

AROUND THE REGION

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Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 37 (1) should be sent by 15 December to atr@osme.org.

CYPRUS

An **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus* Asprokremmos dam 19–20 Jun only the fourth record since 1958 while a drake **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* Fresh Water lake south 9–13 Mar was the sixth record. Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** *Mergus serrator* at Agia Trias 15 Feb and three at Kermia 21 Mar—this species is not seen every year. A single **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* seen at Mandria 30 Mar. One **Baillon's Crane** *Porzana pusilla* Phasouri reedbeds 4–7 Apr was the only record of this occasional migrant. A single **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor* at Akrotiri gravel pits 25–27 Feb and 3 Mar. 19th record in the last ten years of **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* at Paralimni lake 24 Mar. 21st record and only sixth in ten years of **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Lady's Mile 14–23 May. A **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* Larnaca airport pool 1 Apr. Two **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* Akrotiri salt lake 10 Apr and two Akhna dam 17 Apr (possibly the same two birds cape Greco same date). A **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* cape Kormakiti 28 Apr (formerly scarce breeding resident of the dry central plain and only seventh record since 1993). 24th record of **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Limassol port road 24–26 Mar.

A **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* cape Greco 25–26 Mar (less than annual). Third record **Southern (Arabian) Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis aucheri* Mandria 16–18 Mar while a **Southern (Saharan) Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis elegans* Akrotiri gravel pits 10 Apr was the sixth record. Single **Steppe Grey Shrikes** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* at Pervolia 12–26 Feb and Rizokarpaso 21 Mar (10/11th records). Wandering individual

from mainland of non-endemic race of **Coal Tit** *Parus ater* cape Greco 23 Mar. A **Brown-throated Martin** *Riparia paludicola* ringed at Polis reedbeds 1 May would be the first record if accepted; a bird there 12 May thought to be a possible **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* × **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* hybrid. Second record of **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* Armou 25 Apr and an **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* at Goudi 17 Apr (30th record). Single **Rose-coloured Starlings** *Sturnus roseus* cape Greco 22 Apr, Lara 29 May and Phasouri reedbeds 30 May. Best ever spring for **Siberian Stonechats** *Saxicola maurus* (until this year fewer than 20 records); eight records, males and females, 23 Feb–16 Apr, including three cape Greco 29 Mar. Male **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha* cape Greco 30 Mar and female there 13 Apr with another male cape Aspro 20 Apr, 21st–23rd records.

Fourth record **Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla alba personata* Mandria 1–3 Feb. **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* Mandria 22 Mar (one), Lara 16 Apr (two), Mandria 22–24 Apr (one) and two there 27 Apr. Fifth record **Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Paphos lighthouse 16 Apr. Ninth **Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus* Anarita park 30 Jan while four **Trumpeter Finches** *Bucanetes githagineus* cape Greco 7 May (30th record, 13th in last 10 years). Up to 20 **Yellowhammers** *Emberiza citrinella* Troodos 12–13 Feb (12th record since 1990s). Seventh record **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* Troodos 12 Feb. A **Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia* Pentadactylos 1 Feb—species probably annual Kyrenia range but only first record since 2008. A **Western Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* Mandria 3 Apr and another cape Greco 13 Apr.

EGYPT

A **Wahlberg's Eagle** *Aquila wahlbergi* near Ras Shuqeir, some 120 km north of Hurghada 3 May 2013. First for Egypt and new species for the Western Palaearctic list.

GEORGIA

Three Buff-bellied Pipits *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* feeding along Chorokhi river, Batumi, January. First record.

