

FROM THE RARITIES COMMITTEES

Ian Harrison (compiler)

Observers who have had a country first record accepted by a rarities committee are encouraged to write it up as a note or paper for publication.

CYPRUS

BirdLife Cyprus Rarities Committee members: Colin Richardson (chair), Melis Charalambides, Stavros Christodoulides, Jeff Gordon, Hugh Buck, Nigel Cottle. A full list of Cyprus birds requiring rarity descriptions and rare bird report forms are available from Colin Richardson at richar@cytanet.com.cy to whom claims should be sent. The committee has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 36(1).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*. One drake Fresh Water lake south 9–13 March 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). Sixth record.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*. Three Bishop's pool 10 December 2013 (Peter Chambers, Alan Turtle). Ninth record since 2000.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*. One Oroklini marsh 10 October–23 November 2013 (Chris Stavrou). 23rd record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. 11 cape Kiti 22 March 2013 (Johannes Honold). Largest group on record.

Laughing Dove *Stigmatopelia senegalensis*. One Mia Milia WTP 19 October 2013 (Nick Pegler). Some escapes occur but this was assessed as wild and accepted as the fifth record.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*. One Limassol port road 24–26 March 2014 (Colin Richardson). 24th record.

Southern (Arabian) Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis aucheri*. One Mandria 16–18 March 2014 (Alan Crane). Third record.

Southern (Saharan) Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis elegans*. One Akrotiri gravel pits 10 April 2014 (Colin Richardson). Sixth record.

Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris*. One Rizokarpaso 21 March 2014 (Nick Pegler). Tenth record.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*. One cape Greco 23 March 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). A very rare discovery of a wandering individual from the mainland of the non-endemic race.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One ringed Polis reed-beds 23 October 2013 (Alan Crabtree, Mel Preston) and one Mandria 25 October 2013 (Colin Richardson). 12th and 13th records.

Mountain Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus sindianus lorenzii*. One ringed Kouklia 2 April 2013 (Chris & Denise Lamsdell). Second record.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*. One Agia Napa sewage works 23 March 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). Tenth record since first recognised in Cyprus in the 1970s. The *variegatus* type is more often recorded.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*. One Akhna dam 20 September 2013 (Mark Easterbrook). 23rd record since the 1990s.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*. One Marathounta hills 15 January 2013 (Colin Richardson). 11th record.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus*. One Larnaca sewage works 12 March 2013 (Johannes Honold). First record. This accepted claim precedes the previous first record mentioned in *Sandgrouse* 36(1) which now becomes the second record and which involved different birds at the same location.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. 20 Troodos 12–13 February 2014 (Mark Easterbrook). 12th record since the 1990s.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*. One Troodos 22 February 2013 (Mattias Bull). Sixth record.

EGYPT

The Egyptian Ornithological Rarities Committee comprises Sherif Baha El Din (chair), Frédéric Jiguet (secretary), Wed Abdel Latif Ibrahim, Richard Bonser, Andrea Corso, Pierre André Crochet, Andrew Grieve, Richard Hoath and Manuel

Schweizer. Official external advisers are Istvan Moldovan, Ahmed Riad and Mary Megalli. Claims should be sent to eorc.secretary@gmail.com. See also www.chn-france.org/eorc/eorc.php?id_content=1 where claim forms can be downloaded. Since the last report, in *Sandgrouse* 35(1), 39 records were considered, 27 of which have been accepted and 12 considered as not proven. The updated checklist of the Birds of Egypt now includes 453 species: 436 in category A (including seven observed only in the Halaib Triangle), 11 in category B and six in category C. EORC's third report was published online (www.chn-france.org/upload_content/eorc_report_9.pdf) March 2014 and the following is a summary.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*. One Abassa fish ponds, 5 May 2012 (Phil Abbott *et al*). Second record.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*. One adult or near-adult, Zaraniq, North Sinai, 17 September 1980 (Uffe Gjøl Sørensen, Ib Krag Petersen). First record.

Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi*. Nine individuals Ras Matarma, Red sea, 15 July 2012 (Mohamed Ibrahim Habib). Second record. Breeding colony of 20–25 pairs discovered there 25 July 2013 (Mohamed Ibrahim Habib, Pierre André Crochet, Richard Bonser *et al*)

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*. Two birds Abu Simbel 3 April 2012 (Richard Bonser, Josh Jones *et al*). One individual there 1 August 2013 (Fred Vanhove, Raphael Lebrun). The discovery of two singing individuals in Abu Simbel village December 2010 was the first record of this species for Egypt and the Western Palearctic. These birds were present at the site throughout 2012, with a single individual remaining into 2013.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*. A flock of at least 25 individuals near Sandafa in Mniya governorate 21 March 2012 was seen by a group of observers. Since then, the presence of the species has been confirmed by numerous observers and photographs, with 61 individuals on 3 February 2013 (Samuel Progin *et al*). These sightings confirm the survival of the species in Egypt where it was believed to be extinct until recently. It is important to look for the species in other areas where it was historically known (Fayoum depression–Qena).

