

REVIEWS

Checklist of the Birds of Israel

Compiled by Yoav Perlman & Jonathan Meyrav

Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Softback. 30 pages.

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This well-presented booklet lists all 540 species and distinct forms recorded in Israel. For each species, the English, scientific and Hebrew names are given, along with their status and distribution, and a handy check box to keep your list! Small colour photographs with informative captions enhance the layout. A map shows many of the key birding sites and birdwatching centres in Israel. Contact addresses for the latter and a useful list of references and websites are also provided. Well worth getting before your next visit, the checklist is available from NHBS (www.nhbs.com) or the Israeli Ornithological Center (ioc@inter.net.il).

Dawn Balmer

Cyprus Bird Report 2008

BirdLife Cyprus. 2009.

Softback. 168 pages, colour photos, line drawings, graphs and tables.

£15

Available from OSME Sales

Following the relative glut of new species in 2007 (see *Sandgrouse* 31: 193), just one addition to the Cyprus avifauna was made



in 2008, a Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, trapped by a group of visiting English ringers in April. Other rarities included only the second-ever Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* (and first for 40 years), which might seem surprising given the species' relative abundance in Turkey. Indeed comparisons with the latter country are inevitable and interesting to make throughout. Quite a number of Cypriot rarities registered during 2008 are abundant breeding birds just to the north, eg Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* and Rook *Corvus frugilegus*, whilst Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha* chalked up its 14th record in Cyprus in 2008, yet remains unknown in Turkey. Other comparisons are perhaps more humdrum for the visitor, but arguably far more fascinating. For instance, why and how does Common Swift *Apus apus* seem to reach Cyprus so much earlier than in Turkey? We are informed under Little Owl *Athene noctua*, "The race *lilith* occurs but does not predominate". Given that the question of which taxon occurs on Cyprus has baffled taxonomists for over a century (with, for instance, Vaurie 1960 tentatively assigning the population to *A. n. indigena*, and Koenig *et al* 1999 'ducking' the issue altogether), this statement demands clarification or justification, especially given the recent proposal to recognise multiple species within *A. noctua*. If more than one subspecies really occurs on the island, as is implied here, then one hopes some enterprising Cypriot resident is working on the question?

Guy M Kirwan