ISRAEL

The third **Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis* for Israel remained Agamon, Hula, through Jan/ Feb. Single **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* Eilat 10 Mar and another off Eilat's north beach 19–24 Apr. A **Smew** *Mergellus albellus* Bnei Yisrael reservoir, Golan Heights, 15 Jan. Two **Black-throated Divers** *Gavia arctica* off Eilat's north beach 27 Dec 2013 into 2014. A **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* off Eilat's north beach 15 Jan into February. A **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* Horvat Ner, mount Gilboa, 11 Jan, a **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* near Yotvata 29 Apr (second record, first 1979) and a **Ruppell's Vulture** *Gyps rueppellii*, first record, over Lakhish hills, southern Judean plains, 5 May. **Little Bustard** flock Kfar Ruppim increased during first half of Jan peaking at 32 birds. A **Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo* Agamon, Hula, 26 Apr into May. A **White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus* Hamadiya, Bet Shean valley, 7–11 Apr. A **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* at Yotvata, 28 Mar–April with two Uvda valley, south Negev, 8/9 Apr. Two **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* Agamon Hula, 20 May. A **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius hudsonicus* Nakhsholim beach, Carmel coast, 6 Feb into March, first record and for the Middle East. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* Km20 saltpans, Eilat, 11 May, tenth record and a **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* Eilat 10–13 Apr. An **Audouin's Gull** *Ichthyiaetus audouinii* Nakhsholim beach, 14 Feb, two **Lesser Crested Terns** *Thalasseus bengalensis* off Eilat's north beach 26 Apr and up to three **White-cheeked Terns** *Sterna repressa* at that location April.

A **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* Neot Smadar 25–30 Mar. Four **Oriental Skylarks** *Aulauda gulgula* lingered at Yotvata into April.

Two **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Sde Boker 31 Mar while the **Hume's Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* remained in Tel Aviv throughout January, with another bird at Kfar Ruppim 11–17 Feb. Six **Black Scrub Robins** *Cercotrichas podobe* March Eilat–Hazeva, at Hai Bar nature reserve, Yotvata, 16–17 Mar, at Lotan, 17 Mar and Yotvata sewage treatment plant 23–25 Mar. Seventh record **Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* Neot Smadar 26–29 Mar. A **Kurdistan Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrma* Palmakhim beach, south of Tel Aviv, 21 Feb, a **Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka* near Arad, north Negev, 28 Feb and a **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* at Rishpon, Mediterranean coast, 24 Mar. A **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Yotvata 17 Jan remained into February, a **Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* Eilat 11 Apr while the **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* remained at Acre until 18 Feb, when taken by a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*.

KAZAKHSTAN

Significant counts of **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*. On 22 May, c40 000 Zhumay lake, c15 km northeast of Korgalzyhn, Akmoles region. Most gone 23 May (but strong winds and very choppy lake). On the more sheltered Saumalkal lake, c10 km west of Zhumay, 35 000 recorded and likely to have involved the Zhumay birds of the day before. On 7 Jun, at lake Balyksor, c3 km south of Korgalzhyn, c3500 **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genei* breeding on the main island. This shallow lake has been largely dry for a number of years but in the last two years water has been plentiful and created good breeding conditions again for gulls. A **Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* Shardara, south Kazakhstan area, 21 Jan. 2014 appears to be an irruption year for **Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrnhaptus paradoxus*. Six near Donskoe, Karaganda oblast, central Kazakhstan 3 May with a male there 10 May and a pair 12 May. A pair 4 May near Araltobe, Aktobe region, a pair 15 May near Nursay village, west Kazakhstan and a pair near Zharaspai, Karaganda oblast, central Kazakhstan 1 Jun.

Masked Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) personata* recorded Kulanotpes, Karaganda region, 2 Jun (northerly record). Pair of **Desert Finches** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* probably breeding in a

garden Korgalzhyn village (seen several times). Sixth record **White-winged Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera* Kostanay 10 Jan and a **Spotted Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilla severtzovi* Dzhabagly village, south Kazakhstan, 12 Jan. First record **Blyth's Rosefinch** *Carpodacus grandis kotschubeii* Zhabagly, south Kazakhstan area, 12 Jan remaining until at least 9 Feb.

KUWAIT

A **Streak-throated Swallow** *Petrochelidon fluvicola* Jahra pool reserve still present 6 Apr, with possibly two birds present.

LEBANON

A **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* 8 Feb Al Barouk mountain (may have been shot in March).

