

- *Web site Manager*. Responsible for maintenance, updating, and facilitating the development of the OSME web site.
- *Librarian*. Responsible for maintaining OSME's small collection of reference literature, mostly difficult to obtain journals and unpublished papers and reports, and for dealing with occasional requests for information or access to the library from members.
- *Events Coordinator*. This is a new position and the postholder will be responsible for coordinating all aspects of OSME's attendance at key events, currently the Summer Meeting and the BirdFair, such as liaising with venue organisers, arranging staffing rotas etc.
- *Fund-raising Officer*. This is a new position and the postholder will be responsible for seeking core funding for the day to day operation of the Society, for the Conservation and Research Fund and for any specific projects that OSME may develop in the future.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, please contact the Chairman, Geoff Welch, at [chairman@osme.org](mailto:chairman@osme.org).

### Feeling lucky?

In order to raise funds for both the core operation of OSME and the Conservation and Research Fund, thanks to the generosity of several sponsors, especially Opticon who have donated a telescope and tripod kit, OSME is running a major raffle in 2009 with some excellent prizes and we hope that members will support us by buying tickets themselves and selling them to friends and colleagues! Unfortunately, under UK Gaming legislation, raffle tickets can only be sold in the UK so we apologise to all of our overseas members that they are unable to participate, though those with access to a UK bank account are able to buy tickets. A book of tickets is enclosed with this copy of *Sandgrouse* (UK addresses only) and extra books can be obtained from Chris Lamsdell, 4 Hardings Close, Iver, Bucks SL0 0HL, UK.

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## NEWS & INFORMATION

*Dawn Balmer (compiler)*

### ARMENIA

#### Atypical cranes discovered

In May 2008, Russian ornithologist VY Ilyashenko visited a small colony of Common Cranes *Grus grus* in southwestern Armenia, near the border with Turkey and Georgia. He discovered these cranes had clear morphological differences from typical Common Crane. The main differences are a white spot behind the eye and lack of red 'crown'. The taxonomic status of these cranes is currently being assessed. A female was ringed with a white plastic ring with black number 210 on the right leg and standard metal ring A223099 on the left leg. Birdwatchers are asked to look carefully at migrating and wintering Common Cranes in the Middle East for colour-rings. Records of nesting or wintering cranes from Turkey, Iran, Georgia and

Armenia are sought and details should be sent to Valentin Ilyashenko at [ilyashenko@savingcranes.org](mailto:ilyashenko@savingcranes.org).

### EGYPT

#### Wind farm proposals in the migration bottleneck of Zait bay

Plans for a huge wind farm with 3000 MW output in the area of Zait bay, on the west side of the southernmost gulf of Suez, have been amended following a feasibility study that indicated heavy migration of soaring birds in both autumn and spring. The German Development Bank (KfW) commissioned the study which recorded 145 000 soaring birds in the autumn and 179 000 in the spring. An unexpectedly large percentage of birds were observed flying at or below 200 m or even resting on the ground. An alternative propos-

al was put forward whereby construction would be limited to the least critically sensitive areas in the north of the area. The German Development Bank adopted the alternative plan and the Egyptian authorities agreed to the new plan. The KfW is now in control of the situation and searching for a viable alternative site. (Contributed by Dr Gudrun Hilgerloh)

## KAZAKHSTAN

### World Heritage Site designated in Kazakhstan

Two of Central Asia's most important steppe-wetland Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Tengiz-Korgalzhyn and Naurzum have been recognised as a World Heritage Site. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee announced in July 2008 that they were to include the territory of "Saryaka—Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan" into the list of UNESCO natural World Heritage Sites. The Tengiz-Korgalzhyn and Naurzum nature reserves, the two sites forming Saryaka, are located in the steppe zone of Kazakhstan and are two of the most important IBAs in Central Asia. Both are crucial migration stop-over sites for several million birds each year on the African-Eurasian flyway. They also hold large breeding populations of many globally threatened species. Naurzum is particularly important for Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (Vulnerable), Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (Endangered) and the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*. The Tengiz-Korgalzhyn is used by an estimated 2 million waterbirds during migration, and is also a key site for global breeding populations of Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* (Vulnerable), Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* (Near Threatened) and Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* (Critically Endangered). (Source: BirdLife International)

