

FROM THE RARITIES COMMITTEES

Ian Harrison & Peter Cowan

Sandgrouse's Around the Region feature declares that its records are published for interest only and that their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. The intention of this new feature 'From the Rarities Committees' is to publish the results of the assessment of rarity records by the rarity/record committees that operate in the OSME region.

The chairman or secretary of a country's records committee will produce a list of rarity records accepted by the committee after publication of the preceding issue of *Sandgrouse*. This listing should be accompanied by representative photos of those rarities if photos exist and are of reasonable quality. Some rarities committees already publish their decisions online—these include Egypt (www.chn-france.org/eorc/), Israel (www.israbirding.com/irdc), Oman (www.birdsoman.com) and the United Arab Emirates (www.uaebirding.com). Despite this online accessibility, we feel that it is still useful to have the news published in *Sandgrouse* thus bringing together all decisions in one feature—which will start in the next issue, *Sandgrouse* 35 1. IH will communicate with record/rarity committees by email, compile and write-up the outcome.

It is hoped that 'From the Rarities Committees' will give country rarity committees a greater prominence and we will publish their contact details and names of members. It should be noted, however, that rarities committees can only function properly and can only keep their country databases and lists up to date if observers submit information promptly on the rare birds that they see. Unlike in Around the Region, the names of finders and initial describers/identifiers of rarities will be published.

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visiting scientists and enthusiasts.

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