OMAN

Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* with a **Cotton Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus* A'Shuweimiyah 12 Feb. A number of **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* records—one Khawr Rouri 20 Jan, one Mughsayl 21 Jan, two Khawr Rouri 11 Feb, five (two adults, three juveniles) there 22 Feb and a lingering juvenile there 12 Apr. 510 **Abdim's Storks** *Ciconia abdimii* Raysut sewage treatment plant 10 Feb and 1200 **Western White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* there 14 Feb. An **African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Hadbin 19 Jan and possibly the same bird East Khawr 8 Apr—at least 6 Jun (these records may refer to the single bird at East Khawr and Khawr Rouri 13–18 Nov 2013). Sixth record. 71 **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* Khawr Ghawi (part of a winter waterbird survey conducted along entire Omani coastline). First record of **Cinnamon Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*, an adult male, Al Ansab wetland 17 Apr. 194 **Western Reef Herons** *Egretta gularis* along intertidal zone north of Luqbi 13 Feb while 129 Khawr Ghawi 15 Feb. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Sohar 4 Jan. A **Eurasian Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* and a **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* (fourth record) Tawi Atayr 10 Jan. Two adult **Great Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* Ras Sidrah 17 Feb accompanied by a sub-adult **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* (both species very unusual in this area—accompanying them were

two **Bonelli's Eagles** *Aquila fasciatus*, more normally seen in the area). One, probably two **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* Sharbitat 13 Feb (had this pair been displaced by the major road construction along the coastal cliffs east of A'Shuweimiyah and seeking new territory?). A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* Al Ansab wetland 7 Apr and juvenile **Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* Sharbitat 17 Jan.

A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* A'Shuweimiyah 19 Jan while the fifth and sixth records of **Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea* were at Mughsayl 21 Jan and Raysut sewage treatment plant 14 Feb. A **Great Stone-curlew** *Esacus recurvirostris* Shinas 1 Feb. 13 **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* Jarziz farm 18 Feb and 2160 **Grey Plovers** *Pluvialis squatarola* Khawr Ghawi 15 Feb. A **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*, a rare spring migrant, Jarziz farm 18 Feb. Two **Long-billed Dowitchers** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Khawr Rawri 9 Feb. A **Slender-billed Curlew** *Numenius tenuirostris* claimed Barr Al Hikman 10 Apr though no details received by OBRC. Six **Small Pratincoles** Khawr Taqah 20 Jan. A roosting flock of 2536 **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyaetus* Ras Sidrah 17 Feb and a **Common Gull** *Larus canus* Liwa 26 Jan. 247 **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* Ras Bintawt 17 Feb. A **Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Al Ansab wetland 30 Apr while two **Saunders's Terns** *Sternula (albifrons) saundersi* there 4 May (unusual for these species to be inland). 26 **Whiskered Terns** *Chlidonias hybrida* there 4 May. A **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* and eight **Arctic Skuas** *Stercorarius parasiticus* off Liwa 26 Jan.

A **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* Qitbit 24 Jan with another Al Ansab wetland 4 May. Two **African Collared Doves** *Streptopelia risoria* Mudday 8 Feb with four there 27 Feb. An **Omani Owl** *Strix omanensis* seen central Al Hajar mountains 25 Jan while one seen there 4 Feb and another heard. An **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* Khawr Taqah 20 Jan and a **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Sohar 5 Apr. Fifty **European Rollers** *Coracias garrulus* East Khawr 16 Apr, the largest groups for some years. A **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Sayh plateau 20 Apr. 15 **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocoliuis ampelinus* Mudday 27 Feb and five Qitbit 28 Feb. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus*

inornatus Dawqah farm 23 Jan and one Qitbit 24 Jan with a **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei*. Four **Barred Warblers** *Sylvia nisoria* Jebel Harim, Mussandam, 20 Apr, the highest number for a few years. This winter has been a good 'thrush' winter. A **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* Sayq plateau 8 Feb. Eight **Black-throated Thrushes** *Turdus atrogularis* Sal Ala 14 Feb. A **Dusky Thrush** *Turdus eunomus* Qitbit 20 Jan–1 Mar (fifth record) and four **Song Thrushes** *Turdus philomelos* Sal Ala, Mussandam, 15 Feb. 18 **Mistle Thrushes** *Turdus viscivorus* Sayq plateau 8 Feb, a remarkable new maximum and the eighth record. Seven **Common Nightingales** *Luscinia megarhynchos* Sayh plateau 20 April and a **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata* Wadi Hinna 20 Jan and another on the same day Wadi Darbat. A **Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* Wadi Darbat 5 Jan and one Dawqah farm 23 Jan (fourth and fifth records).

