Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* at Khoor-e Tiab 27 Dec was the 14th record for Iran. The last surviving **Siberian White Crane** *Grus leucogeranus* of the former western population arrived at the wintering site of Ezbaran 24 Oct. 12 **White-tailed Lapwings** *Vanellus leucurus* were at Amir, Shushtar, 19 Dec where it is scarce in winter. The first **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* in Iran, reported previously in June, remained on Sheedvar island to at least 12 July. A pair of **Black Drongos** *Dicrurus macrocerus* at Minab 27 Dec was the fifth record for Iran

ISRAEL

The second record of a Bean Goose for Israel involved a **Tundra Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis rossicus* at Kfar Baruch reservoir 8–31 Dec which preceded an influx of **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* 9 Dec when two were at Kfar Makabi ponds, eight at Tishlovet reservoir and two at Kfar Baruch reservoir. To add to these, the fifth record of **Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus* involved nine at Dan fishponds and fields southwest of Kfar Szold 4 Dec–year end. There were up to 11 **Cory's Shearwaters** *Calonectris diomedea* off Eilat North Beach in July and about ten individual **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* recorded on migration through the northern valleys in Aug/Sep. A pair of **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* reared four young at Agamon Hula, the first breeding record for Israel.

A **Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* was at Agamon Hula 11 Dec while a **Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo* was at the same site 28 Sep. 13 **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* at Urim 12 Nov was a notable gathering.

Although an occasional breeder, **Greater Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* remains scarce with one at Hama'apil fishponds, Hefer valley, 24–26 Sep and one at Ein Hamifratz fishponds 4 Nov. A **Pin-tailed Snipe** *Gallinago stenura* trapped at Tsor'a 10 Nov may prove to be the third confirmed record; there are another 6–7 claims for birds seen in the field (Swinhoe's Snipe *G. megala* could not be ruled out). There was a single **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* at Ma'agan Michael 19 Sep and two single **Grey Phalaropes** *Phalaropus fulicarius* at Revadim reservoir 10–12 Aug and Kmeihin sewage ponds 12 Oct.

Up to 16 **Bridled Terns** *Onychoprion anaethetus* were off Eilat North Beach July/August but more notable was one inland at Ma'agan Michael 19 Aug and also unusual was the **White-cheeked Tern** *Sterna repressa* on the Mediterranean at Ashod 13 Jun. An **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* was off Eilat beach 15 Jun followed by a **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* off there 24 Jun. Two sightings of **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis* *pallidirostris* at Sde Eliyahu, Bet She'an valley, 16 Sep and 18 Oct may have referred to the same bird with others at Nir Oz 8 Nov and Yotvata 17 Nov. A **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* remained at the IBRCE birdwatching park, Eilat, 27–30 Nov and two **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* were at Yotvata 17 Nov with a **Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps* in the central Arava 16 Dec.

The fifth record of **Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, at Ein Afek nature reserve 25 Oct, preceded an influx of at least eight **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* 30 Oct–30 Nov and three **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus humei* though the first of the latter at Kibbutz Matsuva 5 Oct seems early and the second at Nafha in the central Negev 25 Oct may possibly belong to the form *P. h. mandellii*; a potential split and a possible first record of this form in the Middle East. The third **Hume's Leaf Warbler** was at Mitzpe Ramon sewage lagoons 17 Nov. A **Common Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla* at Mount Bar'on, north Golan Heights, 17 Dec–year end is a first for Israel whilst the **Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* in Eilat cemetery 19 Nov is the second record. The first claim of **Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla*, a

bird trapped at Jerusalem bird observatory in April 2007, has not been accepted by the Israel Rarities and Distribution Committee so the potential first is now a bird at Midreshet Ben Gurion 16 Oct. An **Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris* was at Kiryat Shmona geological park 25 Nov but more notable were the two **Radde's Accentors** *P. ocularis* at Elrom in the Golan Heights 11 Dec—year end. The **Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii* at Bet Kama alfalfa field 1 Oct will be the fourth record if accepted and there were three **Olive-backed Pipits** *A. hodgsoni* in the Eilat date plantations 19 Nov and also a **Buff-bellied Pipit** *A. (rubescens) japonicus* at Ma'agan Michael 23 Nov. A **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* was at Yotvata 23 Nov and a **Yellow-breasted Bunting** *E. aureola* at Wadi Ashborn, near Sapir, 19 Sep was the 13th record.