Daurian Shrike *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*.

Details of accepted *isabellinus* records: female Shams Alam, Marsa Alam, 15–17 March 2008 and a male there 17 March 2008 (Olof Jönsson). Two males Hamata, 17 March 2008 (Olof Jönsson). Female photographed Shams Alam, Marsa Alam, 30 April 2008 (Kari Haataja). Two males Marsa Alam, 13–16 March 2009 (Massimiliano Dettori *et al*). One male Isis island, Aswan, 6 February 2011 (Dick Hoek). Female/immature Aswan, 5 November 2011 (Dick Hoek, Mary Megalli). Male east of Edfu, 17 January 2013 (Kari Haataja *et al*). The taxon appears to be annual or almost annual in Egypt. In future only claims of Turkestan Shrike *L. i. phoenicuroides* (not yet recorded) will be considered by EORC.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*. One El Gouna 27–31 March 2012 (Edwin Winkel). Second record, first being two birds north of Naama Bay October 1990.

Basalt Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens warriar*. One 15 km south of Port Ghalib, 31 January 2012 (Charly Farinelle). First record.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*. Records as follows: one Sharm el Skeikh sewage pools, 10 December 2010 (Jan & Erlen Landsverk). One female west Aswan, 5 February 2012 (Dick Hoek). A male and female Shams Alam, Marsa Alam, 31 March 2012 (Alain Rouge). Adult male and first summer male Marsa Alam, 7 April 2012 (Richard Bonser). Immature Sharm el Skeikh sewage pools, 21 September 2012 (Olof Jönsson). Female/immature Abu Simbel, 15 January 2013 (Kari Haataja *et al*). These records of eight individuals bring the accepted records total to 11 individuals. Claims are no longer required for consideration by EORC. Citrine Wagtail is best considered as a rare but probably regular migrant in Egypt, September–April.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus*. Two birds Naama Bay sewage works, Sharm el Sheikh, Sinai, 28–29 November and 5 December 2005 (Colin Bradshaw, Celia Bryce). First record. This is the third record examined by EORC, and predates the two records of 2009 and 2010–2011. There is at least one previous record from the late 1990s which has not yet been submitted to EORC.

Records considered not proven (see website for more detailed comments): Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (one Hurghada 4 April 2010, photos suggest hybrid *P. apivorus* × *P. ptilorhynchus*), Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* (two winter plumage birds Sharm el Sheikh 19 November 2012), Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (two adults Hurghada 12 September 2008), Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* (Port Said 25 August 2012), Brown-throated Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola* (Suez 20 April 1990), Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* (one Nabq reserve Sharm el Sheikh 25 November 2012), Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* (one King's island Luxor 14 January 2013), Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis* (one Marsa Alam 10 September 2011, Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (one St Katherine, Sinai 5 October 2011), Daurian Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (male Marsa Alam 29 February 2008), Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer* (one St Katherine, Sinai 19 August 2009).

ISRAEL

The Israel Rarities and Distribution Committee comprises Avner Cohen (secretary), James P Smith, Barak Granit, Rami Lindroos, Killian Mullarney, Eyal Shochat, Eran Banker and Tomer Landsberger. Claims should be sent to Avner Cohen at israbirding@gmail.com. See also www.israbirding.com/irdc where claim forms can be downloaded.

JORDAN

The Jordan Bird Records Committee comprises Fares Khoury (secretary), Richard Porter, Ian Andrews, Feras Rahahleh and Khaldun Al-Omari. Claims should be sent to Fares Khoury at avijordan2000@yahoo.com. JBRC has accepted the following records since the last report, in *Sandgrouse* 35(1).

