



Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus* Tudho, Oman, 6 January 2015. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

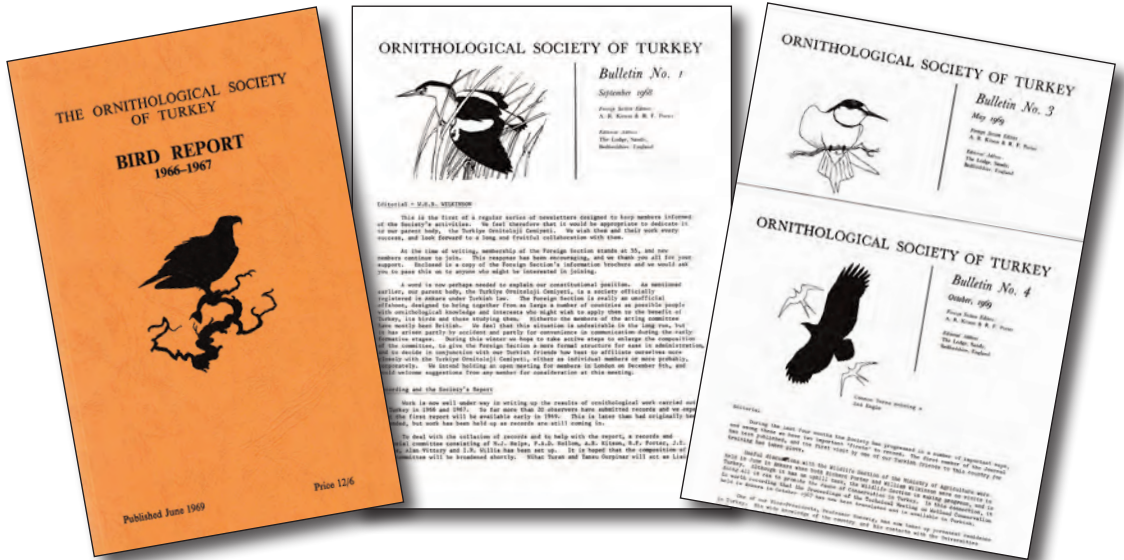
A history of OSME

RICHARD PORTER

EARLY DAYS AND THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF TURKEY

Go back to October 1967. The country is Turkey and a week-long conference on wetland conservation is being hosted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the International Council for Bird Preservation (now BirdLife International) and the International Wildfowl Research Bureau (now Wetlands International). Here, in Ankara, one of the conference's outputs was announced: the formation of the Ornithological Society of Turkey with both national and foreign sections (Appendix 1). IUCN (1968) and Porter (2017) helped tell the story. The following year, 1968, OST was formally launched and the foreign section duly held its first meeting on 6 December in London in the boardroom of Bowmaker House under the chairmanship of the late Sir William Wilkinson. Fifteen founding members were present of which three are still members of OST's successor: the Ornithological Society of the Middle East. In this brief history of OSME and its founding mother, the OST, Sir William is one of the few names I will mention. A total of 28 members served on OST's council, 17 of which went on to be OSME council members (Appendix 1). Furthermore OST's four vice presidents were the first to honour that role for OSME.

OST ran for ten years, an active ten years for both the national and foreign sections. In Turkey there was initially much synergy with the Turkish National Parks Department and the Ministry of Forestry. Also by the early 1970s the first fledging steps were being taken in Turkey to form a voluntary wildlife conservation movement that would eventually become today's Dogal Dernegi (Wildlife Society of Turkey), the Turkish BirdLife Partner. Meanwhile the foreign section, based in England, produced a series of *Bird Reports*, in four volumes, covering the years 1966 to 1975 (Plate 1a) and, in 1971, a *Checklist of the Birds of Turkey*, all with the OST's dramatic logo of a perched White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* with fish in talons on the cover. Those were the days when this fine raptor graced many Turkish lakes. As well as the bird reports, members received the *OST Bulletin* (Plate 1b, 1c), which had a great similarity in style to the newsletter of the Sussex Ornithological Society. Several of those early stalwarts involved in producing the OST literature came from Sussex where they were also involved in writing for the SOS. In 1972 'Foreign Section' was dropped from the society's title and in 1974 the constitution was changed, so that the sole aim became to collect, collate and disseminate ornithological data on



Left to right: **Plate 1a.** Ornithological Society of Turkey Bird Report 1966–1967, 1969. **Plate 1b.** Ornithological Society of Turkey Bulletin 1 1968. **Plate 1c.** Ornithological Society of Turkey Bulletin 3 & 4 1969.

Turkey. Both reflected the need to keep the society out of any political involvement in the country. During its ten years OST membership ranged from 76 at the end of its first year to a peak of 138, fifteen editions of the *OST Bulletin* were produced and the annual subscription, starting at £1.00 went up to £2.00 in 1976. And in 1971 an electric type-writer was purchased for £45.