KAZAKHSTAN

Pallas's Fish Eagles *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* are occasionally recorded in southern/eastern areas and one at Aktogai 21 May is of interest. There are increasing records of summering **Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius* in southern areas, which this year included one at Bartogai reservoir 24 Jul which may have been the same bird as the one at the nearby Boguty mountains also 24 Jul. The largest ever recorded post-breeding gathering of **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* was the 650 counted at Arykty 16 Aug though this is a traditional area for them. **Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* is still a vagrant with two further singles at Temrastau lake, Korgalzhyn, 22 May and Sorbulak 24 May while also of interest was a **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* at Konchengal 16 Jul. A possible new breeding area for **Relict Gull** *Larus relictus* could be Aksor lake, Lebyazhinsky region, where two pairs were present 27 Apr while at least two juveniles were noted at lake Alakol 7 Aug.

Daurian Jackdaw *Coloeus dauuricus* is mainly a winter visitor so a sighting 31 May at Karazhar, Korgalzhyn, was notable. Also not often seen in southern areas is **Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*—one was at Sorbulak 2 Oct. A record of **Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus* at Aktogay, Ayagoz region, 9 Jun would be a first record if found acceptable. There was a

single **White-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) leucocephala* in the vicinity of Tarlauly, Ayagoz region, 7 May and an **East Siberian Wagtail** *Motacilla (alba) ocularis* at Tarlauly 30 Apr.

KUWAIT

The largest number of **Eastern Greylag Geese** *Anser anser rubrirostris* recorded for the country was the 11 at Jahra Pools reserve (JPR) 26 Nov. The group of nine **Red-crested Pochards** *Netta rufina* at JPR 29 Dec was the first record while a **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* 18 Oct at the same location was the eighth record. JPR also hosted the fifteenth sighting of **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* 22 Oct while the first record of **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* for Kuwait was at Sulaibikhat bay 31 Jul–1 Aug. **Socotra Cormorants** *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* seem to have had a good breeding year as the second highest count ever, of 21 juveniles, was made from Sabah Al Ahmad sea city 9 Jul.

The **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* at Al Abra q Al Khabari 12–15 Nov was the fifteenth record while the third–fifth records of **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* involved one at Jahra pivot fields (JPF) 18 Sep, one at Al Abra q 20 Oct and one at JPF 10 Nov (Plate 1). **Shikras** *Accipiter badius* were noted at Tulha (Sabah Al-Ahmad nature reserve, SAANR) 8 Oct (Plate 2) and at Al Abra q Al Khabari 22–29 Sep. Four



Plate 1. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, 10 November 2011, Jahra pivot fields, Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan



Plate 2. Shikra *Accipiter badius*, 8 October 2011, Tulha (Sabah Al-Ahmad nature reserve), Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan



Plate 4. Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*, 20 October 2011, Al Abra q Al Khabari, Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan



Plate 3. Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, 6 October 2011, Jahra Pools, Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan

Common Cranes *Grus grus* at SAANR 6 Dec was the ninth record.

A **Eurasian Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* at JPF and Jahra East outfall 15 Jul was the ninth record and one at JPF 4 Dec the tenth. A **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* at JPR 2–4 Jun was only the second record and the **Pectoral Sandpiper** *C. melanotos* 5–8 Oct (Plate 3) was the first record for the country.

An **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* at Jahra East outfall 3 Jun was the fifth record and a **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* at JPR 31 May the third record. 14 **Namaqua Doves** *Oena capensis* at JPF 4 Dec was a

particularly large gathering. There were two **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* at Sulaibikhat bay 25 Oct with one at Al Abra q Al Khabari 20 Oct (Plate 4). Along with several other countries there were arrivals of **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* with one at Al Abra q Al Khabari 15 Nov and one at Rawdatain bottling plant 10 Dec while a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *P. humei* at Rawdatain 3–10 Dec constitutes the fourth record. A juvenile **Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* at Jahra East outfall 22 Jul may have indicated breeding but some dispersal may have occurred to Kuwait by this date. An addition to the Kuwait list was provided by the **Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* at JPR 26 May whilst 141 **Tawny Pipits** *Anthus campestris* at JPF 27 Oct was the highest ever count for the country. Since the first in 2005 there have now been over ten records of **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* with further singles at Al Abra q Al Khabari 9 Dec–year end and at JPF 11 Dec. The **Grey-necked Bunting** *Emberiza buchanani* recorded at SAANR 16 Sep will be the third record if accepted.

LEBANON

Six **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* were at Aammqi wetland 14 Aug. Improved water levels there also led to the over summering of a **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*. The highlight of the autumn raptor migration was the sighting of two **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* south over Aley 25 Sep.

A **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* was photographed at Dalhoun 28 Aug. Finally, a male **Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer moabiticus* was well seen at Kfar Zabad 8 Oct. This is the first record for Lebanon and was perhaps long overdue, given the species' presence in all the neighbouring countries.

OMAN

The highlight was a first for the region, an adult female **Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* at Thumrait 7 Dec. In addition, the period included second records for Oman of the following species: a **Fork-tailed Swift** *Apus pacificus* at East Khawr 4 Nov, a **Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* at Sun farm, Sohar, 25–26 Dec (the first record being 47 years ago), a **Lesser Moorhen** *Gallinula angulata* at Barr al Hickman 23 Nov and a **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* at Sun farm 18–21 Nov. A **Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea* at Al Mughsayl 24–25 Nov was the third country record.

