

## Turkey July 2004

After gaining inspiration from several trip reports, I decided to visit South-Central and Eastern Turkey for a birding holiday in late July 2004. An [Excel Airways](#) charter flight was booked from London Gatwick to Antalya (the easternmost airport that 'budget' airlines fly to) for £252 per person. As the time of year we travelled was in the peak holiday period this was reflected in the price – flights as cheap as £126 can be available earlier (or later) in the year from UK airports to Antalya. Car hire was booked through [Hertz](#) at a price of £237 for a Ford Focus 1.6 saloon with an additional €140 (£97) being spent in order to gain an extra three drivers and increase our excess to €17,000.

Our team consisted of four people – [myself](#), Andy Clifton, Mark Lopez and Matt Mulvey. Two of our team had been to the country on previous occasions with Andy having birded as far to the east as Birecik on a previous visit and Mark having been to Western Turkey. During our week stay we covered 5,100 km and fortunately did not incur a single problem with respect to our car (including no punctures). On the whole, Turkish roads were of an adequate standard although due to the hot and arid conditions and overloaded Turkish lorries, several of the roads suffered from severe ruts. In addition, the kamikaze nature of the road users meant that it was necessary to be fully alert at all times as on several occasions we were forced to react as vehicles overtook on blind bends or mountain summits.

Although we had a fairly hectic itinerary, we spent every night in hotels (apart from our first night when we arrived late in the night and had a 2 hour drive to our first site). These hotels were on the whole of adequate standard, except for in Bulanik where the accommodation was reminiscent of a scene from the film 'The Beach' where there was no running water and only one of us braved to glance at the toilet facilities. This aforementioned hotel cost TL5,000,000 (£2) whereas all other hotels cost between TL25,000,000 (£10) and TL35,000,000 (£14). We drank bottled water (or soft drinks) at all times with our diet consisting of Nutri-grain bars (that we had brought with us from the UK), crisps and the excellent Turkish freshly baked bread. We all ate a kebab in Kahta and would recommend the Semt Restaurant (although we did not touch the salad) and a couple of our group sampled the cuisine at the restaurant adjacent to the Hotel Merkalam in Birecik. All members of the team remained fully healthy throughout the trip.

### Literature

Whilst Turkey is a large country, there are several areas that are pinpointed by birdwatchers in order to see a variety of target species. 'Finding Birds in Turkey: Ankara to Birecik' and 'Finding Birds in Eastern Turkey', both by Dave Gosney, were both invaluable to the trip and can be purchased from [Birdguides](#) with [updated details](#) available.

Further references that were useful included 'A Birdwatcher's Guide to Turkey' by Ian Green and Nigel Moorhouse as well as an annotated trip report by Paul Higson, Ashleigh Rosier, Dave Hopkins *et al* obtained from [FBRIS](#) that was particularly useful, despite being 10 years old, with regard to directions for the Demoiselle Crane

site. A useful article by Daniele Occhiato on the birding around Nemrut Dagi, Kahta can be found in Birding World Volume 14 No.8.

We used a 1:750,000 Marco Polo Shell Eurokarte map of Turkey throughout our visit; purchased from [Stanfords](#). A [Lonely Planet](#) guide to Turkey was also used during the trip, allowing us to discover the range of accommodation available in areas that we wished to visit.

### **Websites**

Information on birdwatching in Turkey can be gained from the many trip reports to be found on various websites. In particular [OSME](#) provides details of the Caspian Snowcock site within [Ady and Keren Gancz's](#) trip report whilst reports from [Aleix Comas](#) and [Ian Merrill](#) were both very useful. Other Turkish trip reports can also be found at [Birdtours](#) and [Surfbirds](#).

However, the most influential trip report was that of [Chris Batty's](#) trip in June 2003, with his itinerary closely followed and extended by [Stuart Piner et al](#) in June 2004.

### **Other Information**

In order to see Caspian Snowcock and other species near Demirkazik, it is necessary (unless you have hired a robust four wheel drive vehicle) to use the services of either Hasan or Ali Safak. They offer comfortable accommodation at [Özsafak Pension](#), located in Cukurbag village near the base of the mountains. It is advisable to book this expensive jaunt (we paid approximately £50 each for an evening meal, overnight accommodation and a tractor ride up and down the mountain) in advance by contacting the guides by [e-mail](#). The guides are excellent in knowing the whereabouts of Snowcocks throughout the year, but in order to see other mountain birds you will have to find them for yourself as the Safaks are primarily trekking guides with limited birding knowledge.

If you plan to visit Nemrut Dagi, Kahta, the following ferry timetable (Feribot Hareket Saatleri) across the Ataturk Baraji lake may be of use if you are travelling from or to the east. The times detailed below are the departure times from the respective sides of the lake with the ferry crossing taking approximately 20 minutes: -

<b>Siverek</b>	<b>Adyaman</b>
0800	0700
0930	0830
1130	1030
1330	1230
1530	1430
1730	1630
1930	1830
2130	2030

Our itinerary took us to far eastern Turkey, which has previously been and still is to a lesser extent a sensitive area. We were stopped on several occasions at army

checkpoints but, after showing them our passports, we were quickly on the move again and were never given a thorough search. A useful tip when travelling to the east and to the southeast of Diyarbakir would be to always have your passports within easy access for prompt display.

The Red-wattled Plover site at Cizre, a conurbation near the Turkish border with Iraq and Syria, is for obvious reasons in an extremely sensitive area. On our visit we were able to view the River Tigris for approximately five minutes before the Turkish military asked what we were doing and hastily moved us on – claiming that we were looking in the direction of military bases with our telescopes. Fortunately we had located the target species but unfortunately it was in our interest to move on after such a brief observation period (being in the target of a tank gun does not really leave you any option). It is extremely useful to carry a field guide with you at all times in Turkey even if you feel that you do not necessarily need one for bird identification purposes. I showed the army at Cizre what we were looking at, and although they seemed fairly bemused, it probably helped our situation.

Turkish people are often fairly intrigued as to the presence of Westerners in remote localities, and will often stare at you or interrupt proceedings by standing so close to you invading your personal space. The only disconcerting moment of the trip occurred when, returning unsuccessfully from our Demoiselle Crane search at Yoncali, we discovered our car boot to be smeared in fresh human excrement. What we had done to deserve this remains a mystery. Conversely we did witness true Turkish hospitality on one occasion when an old lady gave us some sumptuous green apples at Durnalik.

Finally, the thumbs up gesture that we so often use to show gratitude or thanks in the west has a completely different connotation in Turkey, where it is used as a curse. Indeed we did not find this out until part way into our trip and, to further verify this change in meaning, we were shown the thumbs up by a couple of lads at Durnalik who did not enjoy our expletives as they threw stones in the direction of a juvenile Cretzchmar's Bunting!

### **Itinerary**

A brief outline of our trip (with approximate driving times) is detailed below: -

**24<sup>th</sup> July** – Arrival at Antalya airport late evening. 2 hour drive overnight to Akseki. Slept in the car.

**25<sup>th</sup> July** – Birding at Akseki, then travel to Konya (2 ½ hour drive). Brief birding stops east of Konya town then a 1-hour drive to Karapinar. A further drive of 2 ½ hours to Demirkazik. Slept at Safak Pension, Demirkazik.