QATAR

Surprisingly, the only **Garganey** *Anas querquedula* of the spring were a female Abu Nahkla 21 Feb and a male there 29 Mar. At least half a dozen pairs of **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* bred at two sites this year. Migrating **Little Bitterns** *Ixobrychus minutus* moved north along the coast at Al Wakrah 30 Apr and Al Mafjar 9 May, while up to five **Striated Herons** *Butorides striata* have been in residence at Al Mafjar since 7 May. **Western Cattle Egrets** *Bubulcus ibis* were noted at Abu Nahkla (one) 29 Jan, Sealine beach resort (two) 1–5 Apr and Lekhdaira (five) 11 May. **Montagu's Harriers** *Circus pygargus* were decidedly scarce with just four records involving two or three birds. Likewise, only four **Lesser Kestrels** *Falco naumanni* Irkayya farm 25 Mar–5 May. A **Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus* Sealine beach 1 Apr and 18 **Crab-plovers** *Dromas ardeola* Al Khor 23 Jan. **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* peaked at 12 Irkayya farm 3 Apr, with at least one pair raising a single fledgling at another site (third breeding record). A pair of **Swift Terns** *Thalasseus bergii* was courting Al Khor 24 Mar. One **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* Irkayya farm 3 Apr with four Sealine beach resort 1 May. An extremely early **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Al Khor 23 Jan. **Lilith Owl** *Athene (noctua) lilith*

in good numbers with at least two known breeding pairs raising five young. Two **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* Irkayya farm 24 Jan, along with five (over-wintering?) **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius*.

Passerine migration appeared to start and peak two or more weeks later than last spring. For example, day counts of shrikes peaked at 46 **Red-backed Lanius collurio** 15 May, eight **Daurian** *L. isabellinus* 18 Mar, 38 **Turkestan** *L. phoenicuroides* 3 Apr, 18 **Lesser Grey** *L. minor* 11 May, three **Woodchat** *L. senator* 9 Apr, three **Masked** *L. nubicus* 7 May. 13 **Eurasian Golden Orioles** *Oriolus oriolus* at Sealine beach resort 5 May. Scarcer migrants included six **Red-rumped Swallows** *Cecropis daurica* Irakayya farm 3 Mar. Other migration peaks included 40 **Willow Warblers** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Ras Al Shindwee 11 May. Two **Siberian Chiffchaffs** *Phylloscopus (collybita) tristis* Irkayya farm 17 Mar (status of taxon in Qatar unclear) and two **Sedge Warblers** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Al Shamal park 18 May. A minimum of 45 **Marsh Warblers** *Acrocephalus palustris* Sealine beach resort 1 May (at least 25 in the same bush). Single **Eastern Orphean Warblers** *Sylvia crassirostris* Irkayya farm 14 Mar and Sealine beach resort 1 Apr. One **Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* Al Shamal park 7 May while single **Eastern Nightingales** *Luscinia (megarhynchos) golzii* Irkayya farm 3 and 9 Mar, Sealine beach resort 5 May and Al Mafjar 7 May. Six **White-throated Robins** *Irania gutturalis* Irkayya farm 26 Mar together with 12 **Common Redstarts** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. The last **Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* of the winter at Irkayya farm 3 Apr, with a maximum of 3 there 19 Mar. Wheatears of all species were seemingly scarce this spring, with peaks Irkayya farm of 24 **Northern Wheatears** *Oenanthe oenanthe* 3 Apr, three **Red-tailed Wheatears** *Oenanthe chrysopygia* 23 Feb, 50 **Pied Wheatears** *Oenanthe pleschanka* 3 Mar and nine **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears** *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* 19 Mar. Six **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrushes** *Monticola saxatilis* north coast 1 May with single **Blue Rock Thrushes** *Monticola solitarius* Irkayya farm 23 Feb, 19 Mar and 29 Mar. 60 **Spotted Flycatchers** *Muscicapa striata* north coast 11 May.

