

First confirmed breeding record of Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* for Lebanon, 2009

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The first documented record of Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* in Lebanon was in 1875 by Van Dyck (Kumerloeve 1962). It is considered a common species in Lebanon during spring migration, but scarce in summer and autumn (Ramadan-Jaradi *et al* 2008). Its breeding has been confirmed in the nearby countries of Cyprus, Israel, Turkey and Syria (Huë & Echecopar 1970, Porter *et al* 1996, Kirwan *et al* 2008, Murdoch & Betton 2008) but it has not been recorded breeding in Lebanon (Ramadan-Jaradi *et al* 2008).

In Lebanon, Little Ringed Plovers can be seen in many coastal locations, particularly where there are shallow ponds or salt-pans but it can also be seen on migration at inland sites including Aammiq, Tel el Akhdar and Qaraoun lake. Also, a male was seen in display flight at Cheikh Zennad, April 2007 (Richard Prior pers comm).

On 23 June 2009 while checking salt ponds in the region of Enfeh, north Lebanon, I saw a chick running along the shore of one of the ponds. As I came closer the chick sat still, allowing me to take several mobile-phone photos (Plate 1). At the same time, two adults were flying around and were very vocal, with one of them being only 3 m away from me. Its yellow eye ring and lack of white wing bar allowed confirmation of identity as Little Ringed Plover. The area is located to the north of the town of Enfeh, and consists of several salt ponds surrounded by fallow land and colonized by riparian shrub species. Insects, mainly mosquitoes, flourish in the area, especially in the muddier parts of the ponds where the chick was seen.

At Enfeh salt ponds the following day, two adults were seen and were initially relatively quiet, until one of the birds started using the broken-wing display 20 m away from the observers. Several further visits followed but chicks were not found. Fresh tracks and droppings from dogs and goats were seen in the area. The chick had perhaps died due to these animals.

Several areas in Lebanon show great potential as possible breeding sites for the Little Ringed Plover. More observations are required to ascertain the actual status of this species in Lebanon.



Plate 1. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* chick, Enfeh, north Lebanon, 23 June 2009. © Shadi Indary

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