**26<sup>th</sup> July** – a 2-hour tractor ride up to the chromium mine at Demirkazik mountain, followed by birding on the mountain and then a 2-½ hour drive to Adana and a further drive of 3 hours to Birecik. Slept at the Hotel Merkalam, Birecik (TL 30,000,000).

**27<sup>th</sup> July** – Birding at Birecik, then travel to Halfeti ( $\frac{3}{4}$  hour drive), with a further 5-hour drive to Cizre and a night drive of 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours to Tatvan. Slept at Hotel Alize, Tatvan (TL 25,000,000).

**28<sup>th</sup> July** – 2- $\frac{1}{2}$  hour drive from Tatvan to Van Hills (birding Lake Van en-route) then a 1- $\frac{1}{2}$  hour drive to Bendimahe Marshes. A further  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour drive to Serpmetas and a 3-hour night drive to Bulanik. Slept at the Hotel Ugur, Bulanik (TL 5,000,000).

**29<sup>th</sup> July** – Birding at Yoncali near Bulanik then a 7 hour drive (including a one hour wait for the ferry from Siverek to Adyaman) to Narince, Nemrut Dagi. Slept at Hotel Bardakci, Kahta (TL 25,000,000).

**30<sup>th</sup> July** – birding at Nemrut Dagi and Narince, followed by a 3-hour drive to Isikli and Durnalik then a 4-hour night drive to the Goksu Delta. Slept at the Lades Hotel, Tasucu (TL 35,000,000).

**31<sup>st</sup> July** – birded the Goksu Delta then drove (7 hours) to Antalya to connect with our late evening flight.

### **Day-by-day detailed site guide**

#### ***25<sup>th</sup> July 2004***

##### **Akseki graveyard (Gosney Ankara to Birecik - Akseki site 2)**

This site is accessed by driving into Akseki village and just before the main road reaches a prominent line of coniferous trees in the central reservation, turn right and proceed through the small square and take the turning downhill signposted to Dutluca. Proceed down this road for a short while and park by the football stadium (Stadi Akseki) on your left. Immediately opposite is an iron gate that allows entry to the graveyard. We did not locate any Olive-tree Warblers at this location but *Syrian Woodpecker* and *Jay* were common with 1 *Kruper's Nuthatch*, 1 *Eastern Bonelli's Warbler* and 2 *Sombre Tits* seen in the confines of the graveyard.

##### **Akseki walled garden (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Akseki site 1)**

Just south of the turning to Akseki village on the main Antalya to Konya road, turn left (west) opposite the Toros restaurant and park on the left after 0.9km. A couple of hundred yards away you will see an area of rich deciduous vegetation and, although this site is named after this 'walled garden', it is the rocky outcrops and scrub hedges that contain the target species. From the parking area (just before the main road gains elevation), we walked along the dirt track for a couple of hundred yards and explored the area between the track and the walled garden. *Masked Shrike* and *Eastern Olivaceous Warbler* were both common, with 4 *Woodlark* and 1 *Long-legged Buzzard* over. The scrub and rocky outcrops immediately adjacent to the dirt track provided good views of a pair of *Ruppell's Warblers*, 5 *Long-tailed Tits* and 2 *Western Rock Nuthatches*. Remarkably a *Middle-spotted Woodpecker* showed well as it fed on to one of the telegraph posts between the car park and the walled garden. The walled garden itself was relatively birdless.

### **Akseki White-backed Woodpecker 'new site' (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Akseki site 4)**

Take the main Antalya to Konya road north for c.15km from Akseki where you will come to a junction with a restaurant on the right and a sign for drinking water. Bear left at this junction and proceed for 2.6km and park on the right just beyond a fire warning sign by a sandy track. There will be some prominent rocks on the opposite side of the road (where we noted Eastern Black-eared Wheatear and Isabelline Wheatear) and walk beyond these and slightly uphill following a path across the grass for c.400 yards until you reach an obvious clearing in the coniferous trees where you are lower than the forest. On standing at the entrance to this clearing and looking ahead and to the right, you will see a corner of obvious gradual rocky ledges that can be ascended to the left of the path to reach the start of the tree line. Although a steep climb, we gained decent views of a female *White-backed Woodpecker* c.150 yards up this slope after only half an hour of searching, with this small area being extremely easy for *Kruper's Nuthatch* (at least 7 sighted) and views of 1 *Eastern Bonelli's Warbler*. The open area and small cluster of trees near the sandy track (where you have parked) produced a further 3 *Kruper's Nuthatches*, a *Eurasian Nuthatch*, a family group of *Masked Shrikes* and a couple of *Spotted Flycatchers*.

### **Drive between Akseki and Konya**

A flock of c.80 *White Storks* were located in a hay meadow adjacent to the main road near Seydisehir.

### **Plateau east of Konya**

2 *Lesser/Asian Short-toed Larks* were found in the dry salt scrub east of Konya. When you drive east on the road 330, you will pass the sign that shows you are exiting the city limits and after 6km there is an obvious sandy, driveable track on the south side of the road that takes you onto the plateau. We drove this for c.400 yards and immediately located the larks – it is worth noting that any track that you locate is likely to produce views of these birds.

### **West of Yarma on road 330**

We located a damp area of reeds on the south side of road 330, 0.5km west of the blue sign stating 'Karapinar 67, Adana 320'. Although we had to park on the hard shoulder of the main road, the reedy area produced *Reed Bunting* and several juvenile *Corn Buntings* and *Black-headed Buntings* whilst c.12 *Collared Pratincoles*, a male *Lesser Kestrel* and c.10 *Asian/Lesser Short-toed Larks* were noted in the adjacent fields.

### **South of road 330 at Akcayazi**

The fields around the dusty village of Akcayazi produced little of interest except several hirundines and an *Isabelline Wheatear*.

### **Karapinar Crater Lake (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Konya to Eregli site 3)**

Drive east through Karapinar on road 330 and after several kilometres take the road south signposted 'Meke Tuzlasi Krater Golu' and follow this road down to the lakeshore and park in the vicinity of the pale blue bin. The lake itself was relatively productive with 9 *Greater Flamingos*, 5 *Ruddy Shelduck* and 2 *Sanderlings* noted as well as many *Shelduck* and *Common Sandpipers* in addition to several *Kentish*

*Plovers* and *Black-winged Stilts*. The dry area with rocky outcrops and low vegetation on the north side of the lake opposite the where you have parked leads up to an obvious rocky gorge below the plateau where we saw a *White-throated Robin*, 2 *Isabelline Wheatears* and 4 *Ortolans*. One of our party also located 2 *Bimaculated Larks* in this area and after an unsuccessful search to relocate these birds we returned to the lakeshore near the pale blue bin. We were delighted to find 1 *Bimaculated Lark* drinking from the lake here as well as 10+ *Short-toed Larks* as well as a couple of *Ortolans* and *Black-headed Buntings*.