Citrine Wagtails *Motacilla citreola* Abu Nahkla 22 Jan (one) and 6 Mar (two), Irkayya

farm 24 Jan (one) and Hassad farm 26 Mar (two). A **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* Irkayya farm 14–29 Mar and a **Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* there 14 Mar. Several hundred **Red-throated Pipits** *Anthus cervinus* descended on Irkayya farm 3 Apr. A maximum of three **Ortolan Buntings** *Emberiza hortulana* Sealine beach resort 5 May, while single male **Eastern Cinereous Buntings** *Emberiza (cineracea) semenowi* Irkayya farm 17 and 23 Mar, Doha MIA park 22–29 Mar and a female Irkayya farm 30 Mar.

SAUDI ARABIA

The wintering **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* remained at Tabuk wetlands until at least 14 Feb. A **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* Al Fanateer marina, Jubail, 15 Feb and five **Black-headed Herons** *Ardea melanocephala* Sabya waste water lagoons 21 Jan. Three overwintering **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, adult female and two second calendar year birds, remained together at Dhahran hills until 8 Mar at least with another Jubail 5 Mar and four migrating over 'Phil's' fields near Sabya 4 Apr. A pair Dhahran 8 Jun—at least 14 Jun only the third summer record. An adult **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus vociferous* Dhahran hills

20 Apr (Plate 1), second record for Eastern province. A sub-adult **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina* Sabkhat Al Fasl (SAF) 21 Feb (probably third record for Eastern province). Summer record of a 2nd calendar year **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* SAF 31 May–13 Jun at least. A **Small Buttonquail** *Turnix sylvaticus* near Sabya 2 Apr in the same fields where found 2013. Adult **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* SAF 15 Feb, one Dhahran hills 1 Jun and a juvenile SAF 8–13 Jun at least (Plate 2). Three **White-tailed Lapwings** *Vanellus leucurus* Dhahran hills spray fields 22 Feb (Plate 3) and another SAF 7 Mar while a **Eurasian Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* at Al-Khobar corniche 3 Jan. The second record of **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* was north of Al Hair, Riyadh, late Jan 2014 for a single day. Second record of **Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* SAF 12 Jan and **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus* at two sites near Jizan 20–21 Jan.

A male **Dideric Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx caprius* mount Sudah, Asir mountains, 6 Jun. A **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Udhailiyah mid Jan–2 Feb and the wintering bird remained SAF until 5 Apr at least. A **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*



Plate 1. Adult Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus vociferous* 20 April 2014, Dhahran, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



Plate 2. Juvenile Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* 7 July 2014, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



Plate 3. White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus* 22 February 2014, Dhahran, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

Al Fanateer marina, Jubail, 24 Jan. Group of four **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* on migration Dhahran hills 15 Apr. A **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* trapped and ringed SAF 25 Apr and group of eight **Eurasian Penduline Tits** *Remiz pendulinus* Wadi Al Haski near Qbah, Hail province, 11 Jan. **Blanford's Short-toed Larks** *Calandrella blanfordi* near Abha 30 Mar. A **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* Dhahran hills spray fields 26–27 Apr and a **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Duffi park, Jubail, 15 Feb. Two **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus (novaeseelandiae) richardii* pivot irrigation fields of Qaryat Al Ulya 29 Mar. A **European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis* Dhahran hills spray fields 1 Feb while a female **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* was there 8 Apr. Note: a **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* 36 km south of Al Qouz, Makkah province, 20 Jan, potential new species for Saudi Arabia, was seen briefly from a moving car (details ruling out other Drongo spp not received).

TURKEY

The 2013/2014 winter was very mild in general though some short periods of low temperatures pushed waterfowl south to the Black sea coastland. Several **Red-breasted Geese** *Branta ruficollis* appeared; seven İğneada Longozu 31 Jan, a single lake Terkos and seven Rumelifeneri near Istanbul 1 Feb, one Hersek lagoon 1–2 Feb, a long staying single Kızıllırmak delta 9 Feb–15 Mar and a single Rize Çayeli 3 Feb. **Greater Scaups** *Aythya marila* at Meriç delta, İğneada Longozu, Kocaeli Kefken, Samsun harbour and Trabzon Araklı 25 Jan–11 Feb. Other waterfowl highlights: a single **Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* İstanbul Şile 7 Jan, three **Velvet Scoters** *Melanitta fusca* and 11 **Black Scoters** *Melanitta nigra* Yeşilırmak delta 17 Jan and a **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* Karacabey Dalyan Gölü 3 Feb with two Samsun Kurupelit marina 1 Jan–6 Feb. Following the recent well observed and long staying **Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* in Samsun, a single appeared in the west at Sapanca Gölü 27 Jan during mid-winter waterfowl counts. Two single migrant **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Kastabala Valley 14 Mar and Bozova near Şanlıurfa 15 Mar. The pair that breeds at the latter location were present at the nest this