Greater White-Fronted Geese *Anser albifrons* occurred widely during November and December; in addition to more usual sightings on the farms and khawrs around Salalah, single birds were present at Sun farm, Al Ansab wetlands, Muscat and at Haima in the central desert. The maximum count was of 37 at East Khawr, Salalah, 15 Dec. **Common Shelducks** *Tadorna tadorna* occur irregularly during the winter and so a count of nine at East Khawr 13 Nov was of note. **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* is an uncommon winter visitor, mainly to the Dhofar region, and there were single birds at Al Mughsayl, East Khawr and Sahnawt farm during the first half of November. There were eight **Red-crested Pochards** *Netta rufina* at Qitbit 10 Dec. A **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* at Al Ansab wetlands 3 Dec was only the fourth record for the country and the first since 1998.

Ras Mirbat, 60 km east of Salalah, is one of Oman's most important sea watching sites. A count there on 13 Nov yielded three **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax*, one **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*, 50 **Persian Shearwaters** *Puffinus persicus*, two **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus*, five **Swinhoe's Storm Petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis*, six **Masked Boobies** *Sula dactylatra*, one **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* and 20 **Bridled Terns** *Onychoprion anaethetus*.

There were 200+ **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis* seen off Salalah 2 Nov while a pelagic trip off Muscat 5 Sep produced 20 **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax*, one **Persian Shearwater** *Puffinus persicus*, 100 **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus*, four **Swinhoe's Storm Petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis* and one **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster*. An unusually high count of eight of the latter species was recorded off Al Mughsayl 14 Nov.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* is one species to benefit from the management of Al Ansab wetlands as a nature reserve; maximum count for the period was 46 on 8 Oct. After a long absence, **Black-necked Grebes** *Podiceps nigricollis* have started to make an appearance there too, with a maximum count of seven on 3 Dec. There were three **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* at Wadi Darbat 17 Nov and five Khawr Rouri 28 Dec. The occurrence of 600 **Western White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* at Raysut 28 Nov was the highest count for some time. **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* is a much sought after species by visiting birders; single birds were at East Khawr, the best known site for the species, 4 Sep, at Ayn Hamran 6 Nov and Al Mughsayl 12 Nov. There are relatively few winter records for this species, which is usually seen Jun–Aug. There were three juvenile **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* at East Khawr 12–15 Dec, the eighth record.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* is now recognized as a rare winter visitor to Oman, especially in the Salalah area. Up to three birds were present from the end of Oct and throughout Nov variously at Khawr Taqah, Salalah nature reserve, Al Mughsayl, Raysut and East Khawr. A somewhat more unexpected record was of two birds seen and photographed at Qurum park, Muscat, 13 Nov. A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was at Ayn Tobruk 25 Sep. A **Shikra** *Accipiter badius* was at Sun farm 1 Dec. The most significant count of large eagles during the period was at Raysut 28 Nov; 900 **Steppe Eagles** *Aquila nipalensis*—a new maximum count—were present along with 10 **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* and 10 **Eastern Imperial Eagles** *Aquila heliaca*. There was a single **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* at Wadi Darbat 8 Nov, and two to

three at Al Mughsayl 11 and 12 Nov. The last sighting of **Sooty Falcon** *Falco concolor* for the year was on 6 Nov at Al Sawadi, when three birds were present.

A **Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata* at West Khawr 18–25 Nov was the seventh record. Two records of **African Swampphen** *Porphyrio madagascariensis*, one at West Khawr 22 Sep and one Qurum park mid Oct–early Dec, have prompted a re-examination of earlier records which were accepted as Purple Gallinules *Porphyrio porphyrio*, now known as Purple Swampphen. Two of these records, one at East Khawr, 1983, and one at Qurum park, 1995, are most likely African Swampphens and would therefore be the first and second records and thus this year's records would be the third and fourth records.