26<sup>th</sup> July 2004

### **Geyik Mountain, Demirkazik**

We stayed at [Özsafak Pension](#) overnight and departed at 3.30am on the tractor up the mountain. As it was the height of summer, Ali explained to us that we would have to visit the 'chromium mine site' (see [Ady and Keren Gancz's](#) trip report for further directions) in order to locate any Snowcocks. We proceeded on the main road north of Cucurbag village and turned right and over the river on the road signposted to Demirkazik Ski and Mountain Centre. We then passed through the village and past the Mountain centre on our right, continuing past the gorge described by Gosney (Ankara to Birecik – Demirkazik, site 2) and turned right onto a stony track immediately adjacent to a small graveyard. This track would probably not be passable in a conventional vehicle and from the start of the track it took us 1½ hours to reach our destination at the summit (by continuing straight on this track and forking right at the only junction – straight on here will take you to the nomad camp) with a couple of *Nightjars* flushed from the track on our ascent. Once parked, you will realize you are in the correct locality as you cannot drive any further as the downward slope just beyond the summit is impassable – walk down this rocky path for c.400 yards and scan the rocky outcrops on the mountain ahead and to the left (where the path forms a horseshoe at the head of a steep valley to your left). The far carrying Curlew-like calls of the target bird are instantly recognisable and we were able to locate at least 1 *Caspian Snowcock* by scanning the area described. To the right of the path you will note an obvious large flat rock face and we were extremely fortunate to see a *Wallcreeper* on this cliff as well as several *Red-billed Choughs* and *Alpine Choughs*. 2 *Alpine Accentors* showed well on the boulders immediately adjacent to the path whilst *White-winged Snowfinch*, *Red-fronted Serin* and *Black Redstart* were all common in this area. We descended the mountain on foot, being picked up by the tractor a couple of kilometres down from the summit. Whilst on this walk there is an obvious nomad camp that is prominently placed in the valley below and it was this area (accessed by turning to the right when reaching the first junction on the descent) that provided possibly the best birding of our trip. We followed this track until c.500 yards before the stream, and walked the area up to this stream. *White-winged Snowfinch* was extremely common here whilst *Northern Wheatear*, *Shorelark* and *Red-fronted Serins* were also numerous in the grassy areas adjacent to the track. Most importantly immediately adjacent and slightly beyond where the stream goes under the track, there is an area of rocks that form a small gorge and it was in this area where we located 2 *Radde's Accentors* as well as 3+ *White-throated Robins*. A male *Ring Ousel* and up to 6 *Crimson-winged Finches* were seen between the junction described previously and where we parked to view the area by the nomad camp. We continued down the mountain track on tractor noting a large flock of *Alpine Choughs*

as well as 5 *Crag Martins* whilst several *Red-backed Shrikes* and a juvenile *Cuckoo* were noted on the lower slopes. We had left our car at the start of the rocky track near the graveyard in order to enable us to bird the tarmac road between this area and the Demirkazik mountain centre.

### **Demirkazik graveyard area**

The graveyard can be found on the junction of where the tarmac road meets the stony track up Geyik mountain, although it is relatively overgrown and may be slightly unobvious (see the directions for Geyik mountain for directions from Demirkazik village). There is little point going into the graveyard itself as it merely a grassy field and harbours little of interest – the way we worked this area was to walk back along the tarmac road in the direction of the Mountain Centre for a few hundred yards and scan the rocky ground to the left (where Finsch's Wheatear have been seen by several parties) and check the bushes and small orchard on the right. This latter area proved quite fruitful with views of *Lesser Whitethroat*, *Blue Rock Thrush*, *Western Rock Nuthatch*, *Whitethroat* and *Tree Sparrow* obtained.

### **Demirkazik gorge Gosney Ankara to Birecik - Demirkazik site 2)**

We followed the road back towards Demirkazik village and before you get to the Mountain Centre, there is an obvious steep-faced rocky gorge on the left with a convenient place to park on the same side of the road immediately adjacent to a well-trodden path leading into the area. As we were relatively pushed for time, we only explored this area briefly but were able to find a healthy colony of *Rock Sparrows* and an inquisitive *Little Owl* perching on the cliff face.

### **South of Adana**

Follow road 400 into Adana and immediately east of the bridge over the Seyhan Nehri river, turn south on road 815 (signposted Karatas) opposite a new-looking large mosque. You will almost immediately pass over a drainage canal but ignore any roads leading off the main road and continue through the southern sprawl of Adana. Shortly after leaving the city limits you will encounter another drainage canal with obvious sluice gates to your right. Go over the bridge and take the sandy track to the right immediately after the bridge (signposted 'Sagun Kemal Balacilk'), continuing straight on along the drainage canal where the main track bears left and park at the end by the house. The overgrown area here appears excellent for *White-throated Kingfisher* with no less than 3 birds seen in a twenty-minute period. At least ten *White-spectacled Bulbuls* were also present in the area, favouring the trees adjacent to the watercourse and also in the orchard just before you reach the house at the end of the track.

### **Nizip, east of Gaziantep**

3 *Laughing Doves* were located in this dusty town as we drove through on road 400.

### **River Euphrates at Birecik**

The town of Birecik is situated immediately east of the River Euphrates, and we explored the area to the south of road 400 initially. If you are heading east, go over the bridge (passing the Hotel Merkalam, adjacent to the petrol station on the left hand side just before the bridge) and take the road to the right that clearly takes you into the town of Birecik. The junction will lead slightly downhill and take the first road you

can to the right in order to link up with the road that runs directly south along the bank of the River Euphrates. After c.1 km there is an obvious road to the right that will allow you excellent views of the river and from here we had over 50 *White-winged Black Terns*, a *Little Bittern*, 2 *Pygmy Cormorants* and a *Pied Kingfisher*. We continued along the main road that heads south through the town along the east bank of the river until the road appears to end with a forced left on an unmade road opposite some ill-maintained tower blocks. From this point we followed this track for 2.6km where it again reached the river and a relatively productive marshy area. In the superb mid-evening sunlight we watched at least 200 *White-winged Black Terns* hawking in one tight flock over the river whilst 3 *Cattle Egrets*, 5 *Squacco Herons*, 2 *Little Bitterns* and both *Great Reed Warbler* and *Reed Warbler* showed well in the marshy area on the near bank. As we headed back towards the town, there was an obvious puddle on the track where sparrows were coming to drink and it was here that we located at least 8 *Dead Sea Sparrows* at close range.

### **Birecik 'owl café' (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Birecik site 8)**

As described previously, take the road south from road 400, immediately east of the river bridge, into Birecik. The junction will lead slightly downhill and take the first road you can to the right in order to link up with the road that runs directly south along the bank of the River Euphrates. After only a few hundred metres, the area will become greener and open into a park-like area. On the left as you are heading south, you will notice a small walled area with a building, a couple of redundant fountains and a Pepsi sign over a small entrance gate. This is the infamous 'owl café', with the parking area accessed by turning left off the main river road and then after c.10 yards immediately right. The man who walks with a stoop that is described by Gosney is unfortunately no longer present, having been sent to prison for the murder of someone in a nearby hotel. Instead, we were surrounded by a group of young men who claimed that they could find us the owls. Unfortunately, much to our chagrin, a mid afternoon search proved fruitless. Returning just prior to dusk, we were lucky enough to locate an adult and at least 2 juvenile *Pallid Scops Owls* as they fed actively and perched out in the open around the garden. We found the birds to perch relatively low down on exposed perches when feeding, particularly making use of the washing-line type structure that supports the lighting around the café garden.