### Significant funding obtained for Steppe conservation

At the end of October 2008, the GEF Council approved a 24 million US\$ project (with 2.2 million US\$ GEF funding) on steppe conservation and management in Kazakhstan. This project is part of the Altyn Dala initiative and

will not only create a number of large new Protected Areas in the steppe zone of Kazakhstan, most of which are IBAs, but also improve the management of existing sites and develop and apply concepts for a "landscape level management approach" outside the Protected Areas network. Large parts of this project will be implemented by ACBK, under contract from UNDP. (Contributed by Michael Brombacher, ACBK/RSPB)

### First Annual ACBK Student Nature Conservation Club Network Conference, Karaganda, 22–24 November 2008

This event brought together more than forty students and advisers from ACBK's seven Nature Conservation Clubs and key staff from ACBK (Plate 1). The conference covered three main areas: the development of Clubs over the past two years; the implementation of four GEF Small Grant projects on the "Conservation of pilot Important Bird Areas (IBAs) by specially trained students and local communities"; and participation by students in ACBK and other scientific projects. Since April 2007 ACBK has established Clubs in universities and other institutes of higher education throughout Kazakhstan and these now have more than 130 members. Clubs are provided with up to date literature, optical and field equipment and there is an ongoing programme of training courses and field camps to increase the students' capacity for carrying out routine systematic monitoring and awareness-raising of their local IBAs. This first conference highlighted the importance of



Plate 1. ACBK Students' conference participants. © Zhana Aksartova/ACBK

this initiative for the future conservation of biodiversity in Kazakhstan and its organisation was supported by the Van Tienhoven Foundation and RSPB. (Contributed by Edith Mayer & Geoff Welch)

## LEBANON

### Report on Climate Change

The Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon in partnership with Indyact has developed a project funded by the British Embassy. The aim of the project was to develop a preliminary scientific report highlighting the expected impact of climate change on biodiversity in Lebanon, and identifying indicator species for monitoring. The report 'Effect of Climate Change on Biodiversity in Lebanon' can be downloaded from [www.spnlb.org/publications.php](http://www.spnlb.org/publications.php).

## ISRAEL

### International Spring Migration Festival

The 3rd International Spring Migration Festival will be held in Eilat from 23–30 March, 2009, which is the peak week of Israel's spring migration. For more information about the festival, please check the website: [www.eilatbirdsfestival.com](http://www.eilatbirdsfestival.com).

## IRAN

### Guide to Birds of Iran updated

The second edition of the book *Guide to the birds of Iran* prepared by Dr Jamshid Mansoori has been published. The new edition is fully revised with corrections to species status and distributions incorporated, species list re-ordered, new species added (new total 514), new photos and the book is lighter and smaller than the first edition.

## JORDAN

### Visiting Aqaba Bird Observatory

For those who are interested in getting more information regarding the Aqaba Bird Observatory, you can refer to the Jordan Society for Sustainable Development's website, [www.jssd-jo.org](http://www.jssd-jo.org), or you can email [Aqaba@jssd-jo.org](mailto:Aqaba@jssd-jo.org), [info@jssd-jo.org](mailto:info@jssd-jo.org) or

[Salam@jssd-jo.org](mailto:Salam@jssd-jo.org) regarding securing permits to visit the observatory. JSSD has an official agreement with all parties in Aqaba to facilitate entrance procedures for visitors.

## SOCOTRA (YEMEN)

### World Heritage Site

The Socotra archipelago was recently added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Natural Sites. Many international organisations including BirdLife have long campaigned for the Socotra Conservation and Development Programme's submission for this prestigious designation. This designation is a culmination of the process which began when Socotra was declared a UNESCO Man and Biosphere reserve in 2003. Socotra is of universal importance because of its rich and distinct flora and fauna and high level of endemism. 37% of Socotra's 825 plant species, 90% of its reptile species and 95% of its land snail species do not occur anywhere else in the world. The site also supports globally significant populations of land and sea birds (192 bird species, 44 of which breed on the islands while 85 are regular migrants), including a number of threatened species. (Source: Birdlife International)