There were single **White-breasted Waterhens** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* at Ayn Razat 15 Nov and at Muntasar 29 Oct–3 Nov. Two **Spotted Thick-knees** *Burhinus capensis* were at Jarziz farm 17 Nov. Small numbers of **Caspian Plovers** *Charadrius asiaticus* were present at East Khawr and Sahnawt farm in the south and at Sohar Sun farm in the north, Sep–Nov, with a maximum of three at Sun farm 6–12 Sep. **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* is a rare winter visitor to Oman; there were four at Sahnawt farm 6 Nov and five 14–18 Nov. Oman is an important winter site for **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius*; there were seven at Sahnawt farm 15 Nov, rising to 29 on 25 Nov and three birds were present 26–27 Nov at Sun farm with five on 3 Dec and three on 26 Dec. There were 1–2 **Cream-coloured Coursers** *Cursorius cursor* at Sun farm 20–27 Oct and, more unusually, one at Qitbit 3 Nov. There was a **Small Pratincole** *Glareola lactea* at Khawr Taqah 25 Nov. **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* is an uncommon winter visitor to Oman with very few records in recent years and thus single birds seen at Sun farm 24 Nov and at Al Ansab wetlands during the week beginning 31 Jul and the week beginning 3 Dec are of note. Single **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos* were present at Sur sewage farm 9 Oct and 11–15 Oct at Qurum park, Muscat—the 10th and 11th records respectively. A count of 600 **Ruffs** *Philomachus pugnax* at Sahnawt farm 19 Nov was a new maximum. A **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* was seen at Sun farm 11 Oct.

Pied Cuckoo *Oxylophus jacobinus* is regarded as a rare passage migrant, but this autumn saw birds at numerous sites in the Salalah area during Nov (Dawkah, Sahnawt and Al Balid farms, Al Mughsayl, Tawi Atayr, East Khawr, Ayn Hamran, Thumrait, Raysut) and at Muntasar and nearby Qibit in the central desert. The maximum count was at Muntasar 3 Nov, when 9 were seen. The influx may be due to a period of cyclonic weather, which affected the south of the country especially. A single bird was also seen in the north at Al Ghubrah bowl 12 Dec. A **Grey-bellied Cuckoo** *Cacomantis passerinus* seen north of Duqm 28 Oct was the fourth record. An **Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopacea* was at Qitbit 26 Nov. Two **Hume's Owls** *Strix butleri* were at Al Mughsayl 14 Nov. A single **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* was seen, at Shannah 26 Oct. Liwa, on the Batinah coast, is the stronghold of **Collared Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus chloris* in Oman; there were single sightings there 5 Sep and 15–18 Nov.

A **Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* was seen at Al Ghaftayn resthouse 16 Sep. A **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* was at Dawkah farm 18–27 Sep; it was first sighted with 30 **Isabelline Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* sl, eight **Daurian Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* ss, 20 **Turkestan Shrikes** *Lanius (isabellinus) phoenicuroides*, two **Red-backed Shrikes** *Lanius collurio* and one **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* as well as 40 **Eurasian Golden Orioles** *Oriolus oriolus*, a new high count. The first sighting for the winter of **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* was of an individual 8 Nov at Qitbit; single birds were seen thereafter at Dawkah farm (10 Nov) and, unusually, in the north at Liwa (15 Nov).

Single **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* were seen at Sun farm 20 Oct and 27 Nov, relatively early occurrences since the species is generally seen Dec–Feb. A **Brown-throated Martin** *Riparia paludicola* was at the same site 20 Oct, the seventh record for Oman. Apart from Musandam, Khatmat Milahah is one of the best places in Oman for **Plain Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus neglectus* and there were three there 24 Oct and two on 18 Nov. One was also at Sun farm 3 Dec. A **Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* at

Film 26 October was the fourth record for Oman. A **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* was at Qitbit 15 Dec, while a **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus* was there 27 Oct. A **Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* was at Dawkah farm 18 Sep. There were two **Blyth's Reed Warblers** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* at Sahnawt farm 6 Nov, the fourth record for Oman. There was a Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* at Qitbit 10 Dec. A **Brahminy Starling** *Sturnia pagodarum* at Raysut 1 Nov and another at Qitbit 9–10 Nov, were the eight and ninth records for Oman. There were three **Wattled Starlings** *Creatophora cinerea* at Jarziz farm 7 Nov and a **Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* at Dawkah farm 18 Sep. A **Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* (ssp *variegata*) was seen at Sun farm 1 Dec. A **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* was at Qurm park 26 Nov with two present at Qitbit 10–15 Dec.

Sun farm is the premier site for pipits in Oman; for example a count on 5 Nov yielded four **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus (novaseelandiae) richardi*, 250+ **Tawny Pipits** *Anthus campestris*, 60 **Water Pipits** *Anthus spinoletta* and 30 **Red-throated Pipits** *Anthus cervinus*. The seventh record of **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* was seen there 26 Dec. On 27 Nov, there were 50 **Yemen Serin**

Crithagra menachensis at Tawi Atayr, equal to the record count for the species from the same site. A **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* was at al Ghaftayn 16 Nov and another at Qitbit 28 Nov. A **Pale Rockfinch** *Carpospiza brachydactyla* was at Qitbit 17 Sep. There were three **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeaks** *Rhynchostruthus percivali* at Ayn Hamran 27 Nov, an excellent record as the birds can be difficult to locate other than when male birds are singing in the spring. There were two **Black-headed Buntings** *Emberiza melanocephala* at Sun farm 5 Sep and one 12 Nov. One was seen at Dawkah farm 18 Sep and another at Qitbit 17 Nov.