spring. Single **Rough-legged Buzzards** *Buteo lagopus* Manyas Kuş Gölü 3 Feb and the Black sea coast near Ağaçlı Gölü (İstanbul, Eyüp) 21 Feb. A pair of **Lanner Falcons** *Falco biarmicus* 4 Feb near İğdır cheered up over 50 national birders on a unique train expedition to the cold northeast.

Several sightings of **Great Bustards** *Otis tarda* gave hope for a better future; singles or pairs Sultansazlığı 4 Jan–31 May, Kulu Gölü 13 Apr, Kozanlı Gökgöl 19 Apr, Eskişehir Balıkdamı 19 Apr and Şanlıurfa 19 Jan. A **Baillon's Crane** *Porzana pusilla* Balık Gölü, Hatay, 23 Apr. A **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* Kastabala valley 2 Feb probably overwintered. The 13th record of **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* was a single Göksu delta 11 Apr. A **Eurasian Dotterel** *Eudromias morinellus* visited its traditional pasture near Riva and Karaburun along the Black sea coast 23 Mar–13 Apr. Several **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* Terkos Gölü and Ağaçlı 5/6 May and Manyas Kuş Gölü 19 Apr. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Karaburun 4 Feb probably came with the cold; usual passage migrants of this species were a single 1 Apr and four 12 May Göksu delta. A **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* Kulu Gölü 13–17 Apr was the fifth record. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* was off Rize 11 Feb. Two **Herring Gulls** *Larus argentatus* Samsun Kurupelit marina 30 Jan–4 Feb is the first documented record. A **Baltic Gull** *Larus fuscus fuscus* was present in the **Yellow-legged Gulls'** *Larus michaelis* breeding colony Oymapınar reserve near Antalya 15 Jun, suggesting a possible breeding record, possibly hybridizing with the other species. Wintering **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus* off Rize 11 and 18 Feb with a single off the sea of Marmara on the ferry transect Bandırma–İstanbul 14 Apr, observed by the seabird research team surveying shearwaters. 13 **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* roosted Yedikır Barajı 19 Jan.

A wintering **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* was near Bozova, Şanlıurfa, 24 Jan. At Birecik several sightings of **White-eared Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus leucotis*, notably two 13 Feb, and later 'up to tens' at tea garden and tree nursery; the origin of these birds, however, is still uncertain. A **Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata* singing Halfeti 30

May and a **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* Mağaracık beach, Antakya, 9 Apr. Strong southern winds blew a **Cyprus Warbler** *Sylvia melanothorax* west to Antalya Belek beach 19 Mar. In Ankara a **Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* flew over Hacettepe University 5 Jun. There were three **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* Hatay 4 Jan–1 Feb. An **Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* stayed 15–25 Jan near Subaşı, Antakya. Four **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* Milleyha beach 4 Jan, and a maximum of nine there 1 Feb was the highest count. A **Lapland Longspur** *Calcarius lapponicus* İğneada Longozu 31 Jan.