## SYRIA

### Website of Palmyra Society for the Protection of Environment and Wildlife operational

Palmyra is famous for its magnificent Roman ruins but the area also has some of the best birding in the Middle East; huge numbers of migrants pass through each season and accessible highlights include the relict colony of Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* and Talila, Syria's first nature reserve. However, as roads improve and the human population expands into the desert, there is intense pressure on the local wildlife, with increasing grazing, hunting and water abstraction all degrading the environment. As a result, concerned Palmyrians formed Syria's first local conservation society, the *Palmyra Society for the Protection of Environment and Wildlife*, in autumn 2006. It has wide-ranging objectives including making local people more aware of

the environment and involving them in conservation activities. Its website, [www.palmyrasociety.org](http://www.palmyrasociety.org), has just been set up with support from an OSME grant; its aims are to raise international interest in the area and to develop ecotourism. Anyone visiting Syria should find information useful for their trip; it is hoped to develop a gallery of photos of local birds and a database of records from the area. Local conservationists, trained during the Bald Ibis project, can be contacted via the Palmyra Society website; they will assist visitors to see the charismatic birds of the area such as Northern Bald Ibis, Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*, Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* and 12 species of lark including Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*. Visitors can meet Haian Dukhan, secretary of the Society, at the Palmyra Tourist Office.

### Birds of Syria Arabic field guide published

The first bird book for Syria was launched on 28 January 2009 (Plates 2 & 3). Written in Arabic, it has been jointly produced by the Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife (SSCW) and BirdLife International. The guide covers a total of 393 species including Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus* (Vulnerable), the Critically Endangered Sociable Lapwing and Northern Bald Ibis. This important publication will be used to encourage an interest in birds in Syria and provide a reference work for those engaged in surveys and wildlife conservation programmes.

“The release of the ‘Birds of Syria’ field guide gives a significant rise in hopes to pro-

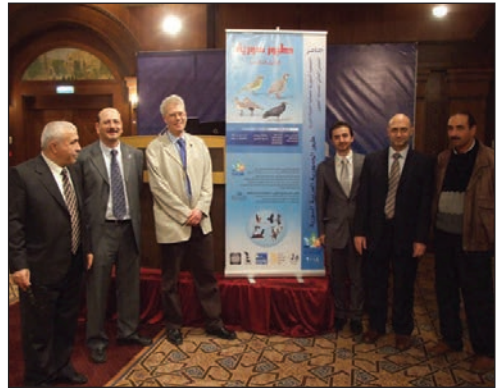


Plate 3. Launch of the Birds of Syria, January 2009.

tect threatened birds in the country, and gives opportunity for the growing conservation efforts in Syria.” Dr Akram Darwish (Vice Chair of SSCW).

“This is the first comprehensive fully illustrated field guide to birds of Syria that is published in local language as a critical conservation tool for conservation in Syria and the whole of Arabia.” Ibrahim Khader (Regional Director of Middle East secretariat, BirdLife International).

The book was funded by the RSPB (BirdLife International Partner in the UK), OSME, the SGP (Small Grant Program) in Syria, Avifauna-Sweden, the World Bank and the John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation.

### Captive breeding proposed for Palmyra’s Northern Bald Ibises

A workshop on the conservation of the Critically Endangered Northern Bald Ibis has concluded that the Palmyra birds should be supplemented with juveniles taken from the expanding semi-wild population at Birecik, Turkey. The meeting was held in September 2008 in Palmyra, Syria, near the site where a relict population of the bird was discovered in 2002. The workshop was organised by the Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife, Syrian Ministry for Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and the General Commission for the Management and Development of al-Badia, with participation and funding from BirdLife International’s Middle East Secretariat, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, BirdLife in the



Plate 2. The newly published Arabic language field guide, Birds of Syria.

UK), and Germany's Hanns Seidel Foundation.

The proposed captive Northern Bald Ibis aviary will be established within the Talila Wildlife Reserve, part of the al-Badia desertic steppe rangelands east of Palmyra, managed by the Syrian government and funded by UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation and others to restore the species to ecological health. The aim of the workshop was to identify the main problems affecting the Bald Ibis breeding colony, to propose practical solutions to these problems, and, develop and endorse a national Action Plan for Northern Bald Ibis conservation. Chris Bowden of the RSPB explained that captive breeding was a last resort, as there is no guarantee of success following a total breeding failure at the colony in the past year. "If fewer than two pairs attempt to breed next year, we will hit the emergency button. The Birecik birds are genetically similar, and so are the obvious source for supplementation".