QATAR

(All records are from Irkayya farm unless otherwise stated.)

12 **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* (ten juveniles and two adults), a rare winter visitor, 19 Nov–3 Dec and ten adults 25 Dec. The second record of **Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus*, an adult female, was present 2–3 Dec (Plate 5). The third record of **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*, an adult, stayed 5 Aug–2 Oct (Plate 6). Omitted from previous *Around the Region* reports was the first record for Qatar of Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, a



Plate 5. Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*, 3 December 2011, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Sameh Odeh



Plate 6. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, 3 September 2011, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Sameh Odeh



Plate 7. Eurasian Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, 23 November 2011, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Sameh Odeh

juvenile showing features of ssp *buteoides*, on 4 Dec 2009. One juvenile **Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*, a rare visitor, 6 Aug, was the fourth record. Other rare winter visitors included a single **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* 8–31 Dec and two juvenile **Eurasian**

Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricaria* 19 Nov–9 Dec (Plate 7). One adult **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*, a rare passage migrant, on 26 Nov. The first confirmed record of **Eurasian Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* was present 23–26 Nov (Plate 8).



Plate 8. Eurasian Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*, 23 November 2011, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Sameh Odeh



Plate 9. Pied Cuckoo *Oxylophus jacobinus*, 19 November 2011, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Sameh Odeh

Another first record for the country was a juvenile **Pied Cuckoo** *Oxylophus jacobinus* 18–21 Nov (Plate 9), part of the influx into Arabia this autumn. Normally a rare winter visitor, **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* were seen at Al Wakra 26 Oct (one, Plate 10) and Irkayya farm 28 Oct–31 Dec (at least five).

Egyptian Nightjars *Caprimulgus aegyptius* were seen 31 Jul and 26 Aug. An adult female **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*, a rare winter visitor, was at Abu Nakhla 21 Oct. **Bimaculated Larks** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* were seen at Irkayya farm 25 Nov and 10 Dec. A **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola*



Plate 10. Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, 26 October 2011, Al Wakra, Qatar. © Sameh Odeh



Plate 11. Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, 31 December 2011, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Ahmad Ammar Kazal

was there 31 Dec (Plate 11), the first record for Qatar.

SAUDI ARABIA

(All records are from the Eastern province. Jabal Nayriyyah is a desert site 70 km north of Jubail.)

Three adult **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* were at Sabkhat Al Fasl (SAF) 21 Jul and 4 Aug with a single juvenile there 28 Jul. An adult male **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* was seen perched and in flight

over Dhahran 30 Jul—this is a very unusual summer record. An immature was present in the trees surrounding the percolation pond at Dhahran Hills 27–28 Sep. Two juvenile **Short-toed Snake Eagles** *Circaetus gallicus* were seen perched together on a sand mound, as well in flight over Dhahran on 22 Oct. A second calendar year **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* was at SAF 21 Jul, the same bird being seen there again 18 Aug. This record indicates that some birds may spend the summer in Saudi Arabia. An immature bird was seen at SAF 15 and 29 Sep and 6 Oct. Three birds including a single adult were at the same site 27 Oct with five adults and four juveniles (first calendar year) 13 Nov and four juveniles 24 Nov. Seven birds (four juveniles and three adults) were again at the same site 1 Dec with nine there (four adults and five juveniles) 8 Dec. A juvenile **Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* was seen perched on a telegraph pole and in flight at Dhahran 22 Oct. A juvenile bird was at SAF 27 Oct with possibly the same bird there 12 Dec. Five birds (one juvenile, three subadults and one adult) were seen at or near Jabal Nayriyyah 10 Nov.



Plate 12. White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*, 29 September 2011, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



Plate 13. Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*, 29 July 2011, Dammam–Al Khobar wader roost, Tarut bay, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

A **Macqueen's Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueeni* was caught by local falconers 10 Nov in an area just south of Jubail. An immature **Little Crake** *Porzana parva* was seen in the reeds at SAF 24 Nov. Two **Crab Plovers** *Dromas ardeola* were seen at the Dammam–Al Khobar wader roost in Tarut bay 22 Jul. A juvenile was seen there begging for food from two adults 10–15 Aug. Numbers then varied on every subsequent visit until 20 Oct, with the maximum count being 20. A **White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus* was at SAF 29 Sep (Plate 12) and 6 Oct. An adult summer plumaged **Eurasian Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* was seen at Saihat mangrove high-tide wader roost in Tarut bay 29 Jul while a winter-plumaged adult was at SAF 24 Nov.