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An **Eastern Greylag Goose** *Anser anser rubrirostris* Zakkher 17 Jan. Pelagic trip Khor Kalba 31 May yielded a **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis* (fourth record, Plate 4), while an earlier trip 19 Apr produced five **Sooty Shearwaters** *Puffinus griseus*. Five **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** *Puffinus carneipes* (11th record, Plate 5) were seen on the 31 May trip and eight **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax* (tenth record). The first two **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus* of the season were seen on a 7 Jun pelagic trip. Two **Masked Boobies** *Sula dactylatra* (20th record) were seen on 17 May trip. An **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus* Al Qua'a 5 Apr (seventh record) while the intermittent bird at Wamm farms since August 2009 present there 18 Apr. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Wamm farms 28 Feb (16th record). Two **Eurasian Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus* Nakkhali 10 Feb (14th record) and nearby 18 Feb when at least six **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos trachelotus* also present (a **Lappet-faced Vulture** Wadi Helo 21 Feb). A ring-tail **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* Al Qua'a fodder field 14 Feb together with the wintering **Steppe Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*. **Merlins** *Falco columbarius* Ras al Khor January and in two locations early February. A **Corncrake** *Crex crex* Emirates Palace 3 May, one Abu Dhabi island 13 May and one Jebel Dhanna 16 May. A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Al Barsha 7–11 Apr. A **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* overwintered Hamraniyah turf fields. **Great Knots** *Calidris tenuirostris* were at Khor al Beida and 13 Bhalghelam island (a hitherto unknown



Plate 4. Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis* 31 May 2014 off Khor Kalba, UAE. © Oscar Campbell



Plate 5. Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* 31 May 2014 off Khor Kalba, UAE. © Oscar Campbell

wintering ground) 17 Jan. A **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* Hamranyah turf fields remained until 7th Mar. Two **Black-legged Kittiwakes** *Rissa tridactyla* Fujairah 18 Apr (sixth record). An immature **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* (18th record) seen on the 31 May pelagic trip while a **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* was at Fujairah 19 Apr (15th record).

A **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* Al Awir 8 Apr (fifth record) while the seventh record of **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* was in Mushreef national park 3 Jan and remained until 11 Jan. Two **Little Swifts** *Apus affinis* Sila 18 Apr. 40 **Turkestan Shrikes** *Lanius (isabellinus) phoenicuroides* between Ghagah island and Mirfa 5 Apr while the spring's only **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* was at Green Mubazzarah 25 Mar. A **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* wintered Abu Dhabi island at Emirates Palace. 130 **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Lulu island 29 Mar while there were over 100 Yas island during February. Four **Savi's Warblers** *Locustella luscinioides* recorded in five days end of March/early April, first Mirfa 28 Mar, with birds the next day (Plate 6) in Green Mubazzarah and Mushreef palace gardens and finally another at Mirfa 1 Apr. 250 **Willow Warblers** *Phylloscopus trochilus* between Ghagah island and Mirfa 5 Apr. Thirteenth record of **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Royal stables, Abu Dhabi, 31 Jan. **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus humei* Wadi Bih 25 Jan and Safa



Plate 6. Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* 29 March 2014, Abu Dhabi, UAE. © Mike Barth

park 26 Jan, the latter remaining to at least 15 Feb. A small wave of **Thrush Nightingales** *Luscinia luscinia* commenced 7 May. **White-throated Robins** *Irania gutturalis* arrived in good numbers from 27 Mar, ten at Mamzar the highest count. The recent male **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* remained at Jebel Hafeet throughout January (Plate 7) until at least 14 Feb. A **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* showing the characters of *ochruros/gibraltariensis* (third record) Wadi Bih 25 Jan. 59 **Northern Wheatears** *Oenanthe oenanthe* between Ghagah island and Mirfa 5 Apr.

March saw the largest ever influx of **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* culminating in at least seven Mamzar 27 Mar. There were four Jebel Dhanna 6 Apr and six

the following day. Latest ever record 2 May Abu Dhabi. Sixth record of **Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* Mushreef palace gardens 16 Apr and remained until 23 Apr. Two **Spanish Sparrows** *Passer hispaniolensis*, a species now very uncommon, were seen Wadi Tarabat 19 Apr. The **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* first seen in late November was located again Mushreef palace gardens, Abu Dhabi, early Feb and remained for most of the month and seen again there 29 Mar. The exceptional winter for **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* continued with one throughout January at Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi (for the third successive winter) and six Hamraniyah turf fields 25 Jan. The first **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza*



Plate 7. Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* January 2014 Jebel Hafeet, UAE. © Huw Roberts

(*cineracea*) *semenowi* Mirfa 1 Apr, singles Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, 4 and 10 Apr (different individuals).

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