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2004**

### **Birecik main wadi (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Birecik site 2)**

Following the road north out of Birecik town along the east bank of the River Euphrates, we parked at the rather unobvious Ibis Centre, on the right hand side of the road and walked into the obvious, steep-sided wadi immediately adjacent to the Ibis Centre. *Ménétries's Warblers* were common throughout the low vegetation whilst at least 10 *Rock Sparrows*, 2 *Rufous-tailed Scrub Robins* and several *Eastern Olivaceous Warblers* were noted in the wadi itself. Walking along the floor of wadi for c.1km, we then took a relatively well-trodden track on the left hand side that led us onto the stony plateaux above the wadi. One *See-see Partridge* was flushed in this area, whilst three more birds of this species were seen on the wadi ridge (c.0.8km in from the Ibis Centre). The plateaux area proved to be very productive for *Desert Finch*, with at least six birds seen, with at least 10 *European Bee-eaters*, 1 *Roller*, a *Woodchat* and a *Hoopoe* additionally present. We retraced our steps along the valley



floor back to the road, and were fortunate to have a pair of *Pied Kingfishers* fly over us at the head of the wadi, immediately adjacent to the River Euphrates. We visited the Northern Bald Ibis Centre before we left, noting that at least 50 birds were already caged for the winter in order to stop them migrating through dangerous, hunter-threatened territories.

#### **Birecik orchards (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Birecik site 4)**

Follow the road that runs adjacent to the River Euphrates north from the Ibis centre, and as it leads away from the river there will be an OTO garage on the right hand side of the road. Immediately inland from the garage will be a small cement workings, and there is an obvious track that leads uphill into the orchards from here. We only walked a few hundred metres up the track yet were rewarded with stunning views of at least 5 *Chestnut-shouldered Petronias* and 10+ *Desert Finches*, whilst *Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin* and *Syrian Woodpecker* were also present at this site.

#### **Birecik Cliffs and the River Euphrates north of the town**

Several hundred metres south of the Ibis Centre and just north of Birecik town, the road running adjacent to the east bank of the River Euphrates passes an obvious rocky outcrop and associated cliff face where Little Swifts breed. Due to our visit being late in the season, we only noted 1 *Little Swift* here although a *Peregrine* showed extremely well on the rocky outcrop. A *Pygmy Cormorant* was present on the River Euphrates, whilst *White Wagtail* and at least two *Laughing Doves* were present at the north end of the town.

#### **Halfeti (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Birecik site 7)**

Take road 400 east from Birecik and, after several kilometres, take the obvious road leading north signposted towards Halfeti. A *Little Swift* and a *Roller* were noted over orchards 8km south of Halfeti whilst at least 3 *Eastern Rock Nuthatches* were extremely vocal and showed well in the rocky area 2.2km south of Halfeti town. This site is best located by ‘clocking’ 7.8km from the ‘Halfeti 10km sign’ and at this distance you will find that the road drops downhill and onto a straight where a lake comes into view (immediately after a right hand bend with rubbish on the verge). If you are pointing downhill, the rocky gorge c.200 metres to the right of the road is the area that is favoured by the Nuthatches.

#### **Road 400 between Birecik and Cizre**

4 *White Storks* were seen on the long drive east towards the Syria/Iraq border at Cizre. A *Short-toed Eagle* showed well by the roadside 44km west of Cizre whilst at least 5 *Laughing Doves* were seen in the town of Viransehir and 3 *Rollers* perched on roadside wires just east of Kiziltepe.

#### **River Tigris at Cizre**

Driving through the dusty main street of the town, passing many abandoned lorries, you will eventually drive over a bridge over the river on road 400. Immediately beyond this bridge on the south side of the road is a garage where, previously, birders have been able to look south along the River Tigris towards Syria for Red-wattled Lapwings. Having heard that a team were unable to do this a few weeks before our visit due to military presence, we decided to take the road north, just before the garage, signposted to Sirnak. After 0.5km we stopped on the left hand side of the road

and scanned the gravel islands in the river from here without success, although a couple of *White Wagtails*, a *Greenshank* and several *Common Sandpipers* were located. Continuing north, the road bends to the left after a further 0.5km and continues to follow the river and, on the northern edge of the town, we found a suitable location to scan the gravel islands again. We immediately located 3 *Red-wattled Lapwings* from here but we were unaware that we were positioned directly opposite an army barracks. After less than five minutes of viewing, we were promptly asked what we were doing and moved on by the Turkish army.

### **Between Sirnak and Siirt**

Only a couple of years ago it was deemed inadvisable to travel at night in this part of Eastern Turkey due to the threat of armed bandits. However we had no problems and were rewarded with views of 2 male *Nightjars* by the roadside.

**28<sup>th</sup> July 2004**

### **South side of Lake Van between Tatvan and Yoldondu**

As we drove from our hotel in Tatvan to the birding areas on the south side of Lake Van, we noted a *Hobby* by the roadside as well as a couple of *Hoopoes* and *Rollers*.

### **North of Izikler on the south shore of Lake Van**

Driving along the south side of Lake Van, we noticed a large concentration of waterfowl in a large, reed-fringed bay by the roadside. Coot was the commonest species, with other concentrations including at least 200 *Pochard*, at least 10 *Black-necked Grebes*, 50+ *Armenian Gulls* and several *Black-winged Stilts*. 26 *Ruddy Shelducks*, including several juveniles, showed well on the lake whilst we also located 4 *White-headed Ducks*, 5 *Great-crested Grebes*, 2 *White-winged Black Terns*, an *Avocet* and a few *Ringed Plovers*. In the reeds adjacent to the road, 3 juvenile *Penduline Tits* were located briefly whilst *Bearded Tit* and *Reed Warbler* were also present. Birds noted over the lake included a *Marsh Harrier*, an adult *Rose-coloured Starling* and 3 *Alpine Swifts*.

### **Horkum Golu, south side of Lake Van (Gosney Eastern Turkey – Lake Van site 11)**

Although this site did not hold the concentrations we had seen north of Izikler, we did manage to locate a couple of *Black-headed Buntings*, a couple of *Rollers*, a *Bee-eater* and at least 10 *Alpine Swifts* whilst 2 *Green Sandpipers* were seen on the lake shore.