Two **Pin-tailed Snipes** *Gallinago stenura* were seen feeding in the damp vegetation at the edge of the main lagoon at SAF 15 Sep. Two further birds were seen 19 Sep at the percolation pond at Dhahran camp, Dhahran. This species is very rarely seen in Saudi Arabia, although possibly overlooked. A **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* was seen well at the edge of the percolation pond in Dhahran 22 Oct. This species is a vagrant to Saudi Arabia. This same location produced another vagrant to the country, **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta*, 4 Oct. 150 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* were seen at the Dammam–Al Khobar wader roost in Tarut bay 29 Jul (Plate 13) reducing to 125 on 4 Aug. Nine **Cream-coloured Coursers**



Plate 14. Pharaoh Eagle Owl *Bubo ascalaphus*, 10 November 2011, Jabal Nayriyyah, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

Cursorius cursor were seen at Dammam airport pools 8 Jul. A moulting adult **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* was seen on an inland pool in Dammam 4 Aug; this species is much scarcer in autumn than in spring. 173 **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* were seen at SAF 29 Sep which is an exceptionally high count for a single site.

Two **Pharaoh Eagle Owls** *Bubo ascalaphus* were seen at day break at Jabal Nayriyyah 10 Nov (Plate 14). Two **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* were found roosting at SAF 21 Jul. Although birds have been regularly seen at this site in August for the past six years, this is an early record. Singles were

seen there 11 and 18 Aug and two 25 Aug. A single was seen in flight at Dhahran Hills 10 Nov. **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* is a rare visitor to Saudi Arabia but one was present at SAF 6 Nov and what was presumably the same bird was also there 1 Dec. Three different first year **Citrine Wagtails** *Motacilla citreola* were seen feeding on insects at the percolation pond in Dhahran 5, 13 and 19 Sep. An adult was seen at SAF 24 Nov with probably the same bird also there 12 Dec.

SYRIA

One pair of **Northern Bald Ibises** *Geronticus eremita* successfully fledged two young near Palmyra this year. Three adults are now wintering in Ethiopia but the whereabouts of the young birds is unknown.

TURKEY

Spring observations omitted from the previous *Around the Region* report were 18 590 **Western White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* at Subaşı, Hatay, 25 Mar and a **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* at Milleyha, Hatay, 13 Mar with two 23 Apr. Four **Mute Swans** *Cygnus olor* at Nizip, Gaziantep, 10 Dec were of note. Autumn migration counts included 8045 **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* in the Subaşı and Samandağ area 30 Sep–10 Oct, and 364 **Levant Sparrowhawks** *Accipiter brevipes* at Belen pass 15 Sep and 646 at Subaşı 1 Oct. The recent run of **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* records continued with two

in Urfa 12 Aug and one at Subaşı 12 and 14 Dec (first record for the province). Two **Lesser Spotted Eagles** *Aquila pomarina* at Nizip 27 Nov–4 Dec was a late record. A **Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraetus fasciatus* was observed in the Amanos mountains 15 Sep and a **Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug* at Erzin 29 Oct. A **Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* was at Filyos, Zonguldak, 7 Nov.

Waders of interest included the third record of **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*, in the Kızılırmak Delta, 26 and 27 Sep (Plate 15) closely followed by the fourth record, at Kuyucuk lake, Kars, 8 Oct. A **Jack Snipe** *Limnocryptes minimus* was at Samandağ 27 Nov, while a **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* was at Milleyha 13 Aug (first record for the province) and a **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* was at Milleyha 20 Aug. An adult **Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus* at Haydarpasa railway station, Kadıköy, Istanbul, 12 Sep continued the trend of regular records of this once rare species.

A **Eurasian Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo* at Ciğdem, Ankara, 12 Sep was a notable record. The third Turkish **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* was seen and photographed at Trabzon 11 Sep. Single **Pallas's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus proregulus* at the Kızılırmak delta 23 (Plate 16) and 24 Oct and Riva, İstanbul, 2 Nov, were the second and third records. There were several records of **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* with singles at Moda, İstanbul, 22 Oct, Riva 2 Nov and six at the Kızılırmak delta



Plate 15. Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, 27 September 2011, Kızılırmak delta, Turkey. © Nizamettin Yavuz



Plate 16. Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*, 23 October 2011, Kızılırmak delta, Turkey. © Nizamettin Yavuz



Plate 17. Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*, 30 October 2011, Filyos delta, Turkey. © Mustafa Erturhan