Juvenile birds would be taken from Birecik to form a captive breeding colony, using adapted compounds that were previously used for captive breeding of Arabian Oryx. The project will draw on expertise from around the world, including Doga Dernegi (BirdLife in Turkey), and the Konrad Lorenz Forschungsstelle in Grünau, Austria, where a semi-wild colony has been established. The Syrian government, local Bedouins, former hunters and others are firmly committed to the survival of the Palmyra colony. (Source: BirdLife International)

### **Developments at Sabkhat al-Jabbul**

Sabkhat al-Jabbul is the most important wetland in Syria and its only Ramsar site, of great importance for its birds at all times of the year. Breeding species include Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*, Iraq Babbler *Turdoides altirostris* and White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, tens of thousands of duck winter and vast numbers of waders pass through on migration. Though it is nominally protected, there is still heavy pressure from hunting and the possible construction of a chemical works on its north side might cause disastrous pollution. Much of the Sabkhat is inaccessible and there are very few data from many areas; but in 2008 surveyors from the Royal Society for

the Conservation of Nature in Jordan have been carrying out monthly counts that will provide essential baseline data. The Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife plans to open the first ecotourism lodge in Syria in 2009, in Jabbul village right on the edge of the wetland. This important development will act as a focus for study and conservation of the site and allow birders to link up with ecoguides from the town of Jabbul. Visitors will support the development of ecotourism in Syria; contact details will soon be available.

## **TURKEY**

### **Poison blamed for deaths of Northern Bald Ibises**

Three Critically Endangered Northern Bald Ibises were found poisoned in October 2008 in a remote Jordanian desert, hundreds of kilometres from their breeding grounds in Turkey. The three birds were being tracked by satellite after leaving Birecik, south-eastern Turkey, where one of only four colonies of Bald Ibis remains. The birds were found 32 km from the Jordanian capital, Amman. Autopsies have ruled out electrocution and shooting. Scientists are investigating the source of the poison and believe it may have been laid by chicken farmers in order to kill rodents. "The deaths are heartbreaking but they may not have died in vain. They came from a semi-captive population and the fact that they left the colony proves they haven't lost their migratory instincts", said Jose Tavares, the RSPB's (BirdLife in the UK) Country Programme Officer for Turkey. "The birds flew via Palmyra in Syria, where a tiny colony hangs on, which means birds we release from Turkey next year could join the group in Syria."

RSCN and BirdLife in the Middle East are cooperating with specialist labs in Jordan to identify the poison. Based on the results, they will take this up with the Ministries of the Environment and Agriculture to try and control use of this poison. Sharif Al Jbour of BirdLife in the Middle East, who found the dead birds, said: "We know where the adults go but it's crucial we follow the young birds' migration route so that we can protect them in winter and help them return to Turkey and Syria to breed." To solve the riddle, more

Turkish birds will be tagged next year by Czech expert Lubomir Peske. These birds will be followed to see if they join and boost the numbers of the tiny colony in Palmyra. The tracking project has boosted hopes for the Northern Bald Ibis in the Middle East with conservationists now more optimistic that they can re-establish a completely wild population in Turkey. (Source: BirdLife International)

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

### New website

UAE birding has a new website, [www.uaebirding.com](http://www.uaebirding.com), and includes an interactive discussion-forum, a news page with RSS feed and a new photo section. (Contributed by Tommy Pedersen)

### Migratory birds of prey to be protected

New measures to protect over 70 species of migratory raptors from threats such as habitat loss and degradation, persecution, accidental killing, and climate change were agreed in Abu Dhabi in October 2008 at a meeting organised by the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi under the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species. This was the second of two meetings, the first was in October 2007 (see *Sandgrouse* 30 (1): 10). Following a joint initiative by the governments of the United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom, a Memorandum of Understanding has been concluded that will coordinate the protection of migratory birds of prey and owls found in Europe, Africa and Asia. The new measures will ensure that signatories focus particular conservation efforts on critical 'bottleneck' sites, including those identified as Important Bird Areas by BirdLife, where large numbers of raptors concentrate while on migration from breeding grounds in the north to wintering ones in the south. Furthermore, signatory countries will investigate and attempt to solve problems likely to be caused by human activities, and assist the recovery and re-introduction of bird populations where they have declined. (Source: BirdLife International)

### Sooty Falcon tracked to Madagascar

A Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* has been tracked from the UAE to its wintering areas in Madagascar by the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi (EAD). This is the first satellite tracking of Sooty Falcon anywhere in the world. EAD fitted the Sooty Falcon with a satellite transmitter at its nest on islands in the Sila peninsula, Abu Dhabi emirate. The bird departed the UAE in October and was recorded flying over Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique before crossing into Madagascar, its final destination for the winter, a journey of 6700 km. Sooty Falcon has recently been upgraded to Near Threatened owing to concerns that its population may be much smaller than previously thought, and in decline. A recent EAD breeding survey revealed a fall of 64% since 1994. They reported that the species had disappeared from several former nesting locations, and only six known breeding pairs remain. EAD scientists believe that the loss may be a result of disturbance from development and human presence during the nesting season. The UAE Sooty Falcon population is now critically close to extinction and requires immediate conservation action. BirdLife believes this monitoring will provide useful information to help conserve this species. (Source: BirdLife International)