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*. One 1cy Aqaba, 5 October 2008 (T Haraldson). Fourth record. Three previous records in Aqaba (1990–1992, I Andrews); this record precedes the one in Azraq 2012, which is the fifth record.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*. One Aqaba bird observatory 24 March 2000 (Gabor Wichmann). Seventh record; the record from the same locality in 2006 becomes the eighth record.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*. Two west Amman 17 April 2013 (S Shama, F Khoury). First confirmed record; an introduced species probably originating from escapees. One (photo of shot bird, unknown locality) June 2013. Second record. One Amman international airport, 12 August 2013 (L Al-Moghrabi). Third record.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. One Dana 21 March 2000 (G Wichmann, U Lindinger, W Lindinger, F Khoury). Fifth record (most records are from this locality).

KUWAIT

The Kuwait Ornithological Rarities Committee comprises Mike Pope (chair), AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan (secretary), Pekka Fagel, Oscar Campbell (external adjudicator), Peter Kennerley (external adjudicator), Brian Foster (honorary member). Claims should be sent to AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan at alsirhan@alsirhan.com.

OMAN

The Oman Bird Records Committee comprises Jens Eriksen (recorder), Ian Harrison, Dave Sargeant, Graham Searle, John Atkins, Peter Cowan, Simon Tull, Waheed Al Farsi, Zahran Al Abdulasalam, Manal Al Kindi. Claims should be sent to Jens Eriksen at hjoman@gmail.com from whom claim forms can be obtained. OBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 36(1).

Black-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta tropica*. One off Ras Al Hadd 15 August 2013 (A A de la Torre, Plates 1 & 2). Third record.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*. One East Khawr and Khawr Rawri 13–18 November 2013 (K H Ateeq *et al*, Plate 3). Sixth record.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*. One Al Ansab wetland 17 April 2014 (H & J Eriksen). First record.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*. One Al Ansab wetland 29 October 2013–17



Plates 1 & 2. Black-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta tropica* 15 August 2013, Ras Al Hadd, Oman. © A A de la Torre

Plate 3. African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Dhofar, Oman, 18 November 2013. © H & J Eriksen

Plate 4. Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* Al Ansab wetland, Oman, 17 April 2014. © H & J Eriksen

Plates 5 & 6. Wire-tailed Swallows *Hirundo smithii* 26 December 2013, Khawr Taqah, Oman. © S De Schutter



April 2014 (M Al Amri *et al*, Plate 4). Fifth record.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*. Two Khawr Taqah 26–28 December 2013 (S De Schutter, Plates 5 & 6). Eighth record.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedulla albicilla*. One Wadi Darbat 5–9 January 2014 (J Jensen). Fourth record.

QATAR

Qatar Rare Birds Committee members: Jamie A Buchan (recorder), Neil G Morris and Simon J Tull. Claims should be sent to Jamie Buchan at jamie_buchan@yahoo.com. As of 1 January 2014, the Qatar List

defines a rarity (which requires a rare bird report to be submitted) as a taxon that has been recorded on no more than twenty occasions in the wild in Qatar. Accepted records:

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*. Two immatures Al Khor 22 January 2014 (S Price). Seventh record.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*. One Abu Nakhla 22–31 January 2014 (NG Morris, JA Buchan). First record.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. One adult female Al Shamal park 13 May 2014 (NG Morris). First record.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus (migrans) lineatus*. One Al Shamal 7 May 2014 (NG Morris), three Fuwairit 18 May 2014 (NG Morris). Fourteenth and fifteenth records.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*. One Irkayya farm 20 April 2014 (S Price). Twelfth record.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. One adult Dhukan area 14 June 2014 (W Hodgkinson, NG Morris, S Price, G Saunders, SJ Tull). Third record.

Corncrake *Crex crex*. One Al Shamal park 9–11 May 2014 (NG Morris, SJ Tull). Seventh record.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*. One of the grey-headed forms Sheraton park, Doha corniche 5 to 29 September 2012 (NG Morris). Originally accepted into category D, now upgraded to category A based on the recent pattern of records from nearby in the region. This becomes the first record of any swamphen taxon other than the resident localized breeder African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*. One Irkayya farm 18–22 February 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one Irkayya farm 6 March 2014 (NG Morris), one Hassad Food Company farm 25 March 2014 (NG Morris). Twelfth–fourteenth records.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*. One adult male Al Mafjar 16 March 2014 (NG Morris). Twelfth record.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*. Six Ras Al Shindwee 17 January 2014 (NG Morris, G Saunders, SJ Tull). Second record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. One pale phase juvenile Simaisma 14 January 2014 (NG Morris), one pale phase Al Wakrah 30 January 2014 (S Price), one pale phase

adult Fuwairit 26 April 2014 (NG Morris). Fifth–seventh records.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*. One Ras Al Shindwee 17 January 2014 (NG Morris, G Saunders, SJ Tull), one Jazirat Al Ghanim 21 February 2014 (A Everester). Tenth and eleventh records.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*. Two Irkayya farm 3 April 2014 (NG Morris). Twelfth record.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*. One Al Shamal park 7–11 May 2014 (NG Morris), one Al Ruwais outskirts (livestock farm) 7 May 2014 (NG Morris). Third and fourth records.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. One Sealine beach resort 5 May 2014 (NG Morris), one Al Shamal park 15–18 May 2014 (NG Morris). Sixth and seventh records.

Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia minula*. One Irkayya farm 23 February 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one Irkayya farm 2 April 2014 (NG Morris). Sixth and seventh records.

Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea*. One Irkayya farm 14 March 2014 (D Kumar Pushpangadhan), one Irkayya farm 17 March 2014 (NG Morris), one Irkayya farm 1 April 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one Irkayya farm 2 April 2014 (NG Morris), two Irkayya farm 3 April 2014 (NG Morris, S Price). Sixth–tenth records.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*. One Sealine beach resort 5 May 2014 (NG Morris), up to three Al Shamal park 7–13 May 2014 (NG Morris, SJ Tull), one Ras Al Shindwee 7 May 2014 (NG Morris). Seventh–ninth records.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*. One Abu Samra 29 March 2014 (S Al Aseeri, NG Morris), two Umm ash Shubrum 22 April 2014 (S Al Aseeri). Tenth and eleventh records.

'North Caspian' Stonechat *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*. One male Irkayya farm 22 January 2014 (NG Morris). Fifth record.

Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*. One male and female Doha golf club 17 March 2014 (S Price), one female Irkayya farm 17–18 March 2014 (NG Morris), one female Sealine beach resort 1 April 2014 (NG Morris, S Price), one male Doha golf club 7 April 2014 (S Price), one male Irkayya farm 18 May 2014 (NG Morris). Tenth–fourteenth records.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus (novaeseelandiae) richardi*. Two Irkayya farm 6 March 2014 (NG Morris), one Irkayya farm 29 March 2014 (NG Morris). Third and fourth records.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Emirates Bird Records Committee comprises the following voting members: Oscar Campbell (chair), Mark Smiles (secretary), Simon Lloyd, Huw Roberts, Neil Tovey and Tommy Pedersen (UAE bird recorder). Ahmed Al Ali and Peter Hellyer are non-voting members. Records are circulated and assessments published three times per year according to the timetable outlined at www.uaebirding.com/ebrc.html. Decisions on assessments, plus EBRC's constitution and information about the assessment process and downloadable report forms are all available at the same location. Claims, preferably on the report forms, should be sent to ebrcuae@gmail.com or to Tommy Pedersen at 777sandman@gmail.com. The UAE Bird Checklist, in both short and annotated forms, is available at www.uaebirding.com/uaechecklist.html together with recently published reports for 2010, 2011 and 2012. EBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 36(1).



Plate 7. Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla* Mushrif Palace gardens, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 16 April 2014. © OJ Campbell

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*. One adult Al Qua'a fodder field 5 April 2014 (S Young, G Askew). Sixth record (although there are several recent outstanding submissions).

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*. Two Nakhali 10 February 2014 (L McGillevie) and two in nearby Tijarah desert 18 February 2014 (K Hyland). Fourteenth record; previous 2013.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. Two immatures Fujairah port beach 18 April 2014 (SP Lloyd). Sixth record; previous 2012.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. One adult Kalba corniche 19 April 2014 (K Al Dhaheri). Fifteenth record; previous 2012.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*. One Umm Suqeim park 28 March 2014 (B Al Qasimi). Fourth record; previous 2012.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*. One Mushrif NP 3 January–14 March 2014 (H Druid *et al*). Seventh record; previous 2012.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One Abu Dhabi Royal Stables 31 January–1 February 2014 (OJ Campbell, A Ward). Thirteenth record; previous 2013.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One male showing the characters of nominate *P. o. ochruros*/*P. o. gibraltariensis*, Wadi Bih, 24 January 2014 (SP Lloyd, OJ Campbell). Third record. Following this record, the previous two records (from Jebel Dhanna, January 2011 and December 2012–January 2013) have been reassessed and are now regarded as showing the characteristics of nominate *P. o. ochruros*/*P. o. gibraltariensis*, rather than *P. o. gibraltariensis*.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*. One Mushrif Palace gardens 16–23 April 2014 (OJ Campbell *et al*, Plate 7). Sixth record; previous 2013.

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