25–27 Nov. The second Turkish record of **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* was a single in Samsun 19 Nov. Single **Common Grasshopper Warblers** *Locustella naevia* were recorded at Kırıkhan, Hatay, 3 Apr and Balık Gölü, Hatay, 28 Aug and 10 Sep. An **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* at the Filyos delta 30 Oct (Plate 17) was the second record. A **Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* was at Subaşı, 14 Mar, together with a **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cyprica*, and a **Siberian Stonechat** was also recorded at Nizip 13 Nov. A **Pale Rock Finch** *Petronia brachydactyla* was at Kırıkhan 28 May. A **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* at Nizip 10 Dec was of note. The Samandağ-Milleyha area continued to attract rare pipits with four **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus (novaseelandiae) richardi* 22 Oct and one 1 Nov and one **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* 13 Mar, three 13 Nov and two 27 Nov (third–fifth records). A **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* at Subaşı 5 Nov was exceptionally late though there are two previous mid-winter records. At least five **Cinereous Buntings** *Emberiza cineracea* at Balık Gölü 10 Sep were the first record for the province. Single **Snow Buntings** *Plectrophenax*

nivalis were recorded at Kefken, Kocaeli, 13 Nov and at Bartın 18 Nov.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

There were records of Greater White-fronted Geese *Anser albifrons* at a number of sites from 12 Nov onwards, with a maximum count of 45 birds at Wamm farms. Pelagic trips off Khor Kalba on the east coast continued to produce some excellent records. The UAE's third **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis* was seen 1 Jul (the first and second



Plate 18. Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax*, 12 August 2011, off Khor Kalba, UAE. © Tommy Pedersen



Plate 19. Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*, 24 August 2011, Wamm farms, UAE. © Tommy Pedersen

records were off the same location 12 May and 22 Jun). Another trip on 12 Aug produced a **Jouanin's Petrel** *Bulweria fallax* (Plate 18), the second record for the UAE and the first since 2004; one or two birds were then seen on each of five subsequent trips until 17 Sep, the third to seventh UAE records. With only one previous record (2010), this has been an exceptional year for **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* in the UAE, being recorded from 15 Apr onwards with a maximum of 21 being recorded 1 Jul–26 Aug. A maximum of 950 **Persian Shearwaters** *Puffinus persicus* were seen on 1 Jul, with lower numbers occurring until late Dec, some pelagic trips recording only single birds. Two **Swinhoe's Storm Petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis* were seen and photographed 12 Aug, a new species for the UAE. Up to five birds were seen on four subsequent pelagic trips until 9 Sep. **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus* were recorded 20 May–7 Oct with a maximum of 60 birds on this last date. A **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* was spotted off Fujairah 30 Oct, only the 15th record.

Up to 10 **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos tracheliotus* showed well at a camel carcass

inside the Dubai Desert conservation reserve 10–22 Nov. A **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* was present at Al Qua'a fodder field 27 Oct–7 Dec, only the fifth record of this rare harrier in the UAE since 1999 and the first since 2006. A **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* 16 Aug in the Dubai Desert conservation reserve was an unusual record.

A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* was seen in Sharjah university city 2–3 Dec. Single **Baillon's Crakes** *Porzana pusilla* were at Wadi Al Ain, one 27–29 Sep and another on 29 Oct, the 15th and 16th records.

A **Great Stone-curlew** *Esacus recurvirostris* at the Bu Al Siaief marine protected area 27 Sep was the first record for the UAE while a **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* at Al Ain water treatment plant 4–26 Nov was only the sixth record. A **Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* was present on Sila'a peninsula 9 Dec, the 17th record. Single **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos* were recorded at Mirfa water treatment plant, an adult 6–9 Oct and an immature 15–19 Nov; these were the fourth and fifth records. The fourth UAE record of **Oriental Pratincole**



Plate 20. 'Western' Black Redstart *Phoenicurus (ochruros) gibraltariensis*, 12 January 2012, Jebel Dhanna, UAE. © Khalifa Al Dhaheiri

Glareola maldivarum was at Wamm farms 24–31 Aug (Plate 19).

An adult **Mediterranean Gull** *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* on Lulu island 19 Nov was the eighth record and the first adult bird seen. Pelagic trips off Khor Kalba produced records of **Brown Noddies** *Anous stolidus* until 1 Dec, with a maximum of 19 on 6 Aug, while the fourth UAE record of **Lesser Noddy** *Anous tenuirostris* was photographed 22 Sep. This was another good year for **Sooty Terns** *Onychoprion fuscatus* with up to two birds being seen 12 Aug–14 Oct, the 10th, 11th and 12th records. Finally, a **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* on the 6 Aug pelagic trip was the 12th record.

The invasion of **Pied Cuckoos** *Clamator jacobinus* in Oman was reflected in two birds together at Wamm farms 4–6 Nov, only the third record for the UAE. An **Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* was present on Sila'a peninsula 9 Dec, the 13th record. Two **Alpine Swifts** *Apus melba* were seen over Samaya hotel in Dubai 17 Nov, only the 23rd record of this scarce swift in the UAE. The tenth record of **White-throated Kingfisher**

Halcyon smyrnensis, at Wamm farms 5–30 Nov, was the source of much delight as well as frustration as it played hide-and-seek with many a visiting birder. A lone **Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra* was with a flock of **Bimaculated Larks** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* at the Al Qua'a fodder field 9 Dec, the sixth record. An **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* in Safa park, 27–28 Oct, was the fourth record, but the biggest surprise of this autumn was an **Asian Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone paradisi* on Dalma island 27 Oct, the first for the UAE and Arabia.