## OTHER NEWS

### Zoology in the Middle East

Three recent issues of this excellent journal have included features on birds. Volume 43 has a paper on the status of Great Bustard *Otis tarda* in Kurdistan Province, Iran, based on data from 1975–2005. In 2005, only 10 Great Bustards were recorded in the whole province. The authors concluded that without effective conservation measures, it seems inevitable that the species will become extinct in the province, and perhaps the whole of Iran. Another paper analyses feeding specialization of urban Long-eared Owls *Asio otus* in Jerusalem, Israel. 13 species of bird were the most common prey group with House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* and Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* being the most frequent prey species. Another paper reports on the feeding ecology and behaviour of Northern Bald

Ibises in Syria. Taking data from four breeding seasons, 2002–2004 and 2006, the home range used by the birds was estimated to be up to c450 km<sup>2</sup>. In particular, the ibises were found to feed on larvae of Eastern Spadefoot Toads, together with ground beetles and grasshoppers. A ground mantis and an isopod, as well as lizards, may possibly be important components of the diet.

Volume 44 includes a paper on the breeding status of the Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* on Jarnein island in Abu Dhabi emirate. In March 2007, extensive searches and mapping of tropicbird nests were carried out and 217 nests were recorded. Nearly 40% were with grown-up chicks while nearly 28% had adult birds, either incubating or tending downy chicks. Another paper discusses food diversity and niche-overlap of sympatric tits in the Hyrcanian plain forests in Iran. Gizzard contents of 241 specimens of Great Parus *Parus major*, Blue Cyanistes *Cyanistes caeruleus* and Coal Tits *Periparus ater* were collected so that the percentages of grit, plants and animal materials could be estimated and the plant and invertebrate species consumed identified. The re-introduction of the Ostrich *Struthio camelus* in Mahazat as-Sayd Protected Area in central Saudi Arabia is also reported. As the *syriacus* race became extinct in the wild during the mid-20th century, the most closely related subspecies, *camelus*, was chosen for the re-introduction. In 1988/9 a few individuals were obtained from Sudan from a private collection, and, in 1994, a few birds were translocated into a 25 ha fenced enclosure. The estimated population in Mahazat as-Sayd is now between 125 and 150 individuals.

Volume 45 includes details of the first survey of Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii* colonies at Kleidhes islands, Cyprus. Breeding numbers were assessed during spring 2007. The colony on Kasteletta was small, holding six nests, and was abandoned early probably because of the presence of a much larger Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* colony. The colony on Zinaritou had 43 nests and a high breeding success. Another paper reviews year-to-year variation in clutch size and breeding success of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* at lake Poyrazlar in north-west Turkey between 2002–2005. Further details of *Zoology in the Middle East* are at

[verlag.de](http://verlag.de). Copies are also available from OSME Sales. (Contributed by Keith Betton)

## The Phoenix

The latest issue (number 25, January 2009) runs to 24 pages and includes articles on a wide variety of topics. Suspicions that Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* is breeding in northern Oman are discussed following observations around Jebel al Akhdar in 2008. There is an update on the reintroduction of Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii* to Abu Dhabi and also a Sooty Falcon survey in Oman in 2008. Accidental electrocutions of birds in Saudi Arabia are summarised as well. An interesting assessment is made of the final history of the last Arabian Ostrich with a review of some questionable records. As always there is an update on the Arabian Breeding Bird Atlas, and there are reviews of various publications on the region and short notes on interesting sightings, including breeding of Spanish Sparrows *Passer hispaniolensis* in Bahrain.