### **Van Hills (Gosney Eastern Turkey – Van Hills)**

On the north side of Van town, take the road northeast signposted towards Ozalp and clock 8km from this junction. You will pass an obvious reservoir (where large numbers of Armenian Gulls bathe between visits to the rubbish tip on the hillside to the left of the road) down to the right of the road and then you will see, again on the right, a small quarry. Immediately beyond here, it is possible to park on the right. The area to the right of the road is known as Van Hills (in Gosney). From where we parked there is an obvious track that leads between a rocky hill to the right and open fields to the left. This rocky hillock (Van Hills site 2), above the quarry workings, provided us with views of *Eastern Black-eared Wheatear*, *Common Swift*, several

*Northern Wheatears*, a couple of *Tawny Pipits*, a *Long-legged Buzzard*, a *Rock Thrush* and a *Nightjar* that we presumably flushed from its daytime roost. This hillock used to be the favoured area for the target species – Grey-necked Bunting – but a thorough search of this area by our team (and by a group that visited several weeks before) was unsuccessful. After searching this area, we again proceeded away from the road in the direction of the railway cutting (Van Hills site 3). *Rock Sparrows* were numerous in the cutting itself whilst a couple of *Common Kestrels* and *Hoopoes* were located nearby. As you face away from the direction you have just walked, there is a rather imposing, green yet rocky hillside immediately in front of you with obvious rocky crags at its peak. After firstly walking in the direction of the railway tunnel and then ascending the hill from that direction we encountered at least 2 male *Finsch's Wheatears* on the lower slopes, as well as at least 8 *Eastern Rock Nuthatches*, before eventually locating 2 (an adult and a juvenile) *Grey-necked Buntings* in the rocky crags just to the left of the peak. These birds were extremely flighty and, when disturbed, would often fly several hundred metres before landing. We descended the mountain and journeyed back towards the car, with the arable fields adjacent to the road being full of *Crested Larks* and *Black-headed Buntings*.

### **Ercek Golu (Gosney Eastern Turkey – Van Golu site 3)**

By continuing on the road away from Van town, you will reach Ercek Golu, a freshwater lake on your left hand side. We followed a track at the far end of the lake to view, as views from the road are slightly obscured by an embankment. The lake was filled with hundreds of *Black-necked Grebes* whilst huge numbers of *Sand Martin* and at least 250 *White-winged Black Terns* hawked over the water. At least 5 *Slender-billed Gulls* were identified in the near gull flock whilst 50+ *Ruddy Shelduck* and 250+ *Pochard* frequented the open water. A small marshy area on the near side of the lake held 3 *Wood Sandpipers*, a *Green Sandpiper*, at least 5 *Ruff*, 2 *Greenshank* and 8 *Lapwings*.

### **Road 975 between Van and Bendimahe Marshes**

From Van town we headed north on road 975 along the east side of Lake Van. The arid steppes and prominent roadside perches produced 3 *Lesser Grey Shrikes*, at least 15 *Rollers*, a *Long-legged Buzzard* and a *Black Kite*.

### **Bendimahe Marshes (Gosney Eastern Turkey - Bendimahe)**

Road 975 eventually reaches an inlet of Lake Van, and Bendimahe Marshes are located between an army checkpoint and the village of Karahan. Once you have passed through the army checkpoint, take the immediate left fork and after 0.3km there will be a lagoon on the left. A couple of *Ruddy Shelducks* were seen on this lagoon as were several *Black-winged Stilts* although an unexpected highlight was a huge *Saker* that flew through the lagoon, dispersing all birds in the area. We drove a little bit further along the road until we reached the area adjacent to the bridge over the river. The best way to view this area is to park either side of the bridge and then walk onto the taller structure directly adjacent to the main road bridge – by doing this, you evade the horns and accident potential of scanning from the road bridge itself with the increased height allowing slightly better viewing. It is also possible to take a rough path through the damp area immediately adjacent to the bridge and into the reeds – by doing this we were able to locate a juvenile *Citrine Wagtail* in amongst the hordes of *Black-headed Wagtails*. At least 3 *Marsh Harriers* patrolled the reedbeds

whilst *Reed Warbler*, *Great Reed Warbler*, a couple of *Purple Herons* and *Little Bitterns* and 3 each of *Squacco* and *Black-crowned Night Heron* were seen in the reeds themselves. The muddy margins of the river held several species of wader including *Temminck's Stint*, *Curlew Sandpiper*, *Spotted Redshank*, *Ruff*, *Wood Sandpiper*, *Greenshank*, *Redshank* and *Black-winged Stilt* whilst exposed mud allowed at least 50 *Armenian Gulls*, 5 *Black-headed Gulls* and 15 *Gull-billed Terns* to rest. A *Little Tern* and at least 50 *White-winged Black Terns* hawked over the river itself whilst a female *Shoveler*, a *Kingfisher*, a *Little Grebe* and a couple of *Great Crested Grebes* were also noted at this site. As we travelled between this site and the town of Muridaye, a *Lesser Grey Shrike* and at least 20 *Jackdaws* were noted.

### Serpmetas lava fields

Take road 975 northeastwards from Bendimahe, passing through Muridaye, until you reach the village of Caldiran. In this village there is a road to the left, just before the army barracks, that is signposted 'Serpmetas 7km'. Follow this road for 5.5km from this junction passing through fields (where we located a couple of *Long-legged Buzzards* and a *Short-toed Eagle*), and you will eventually come to an obvious right hand bend that will take you slightly uphill and to the start of the lava fields. We parked on the roadside 0.3km beyond this bend, just before the first crest in the road. 3 juvenile *Mongolian Trumpeter Finches* were immediately located in the lava field directly adjacent to the road, with a superb male and an adult female being seen feeding on the road shortly later. We walked west on the lava fields (a rather uncomfortable surface to walk on!) for a couple of hundred metres, locating at least 12 *White-winged Snowfinches* and 5 *Black Redstarts* in the process.

### Bulanik town

A *Long-eared Owl* was heard in the centre of this dusty town late evening.

29<sup>th</sup> July 2004

### Bulanik town

4 *White Storks* and at least 20 *Pallid Swifts* were visible over the centre of the town early morning.

### River Murat at Yoncali

From recent reports, it appears that the most frequent location that Demoiselle Cranes are being located is that of the River Murat, northeast of Yoncali village (although subsequent to our trip we learnt that 2 birds were seen east of Bulanik). From the town of Bulanik head west along the main road and turn right onto the dirt track that is immediately opposite a derelict petrol station. Follow this dirt track through the dusty village of Yoncali, past a small puddle/pond on the right, and take the track towards the river turning right at the only fork. We managed to get our Ford Focus all the way to the river from here, though in several instances it was necessary for the passengers to get out of the car to gain extra clearance. From the car, we walked east along the riverbank for at least 3km. The damp fields adjacent to the track provided good views of 5 *Spur-winged Plovers* whilst good views of a *Black-bellied Sandgrouse* were obtained on a sandy area near to where the car was parked (with a further 3 seen to fly over). *Montagu's Harriers* were numerous over the arable fields, with at least 15 birds seen, whilst other raptors noted included 2 *Long-legged*

*Buzzards*, a *Marsh Harrier* and 2 *Hobbies*. The river itself proved to be productive with a female *Eurasian Teal*, a couple of *Oystercatchers*, a *Pygmy Cormorant*, 10+ *Green Sandpipers*, 5 *Wood Sandpipers*, 25+ *Armenian Gulls*, 9+ *Spoonbills*, 2 *Squaccos*, 4 *Little Egrets*, 2 *Little Terns*, 12+ *Gull-billed Terns*, 2 *White-winged Black Terns*, 6 *Little Ringed Plovers* and 2 *Snipe* being located on our walk. A Stone-curlew was located in a dry area adjacent to the river whilst several *Black-headed Wagtails*, 2 *Rollers*, 6 *Hoopoes* and 5 *Bee-eaters* were seen in the adjacent fields.