A male **Eurasian Blackbird** *Turdus merula* was seen briefly on Jebel Dhanna 19 Nov, while a **Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* made a brief appearance on Sila'a peninsula 9 Dec, the 8th record. The first record of **'Western' Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus (ochruros) gibraltariensis* occurred at Jebel Dhanna 27–28 Dec and was photographed 12 Jan 2012 (Plate 20). A lone **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* was seen on Lulu island 21 Oct and was a very early record for the UAE. Maximum counts were 30 at the same location 25 Nov and 21 on Sila'a peninsula 18 Nov. A single **Buff-bellied Pipit**

Anthus (rubescens) japonicus at Emirates Palace hotel 10 Dec was the 20th UAE record and only the second for Abu Dhabi island.

UZBEKISTAN

Single **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* were recorded in the Kattasay river valley (southwestern slopes of the Chatkal range, Tashkent region) 15 May and 11 Aug. This species has been lost as a breeding species in recent years in the mountains of the Tashkent region. A flock of 900 **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* was recorded 9 Sep at Solenoe lake, Jeyran ecocenter (Bukhara region). The lake is a traditional stopping place for many migratory birds, but this year it was dry.

Other autumn migrants at the Jeyran ecocenter included **Western Ospreys** *Pandion haliaetus* (two 10 Sep and one 21 Oct, Plate 21), **Cinereous Vultures** *Aegypius monachus* (two 9 Sep and one 12 Nov), and **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* (one 21 Oct). A **Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*, a rare visitor, was recorded on migration 25 Sep in the vicinity of Khodjикent (Chatkal ridge, Tashkent region). A single **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* was recorded 2 Oct during a vehicle count along the Amu-Bukhara canal (Bukhara region).

A migratory flock of 70 **Northern Lapwings** *Vanellus vanellus* was recorded 2 Oct in the upper part of the Chirchik river valley in the foothills of the Chatkal range (Tashkent region), an unusual location for this species. **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* is a rare migrant in Uzbekistan so a single bird recorded 2 Oct at lake Khadicha (Bukhara region) was of note. Also seen on the same day at this location was a small flock of seven **Marsh Sandpipers** *Tringa stagnatilis*, a late autumn record.

A breeding pair of **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* was photographed in April in the northern part of the Jeyran ecocenter at the foot of the Kagan hills—breeding at this location had been previously suspected but this is the first confirmation (Plate 22). An unusually high number of **Asian Paradise Flycatchers** *Terpsiphone paradisi* was recorded 2 Jul in Nurata reserve (Djizzak region, Plate 23) when 17 individuals were observed during a walked count of 3 hours 50 minutes. In early October in



Plate 21. Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, 21 October 2011, Solenoe lake, Jeyran ecocenter, Uzbekistan. © Valentin Soldatov



Plate 22. Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius*, April 2011, Kagan hills, Jeyran ecocenter, Uzbekistan. © Valentin Soldatov



Plate 23. Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*, 2 July 2011, Nurata reserve, Uzbekistan. © Lidia Shinas

Tashkent, a pair of **Eurasian Collared Doves** *Streptopelia decaocto* occupied the nest of a pair of **Laughing Doves** *Spilopelia senegalensis* on a maple tree and brooded the latter's nestlings. From the second half of October, the adults continued to feed their adopted young despite heavy rains and a snowfall. The young birds finally left the nest 11 Nov although they were ready to fly as early as 5 Nov. Two nesting

pairs of **Blue-headed Redstarts** *Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus* were recorded 3 Apr in the Kattasay valley and birds were still present until 8 Nov. Breeding of these rare birds has been observed here regularly since 2003.

YEMEN

Two **Arabian Bustards** *Ardeotis arabs* were for sale in Sana'a livestock market on 26 Aug (Plate 24). Two **Hume's Owl** *Strix butleri* chicks were successfully raised at a nest in Sana village, on the outskirts of Sana'a, one of which was photographed 7 Oct. This is an unusually urban setting for this species. An **Eastern Nightingale** *Luscinia (megarhynchos) golzii* was photographed in a camera trap 13 Oct at Kharoobit in Hawf, Al Mahrah—this may be the first authenticated record of this race in Yemen.



Plate 24. Two Arabian Bustards *Ardeotis arabs* at Nuqum animal market in Sana'a, Yemen, 26 August 2011. © David Stanton

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