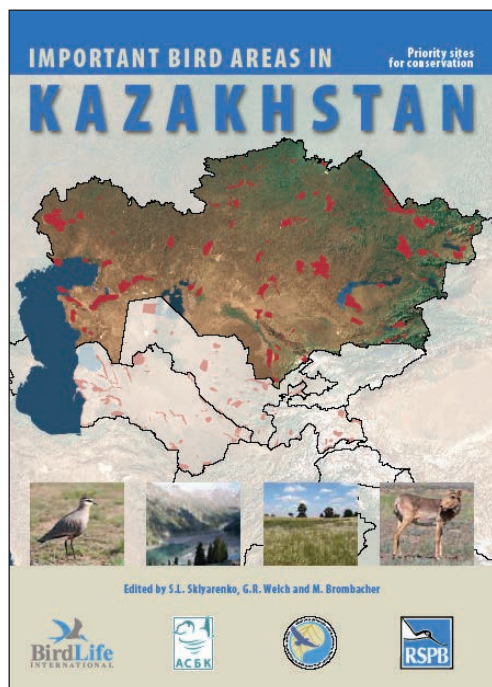
One issue of Phoenix is published each year. The subscription costs £25 for five issues and should be payable to ABBA/Phoenix at the following address: M C Jennings, Warners Farm House, Warners Drove, Somersham, Cambridgeshire PE28 3WD, United Kingdom. (Contributed by Keith Betton)

## Wildlife Middle East—new issue

The latest issue of *Wildlife Middle East* was published in June 2008 and can be downloaded from [www.wmenews.com](http://www.wmenews.com). The editors are keen to encourage contributions from the Middle East, particularly Iran, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Turkey, Palestine, Kuwait, Iraq and Oman, for future issues. Please contact the editors with any ideas that you may have ([editors@wmenews.com](mailto:editors@wmenews.com)).

## Central Asia Important Bird Area inventories published

After three years of intensive research, fieldwork, data collation and analysis, the first national IBA inventories for Kazakhstan (Plate 4), Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were launched at BirdLife International's Global Partnership Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in September 2008 (Plate 5). Together the inventories, published in both



**Plate 4.** The first national IBA inventory for Kazakhstan, *Important Bird Areas in Kazakhstan*.



**Plate 5.** Central Asia IBA inventories launch in Argentina, September 2008. From left to right, Vitaliy Gromov (Director ACBK), Mike Rands (Director and Chief Executive, BirdLife International), Eldar Rustamov (IBA Coordinator, Turkmenistan), Sergey Sklyarenko (IBA Coordinator, Kazakhstan) and Roman Kashkarov (IBA Coordinator, Uzbekistan). © Michael Brombacher

English and Russian, document 219 sites of international importance: 121 in Kazakhstan, 48 in Uzbekistan and 50 in Turkmenistan. Publication of these inventories has filled an important gap in BirdLife's global network of IBAs. As well as providing information on the conservation importance of the sites, the inventories provide a valuable tool for plan-

ning long term protection of the rich biodiversity of the region. Copies of the inventories are available from the Natural History Book Service, [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com). (Contributed by Geoff Welch)

### The Phoenix: broader scope

With the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia (<http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/arabian.birds>) effectively completed, the scope of Phoenix is to be broadened to accommodate papers on, for example, migration, notes on winter visitors or other non breeding groups, conservation or wider issues relevant to Arabian ornithology. News on breeding birds and their habitats is still welcomed. Contributions should be sent to the editor, Mike Jennings, at [ArabianBirds@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:ArabianBirds@dsl.pipex.com).

### Welcome AviCA

The worldwide database for bird observations, [www.worldbirds.org](http://www.worldbirds.org), developed by BirdLife International and the RSPB, has recently been extended to include Central Asia. It is now possible to collect and analyse observations on frequency, distribution and the migration of birds and to look at long-term changes at the national, regional and international scale. AviCA can be accessed centrally via [www.worldbirds.org/centralasia](http://www.worldbirds.org/centralasia) or separately for each country:

[www.avica.uz](http://www.avica.uz) (Uzbekistan)

[www.avi-ca.org](http://www.avi-ca.org) (Turkmenistan)

[www.worldbirds.org/v3/centralasia.php?c=1](http://www.worldbirds.org/v3/centralasia.php?c=1)  
(Kazakhstan, soon [www.avica.kz](http://www.avica.kz))

[www.worldbirds.org/v3/centralasia.php?c=2](http://www.worldbirds.org/v3/centralasia.php?c=2)  
(Kyrgyzstan)

[www.worldbirds.org/v3/centralasia.php?c=3](http://www.worldbirds.org/v3/centralasia.php?c=3)  
(Tajikistan).

The AviCA database currently contains 241 species that have been observed during 68 expeditions in Central Asia and has 42 registered users who have reported 1160 observations. So if you have observations from Central Asia, don't leave them languishing in your notebook, sign up, log on and make a valuable contribution to nature conservation. (Contributed by Anna Ten & Jens Wunderlich, Uzbekistan IBA Project)