#### Siverek town centre

4 *Laughing Doves* were seen adjacent to the main road running through the town.

#### Ataturk Baraji

The ferry between Firat Iskelesi and Hutkoy (see the 'other information' section for the timetable), crossing this reservoir, produced at least 2 *Common Terns* and 2 *Slender-billed Gulls*.

#### Narince

Once we had departed the ferry, we turned right at the t-junction onto the main road and followed signs to Nemrut Dagi. Continuing to follow signs to Nemrut Dagi, you will take a left turn and 3.2km from here, after going through a small village, there are some orchards to the right and below the road (just before the road bends left then round to the right and proceeds uphill through a rocky area). At least 2 *Olive-tree Warblers* were located in the trees just below the road whilst 3 *Woodchats*, a juvenile *Masked Shrike*, a *Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin* and 3 *Goldfinches* were also seen in the area.

#### 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004

#### Nemrut Dagi, Kahta

The mountain of Nemrut Dagi, near the town of Kahta, is not to be confused with the popular tourist attraction of the same name near Lake Van. Early morning, we drove through the entrance gate (where a *Finsch's Wheatear* was present) and up to the summit car park. Immediately adjacent to this car park, and behind the souvenir shop and buildings, we located a dripping tap that was a magnet to several of the montane species. Species here included a couple of *Rock Thrushes*, at least ten *Shorelark*, several *Red-tailed Wheatears* and a *Water Pipit*. We descended the mountain slowly by car, with frequent stops producing a further ten or so *Red-tailed Wheatears*, at least 5 *Eastern Black-eared Wheatears*, a pair of *Finsch's Wheatears*, a couple of *Short-toed Eagles*, a *Long-legged Buzzard* and at least 4 *Western Rock Nuthatches*. Where the road from the summit flattens out (after c.2km from the summit car park), there is an obvious gorge where the road swings round to the right and we found this area of vegetation good for *Woodchat*, *Black-headed Bunting* as well as producing at least 4 *Upcher's Warblers* and a couple of *Rock Sparrows* and *White-throated Robins*. Previous trips have located Pale Rock Sparrow in this area but we were unsuccessful in our quest to locate this species (presumably due to the dispersive nature of the species and potentially the time of year that we visited).

#### Narince

A re-visit to the orchards north of the village, that were visited the previous day, produced further sightings of an *Olive-tree Warbler* as well as a couple of *Woodchats* and 3 *Bee-eaters*.

### **Between Narince and Kahta**

An adult *Egyptian Vulture* showed well by the roadside approximately 1km west of the large bridge across the river east of Kahta.

### **Isikli (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Yesilce site 6)**

Heading west from Gaziantep along the E24, take a right turn signposted to Isikli, and as you approach the village take the left hand fork. After a few hundred yards there is a track on the left hand side (where a general store corners the far side of this junction). We parked in the village immediately adjacent to the start of this track, bought some food from the shop (as we had heard birders experiencing petty crime in this village and wanted to make contact with locals) and started walking. The track will almost immediately bend around to the left and continue up a steep ridge above the village, eventually curving right and into the ‘lunar landscape’ described by Gosney. Brief views of a *Cinereous Bunting* were obtained in this area, whilst other species noted included a male *Blue Rock Thrush*, several *Eastern Black-eared Wheatears* and a couple of *Eastern Rock Nuthatches*. At the far end of this landscape from the village, an orchard provided views of 2 *Eastern Orphean Warblers*, a *White-throated Robin* and 4 *Upcher’s Warblers*.

### **Durnalik (Gosney Ankara to Birecik – Yesilce site 2)**

Returning to the main road from Isikli village, head west along the E24 for 1.2km and turn left towards Durnalik village opposite the lime kiln workings. Drive up this road for 1km and turn right immediately beyond a turquoise fence (on the left) and proceed down this track for a further 0.4km to view the stream on the right. In the couple of hours that we birded this area, we were more than impressed with both the variety and views of the species that came down to drink in the stream - at least 2 *Cinereous Buntings* showed superbly as did a couple of *Cretzchmar’s Buntings*, 5 *Desert Finches*, a *Sombre Tit*, a *Turtle Dove*, an *Eastern Black-eared Wheatear*, a couple of *Greenfinches* and an *Eastern Rock Nuthatch*. A female *Semi-collared Flycatcher* provided a noteworthy find in the adjacent bushes whilst a couple of *Woodchats* and 4 *Black-headed Buntings* also favoured this area.

### **31<sup>st</sup> July**

#### **Göksu Delta (Gosney Ankara to Birecik - Göksu Delta)**

The most productive area of this vast expanse of saline marsh is the Akgol lagoon and scrub area (Gosney site 2), immediately south of the holiday village. Access to this area is via the ‘runway’ leading towards the beach from the holiday village. A brief search of the scrub area immediately inland of the beach did not reveal any Black Francolins although 2 *White-throated Kingfishers* was seen as they rested in bushes, whilst *Graceful Prinia* was common and a couple of *White-spectacled Bulbuls*, a *Syrian Woodpecker*, 3 *Rufous-tailed Scrub Robins*, a *Reed Warbler* and a couple of *Great Reed Warblers* were seen in this area. The lagoon itself, which is viewable from an obvious observation tower on its west side accessed from the ‘runway’, was excellent for large numbers of waterfowl. At least 4 *Grey-headed Swamp-hens* were found as they emerged from the reed fringes with 5 *Marbled Duck*, 14 *Ruddy*

*Shelduck*, 15+ *Mallard*, 20+ *Red-crested Pochard* and 75 *Garganey* located on the open water of the lagoon. A couple of *Marsh Harriers* quartered the reeds and a *Great White Egret* and 3 *Purple Herons* were also seen on the lagoon. 5 *Shags* (of the race *desmarestii*) and 4 *Little Terns* were present on the sea off Akgol beach. Further east, a search of Paradeniz Golu (Gosney site 7) produced only a couple of *Great-crested Grebes* and a handful of *Slender-billed Gulls* whilst birds at the river mouth included an adult *Little Stint* and 8 *Kentish Plovers*, whilst *White Storks* and *Black-headed Wagtails* were common in damp fields throughout the Delta.

### **COMPLETE TRIP LIST**

#### **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

5 Karapinar Crater Lake, 26 Lake Van, 50+ Ercek Golu, 14 Goksu Delta.

#### **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

c.100 Karapinar Crater Lake.

#### **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*

20+ Goksu Delta.

#### **Common Pochard** *Aythya farina*

200+ Lake Van, 250+ Ercek Golu, 1 Bendimahe Marshes, 3 River Murat at Yoncali.

