

Editorial: expansion of *Sandgrouse's* area of interest

In April 1978 it was announced that the Ornithological Society of Turkey was enlarging the scope of its activities to cover what is loosely called the Middle East and, in consequence, was changing its name to the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, OSME. The first issue of *Sandgrouse* was published in 1980. The decision to expand the OSME region further to include the Caucasus and Central Asia (the now-independent former states of the Soviet Union east of the Caspian sea) was made in 2001. With increasing ornithological interest in, and accessibility to, countries bordering the OSME region, OSME Council has recently discussed expanding *Sandgrouse's* current remit to include certain countries and areas close to the OSME region.

In future, the editor of *Sandgrouse* will also give careful thought to the publication of manuscripts that concern three further areas. The OSME region (see inside back cover) includes Egypt, its only part of the Sahara and the largest desert on Earth. The Sahara has many similarities both faunal and topographic to the deserts of the Arabian peninsula. *Sandgrouse's* area of interest will now also include the eastern half of Libya and arid and semi-arid Sudan (the country, not the phytogeographical region).

The OSME region contains lands that border the Red sea and gulf of Aden. As well as the Sudanese Red sea region, both land and sea, *Sandgrouse* will now also accept material on Eritrea, Djibouti, the 'Republic of Somaliland' and the 'Puntland State of Somalia'. The Yemeni archipelago of Socotra (OSME region) completes the 'encirclement'. I'm sure *Sandgrouse's* readers will appreciate fuller consideration of these Afro-Arabian regions.

The third new area is again a straightforward inclusion. The OSME region ends in the east along the eastern borders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan and Afghanistan and yet the mountains, high plateaus, forests and deserts continue eastwards. *Sandgrouse's* area of interest will now also include the geographical regions of Kashmir, Tibet and Sinkiang plus the western half of the state of Mongolia. 'Advice for Authors' on the inside back cover has been amended accordingly. Other OSME functions (www.osme.org) will still solely be concerned with the OSME region. The features 'News & Information' and 'Around the Region' will also only contain material about the OSME region.

These additional areas and countries can all be considered part of the greater Middle East (Culcasi 2010) or of central Asia proper (Cowan 2007) and indeed in the past *Sandgrouse* has had a wider coverage. As recently as 2005, 'Guidelines for Authors' stated that *Sandgrouse's* area of interest included Libya and east to the Palearctic fringes of Pakistan and south to Palearctic limits in Sudan and Ethiopia. A paper on changes in the status and distribution of birds in Libya was published in 2005 (Gaskell 2005). I look forward to



receiving manuscripts concerning the 'new territories'. Avifaunal lists and ornithological observations made in *eg* the Omdurman, Berbera, Leh, Kashgar and Urumqi areas or the Qaidam basin or the southern Altay Gobi nature reserve could well be of interest to *Sandgrouse* readers. Observations of interactions between Brown-necked Ravens *Corvus ruficollis* and Northern Ravens *C. corax* in the uplands of the Benghazi region, studies or observations of possible ecological or genetic replacement taxa *eg* the Kordofan Lark *Mirafra cordofanica*, Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak *Rhynchostruthus (socotranus) louisae* and Xinjiang Ground Jay *Podoces biddulphi* are a few of many possibilities as well as descriptions of birding sites and photospots. Review articles are welcome. The addition of a new outlet in the literature should help to ensure that interesting information concerning these three further areas does not disappear but rather is formally published.

REFERENCES

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PETER COWAN

The OSME region

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