#### **Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*

1 River Murat at Yoncali.

#### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

15+ Goksu Delta.

#### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

c.75 Goksu Delta.

#### **Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

1 Bendimahe Marshes.

#### **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

5 Goksu Delta.

#### **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*

4 Lake Van.

#### **Caspian Snowcock** *Tetraogallus caspius*

1+ Demirkazik.

#### **See-see Partridge** *Ammoperdix griseogularis*

4 Birecik main wadi.

#### **Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

1 heard at the River Murat at Yoncali.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

1 River Euphrates at Birecik, 1 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

5 Lake Van, 3 Bendimahe Marshes, 2 Goksu Delta.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

10+ Lake Van, many Ercek Golu.

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*

5 Goksu Delta.

**Pygmy Cormorant** *Microcarbo pygmeus*

4 River Euphrates at Birecik, 1 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

3 River Euphrates at Birecik, 2 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

3 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

5 River Euphrates at Birecik, 3 Bendimahe Marshes, 2 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

3 River Euphrates at Birecik.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

2 Adana, 2 River Euphrates at Birecik, 4 Bendimahe Marshes, 4 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Great White Egret** *Egretta alba* 2 Goksu Delta.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

2 Lake Van, 3 River Murat at Yoncali, 2 Goksu Delta.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

2 Bendimahe Marshes, 3 Goksu Delta.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

Fairly common by the roadside with c.80 near Seydisehir, 4 on the drive between Birecik and Cizre, 4 Bulanik, 5 River Murat at Yoncali, c.10 Goksu Delta.

[**Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita*

c.50 in the caged compounds of the Ibis Centre at Birecik]

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*



9+ River Murat at Yoncali.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*  
9 Karapinar Crater Lake.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*  
1 by road 975 between Van and Bendimahe.

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*  
adult between Narince and Kahta 1km west of the Kahta road bridge.

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*  
1 c.44km west of Cizre, 1 Serpmetas, 3 Nemrut Dagi.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*  
1 Lake Van, 3 Bendimahe Marshes, 1 River Murat at Yoncali, 2 Goksu Delta.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*  
15+ River Murat at Yoncali.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*  
1 Akseki.

**Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*  
1 Akseki, 1 Van Hills, 1 by road 975 between Van and Bendimahe, 1 Bendimahe Marshes, 2 Serpmetas, 2 River Murat at Yoncali, 1 Nemrut Dagi.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*  
1 west of Yarma by road 330.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
2 Van Hills, 1 road 975 between Van and Bendimahe, 1 Bendimahe Marshes, 2 Nemrut Dagi.

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*  
1 by the road between Tatvan and Yoldondu, 2 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Saker** *Falco cherrug*  
female-type at Bendimahe Marshes.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*  
1 Birecik on cliffs north of the town on the east side of the River Euphrates, 1 Demirkazik.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
1 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Grey-headed Swamp-hen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus caspius*

4+ Goksu Delta.

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*

1 River Euphrates at Birecik, many Lake Van, 2 Bendimahe Marshes, many Goksu Delta.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

2 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

12 Karapinar Crater Lake, 15+ Lake Van, 20+ Ercek Golu, 30+ Bendimahe Marshes.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

1 Lake Van.

**Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicephalus saharae*

1 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*

c.12 west of Yarma by road 330.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius coronicus*

6 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

2 River Tigris at Cizre, 5 Lake Van.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

10+ Karapinar Crater Lake, 8 Goksu Delta.

**Spur-winged Plover** *Vanellus spinosus*

5 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Red-wattled Plover** *Hoplopterus indicus*

3 River Tigris at Cizre.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

8+ Ercek Golu, 15+ River Murat at Yoncali.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

2 Karapinar Crater Lake.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

1 Goksu Delta.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

2 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

1 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

1 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

5+ Ercek Golu, 5 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

2 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

1 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

1 River Tigris at Cizre, 2 Lake Van, 2 Ercek Golu, 20+ Bendimahe Marshes, 5+ Goksu Delta.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

1 River Tigris at Cizre, 2 Ercek Golu, 3 Bendimahe Marshes, 3 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

2 Lake Van, 1 Ercek Golu, 5 Bendimahe Marshes, 10+ River Murat at Yoncali.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

3 Ercek Golu, 15+ Bendimahe Marshes, 5 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Numerous on all areas of water visited.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

5 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*

5+ Ercek Golu, 2 Ataturk Baraji, 8 Goksu Delta.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

Seen in numbers, though less numerous than the next species, at Lake Van, Ercek Golu and Van Hills reservoir and tip.

**Armenian Gull** *Larus armenicus*

Numerous in the Van area with birds noted at Lake Van, Ercek Golu, Van Hills reservoir and the adjacent tip, Bendimahe Marshes and the River Murat at Yoncali.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*

c.15 Bendimahe Marshes and 12+ River Murat at Yoncali.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

2+ Ataturk Baraji.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

1 Bendimahe Marshes, 2 River Murat at Yoncali and 4 Goksu Delta.

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

250+ River Euphrates at Birecik, 2 Lake Van, 250+ Ercek Golu, 50+ Bendimahe Marshes, 2 River Murat at Yoncali and 1 Goksu Delta.

**Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis*

4 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia*

Numerous, with birds best classed as 'Feral Pigeons'.

**Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*

3 Akseki.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and widespread in suitable habitat.

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

1 Durnalik.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis phoenicophila*

1 Nizip, 2 Birecik, 5 Viransehir and 4 Siverik.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

1 Demirkazik.

**Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei obsoletus*

3 (adult and 2 juvs) Birecik.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua indigena*

1 Demirkazik and 1 Van Hills.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

1 heard Bulanik.

**European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus meridionalis*

2 Demirkazik, 2 between Sirnak and Siirt, 1 Van Hills.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

3 Van Hills.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*

20+ Bulanik.

**Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*

12+ Lake Van.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis galilejensis*

1 Birecik and 1 south of Halfeti.

**White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis syriaca*

3 River Tarsus at Adana and 2 Goksu Delta.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*

1 River Euphrates at Birecik, 2 Birecik main wadi.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

1 Bendimahe Marshes.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*

c.10 Birecik main wadi, 1 Lake Van, 1 Van Hills, 5+ Bendimahe Marshes, 5 River Murat at Yoncali, 3 Narince.

**European Roller** *Coracias garrulous*

1 Birecik main wadi, 1 Birecik gravel workings, 3 by road 400 east of Kiziltepe, 2 between Tatvan and Yoldondu, 2 Lake Van, 2 Van Hills, 1 Ercek Golu, 15+ by road 975 between Van and Bendimahe, 4 between Bendimahe and Serpmetas and 2 River Murat at Yoncali.

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops garrulous*

1 Akseki, 1 Birecik main wadi, 1 Birecik gravel workings, 2 between Tatvan and Yoldondu, 2 Van Hills, 1 Goksu Delta.

**Syrian Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos syriacus*

4 Akseki, 1 Birecik orchards and 1 Goksu Delta.

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius*

2 Akseki.

**White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos lilfordi*

1 female Akseki.

**Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata rufescens*

1 Karapinar Crater Lake.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla artemisiana*

10+ Karapinar Crater Lake.

**Asian/Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cheleensis niethammeri/rufescens aharonii*

It is unclear as to whether birds present in central and eastern Turkey are the former species or a pale race of Lesser Short-toed Lark. 2 east of Konya and c.10 by road 330 west of Yarma.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*  
Common in suitable habitat throughout the country.

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea pallida*  
4 Akseki and 1 Birecik gravel workings.

**Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris kumerloevae*  
10+ Demirkazik and 12+ Nemrut Dagi.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*  
Common to abundant near water courses, with particularly large numbers at Bendimahe Marshes and the River Murat at Yoncali.

**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*  
5 Demirkazik.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
Common throughout the country.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica rufula*  
1 by the junction of the E90 and road 400 west of Adana and 1 between Narince and Kahta.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*  
Relatively common throughout the country.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris campestris*  
2 Van Hills.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta coutelli*  
2 Demirkazik and 1 Nemrut Dagi.

**Black-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla feldegg*  
15+ Bendimahe Marshes, 20+ River Murat at Yoncali and c.5 Goksu Delta.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola werae*  
1 (juv) Bendimahe Marshes.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*  
2 River Euphrates at Birecik, 1 River Tigris at Cizre and 2 Bendimahe Marshes.

**White-spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*  
10+ River Tarsus at Adana and 2 Goksu Delta.

**Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis*  
2 (adult and juv) Demirkazik.

**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris subalpina*

2 Demirkazik.

**Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes syriacus*

2 Birecik main wadi, 1 Birecik orchards, 1 Narince and 3 Goksu Delta.

**White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis*

1 Karapinar Crater Lake, 3+ Demirkazik, 2 Nemrut Dagi and 1 Isikli.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros ochruros*

c.15 Demirkazik and 5+ Serpmetas.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*

1 Akseki, 1 south of road 330 at Akcayazi and 2 Karapinar Crater Lake.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe libanotica*

c.25 Demirkazik and 10+ Van Hills.

**Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe melanoleuca*

1 Akseki, 4 Van Hills, c.5 Nemrut Dagi, 5+ Isikli and 1 Durnalik.

**Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii finschii*

2 Van Hills and 3+ Nemrut Dagi.

**Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrna*

15+ Nemrut Dagi.

**Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis saxatilis*

2 Demirkazik, 1 Van Hills and 2 Nemrut Dagi.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius solitarius*

1 Demirkazik and 2 Isikli.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus amicornum*

1 (male) Demirkazik.

**Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula syriacus*

1 Akseki and 2 Durnalik.

**Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis akyildizi*

10+ Goksu Delta.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*

2 River Euphrates at Birecik, 4 Lake Van, 2 Bendimahe Marshes and 1 Goksu Delta.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus arundinaceus*

1 River Euphrates at Birecik, 2 Bendimahe Marshes and 2 Goksu Delta.

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Acrocephalus pallidus tamariceti*

Present in small numbers at the majority of sites where suitable habitat was present.

**Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida*

4 Nemrut Dagi and 4+ Isikli.

**Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum*

2+ Narince.

**Ménétries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea rubescens*

c.12 Birecik main wadi.

**Rüppell's Warbler** *Sylvia rueppelli*

2 (pair) Akseki.

**Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris*

3 Akseki and 2 Isikli.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

1 Demirkazik

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis icterops*

1 Demirkazik.

**Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus orientalis*

2 Akseki.

**Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata*

1 (female) Durnalik.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* 2 Akseki.

**Bearded Tit** *Panurus biarmicus russicus*

2+ Lake Van and heard at Bendimahe Marshes.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus tephronotus*

5 Akseki.

**Sombre Tit** *Parus lugubris anatoliae*

3 Akseki, 1 Narince and 1 Durnalik.

**Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

1 Akseki.

**Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*

5 Akseki.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

6+ Akseki and 1 Birecik main wadi.



**Krüper's Nuthatch** *Sitta krueperi*

10+ Akseki.

**Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea levantina*

1 Akseki.

**Eastern Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta tephronota dresseri*

3 Halfeti, 8 Van Hills, 2 Isikli and 1 Durnalik.

**Western Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta neumayer*

2 Akseki, 3 Demirkazik and 4+ Nemrut Dagi.

**Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria*

1 Demirkazik.

**Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*

3 Lake Van.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

5+ Demirkazik.

**Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor*

3 by road 975 between Van and Bendimahe and 1 by road 975 between Bendimahe and Muradiye.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*

1 Birecik main wadi, 3 Narince, 10+ Nemrut Dagi and 3+ Isikli.

**Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus*

7+ Akseki and 1 Narince.

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius anatoliae*

5+ Akseki.

**Common Magpie** *Pica pica pica*

2 west of Yarma by road 330.

**Alpine Chough** *Pyrrhocorax graculus digitatus*

50+ Demirkazik.

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax docilis*

c.20 Demirkazik.

**Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula soemmerringii*

20+ Bendimahe Marshes.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus frugilegus*

5 Lake Van and 5 Bendimahe Marshes.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix pallescens*  
Common throughout the country.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax laurencei*  
3 Akseki.

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*  
Fairly common throughout the country.

**Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus*  
1 (adult) Lake Van.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
Numerous in all areas visited.

**Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer moabiticus mesopotanicus*  
8+ River Euphrates at Birecik and 1 Birecik gravel workings.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*  
5 Demirkazik.

**Chestnut-shouldered Petronia** *Petronia xanthocollis transfuga*  
c.5 Birecik orchards.

**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia*  
10+ Demirkazik, 10+ Birecik main wadi, 25+ Van Hills and 2 Nemrut Dagi.

**White-winged Snow Finch** *Montifringilla nivalis leucura*  
100+ Demirkazik and 12+ Serpmetas.

**Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus*  
c.40 Demirkazik.

**European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*  
2 Durnalik.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis niediecki*  
4 Akseki, 3 Narince, c.8 Isikli and 5+ Durnalik.

**Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina bella*  
2 Karapinar Crater Lake, 3 Demirkazik and c.10 Durnalik.

**Crimson-winged Finch** *Rhodopechys sanguinea sanguinea*  
6 Demirkazik.

**Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta*  
6+ Birecik main wadi, 10+ Birecik orchards and 5 Durnalik.

**Mongolian Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes mongolicus*

5 (pair and 3 juvs) Serpmetas.

**Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea semenowi*

1 Isikli, 2+ Durnalik.

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*

4 Karapinar Crater Lake.

**Grey-necked Bunting** *Emberiza buchanani*

2 (male and juv) Van Hills.

**Cretzschmar's Bunting** *Emberiza caesia*

2 (male and juv) Durnalik.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus pyrrhuloides*

1 by road 330 west of Yarma.

**Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*

4+ west of Yarma by road 330, 2 Karapinar Crater Lake, 2 Lake Van, 15+ Van Hills,  
4 Nemrut Dagi, 4 Durnalik.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra calandra*

5 west of Yarma by road 330.