OSME IS CONCEIVED

Fast forward to October 1976 and the Pontic mountains (Plate 2) in northeast Turkey above the Coruh river. Here in Borcka, close to the Georgian border, the notion of OSME was thought of during an expedition to ‘discover’ the raptor migration route that followed the eastern Black sea coast (reported in *OST Bulletin* 14). The OST was eight years old and was starting to show signs of becoming stale and somewhat restricted in what it could contribute to Turkish ornithology, especially with a new conservation movement taking shape. It was time for a change. And so it was that in 1978 OSME (Appendix 1) and its flagship journal, *Sandgrouse*, was launched expanding the region of ornithological interest to the whole Middle East with the first AGM held in June 1979 at the offices of Kleinwort Benson in London, attended by 21 members. At the end of its first year membership stood at 313. Subsequently it increased to a peak of c1000 in 1998, but has since declined, with fluctuations, to the current level of 700.

In 1981 OSME became a registered charity thus enabling the society to benefit from those members who pay tax in the UK. In 1984 life membership was introduced at £150 and the first life member signed up the following year. Now there are 37 life members, though the offer of life membership has since been dropped as it proved not to be economical. People are living too long! In 1991 membership details were transferred from card index to computer and in 1997 a new category of supporting member was introduced to pay for a subscription of a young member living in the region. There are now over 30 Middle East nationals helped in this way. In the early days OSME produced car stickers, badges, ties, tee-shirts and season’s greetings cards, but financial constraints (mainly price of postage) and work load has meant that sales items have become a thing of the past. But if you have any look after them as an OSME pin-badge has sold on e-bay for £100.



Plate 2. Pontic mountains, Turkey, October 1976. © RF Porter

Discussions by Council in the 1990s considered the expansion of OSME's southern boundary to take in parts of north and northeast Africa, but following the formation of the African Bird Club it was agreed that the only African country that would be OSME territory was Egypt. However in 2001 the society expanded its aims and became the *Ornithological Society of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia* but retaining its OSME acronym. The Central (Middle) Asian countries were not part of a regional bird club falling as they did, geographically, between OSME and the Oriental Bird Club regions; also it was becoming more and more difficult to undertake bird-related studies in many Middle Eastern countries, so the OSME machine extended its tentacles. In 2008 Council confirmed that the Caucasus included the North Caucasus, to 45° N, of the Russian Federation.

A total of 92 members (Appendix 1) have served on OSME council of which 17 had previously been on the council of OST. In the 50 year history of OST and OSME 103 members have served as officers. In addition there have been 35 vice presidents. It was an early decision not to have a president as choosing a figurehead in a region in which there were many political divisions was felt to be unwise.

SANDGROUSE, SANDGROUSE SUPPLEMENTS AND THE OSME BULLETIN

As with all active journals *Sandgrouse* has evolved in both style and content since the first issue published in 1980, with the familiar OSME logo of a Black-bellied Sandgrouse (Plate 3a–c). The chairman's foreword made reference to the link between the new journal and the OST's first *Turkish Bird Report* and quoted the foreword in that, penned by the eminent environmental scientist, Dr J B Cragg, the sentiments of which he felt were still valid for *Sandgrouse*:

"This new journal is to be welcomed because it will provide a medium for the publication of all types of studies on birds, many of which have no source of publication at present. A journal, by focussing attention on a particular field of study, can have an effect well beyond the boundaries which it may set for itself. I have every hope that this journal



Left to right: **Plate 3a.** *Sandgrouse* 1 1980. **Plate 3b.** *Sandgrouse* 18 (2) 1996. **Plate 3c.** *Sandgrouse* 38 (2) 2016. **Plate 3d.** *Ornithological Society of the Middle East Bulletin* 35, 1995.

will provide the stimulus for a new approach to field studies in an area of the world which still retains many natural assets”.

In addition five special *Sandgrouse* issues or supplements have been published: an Arabian Gulf issue (1993) followed by country checklists for Turkey (1998, Plate 4), the Levant: Israel and Jordan (1999), Syria (2008) and the United Arab Emirates (2010), as well as the *Sandgrouse* volumes devoted to the two OSME expeditions: to North Yemen in 1985 and Southern Yemen and Socotra in 1993. Thirty five issues of *OSME Bulletin* (Plate 3d) were published, but in 1995 the journal was subsumed into *Sandgrouse*.



Plate 4. Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*, Birecik, Turkey, 17 June 2002. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen. The eastern population is confined to the Middle East and has declined dramatically in the last 50 years and may no longer breed in the wild.

The contents of *Sandgrouse* from 1996 are listed on the OSME website's home page and all back issues, apart from the three years preceding the current issue are now downloadable as scans from the Biodiversity Heritage Library, as are *OSME* and *OST Bulletins*. All 30 issues of *Phoenix*, the newsletter of the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia project, are also on the BHL website.

As with all organisations, social media have played an increasing role in communicating with members and others about the importance of birds and bird conservation across the OSME region. The website, launched in the early 2000s and revamped in 2014, is the society's showcase, with over 22 000 visits and over 300 000 hits in its peak month in 2017. Furthermore Twitter followers are almost at 3500 and the Facebook page has more than 1600 'likes'. A discussion group, Middle East BirdNet (MEBirdNet), was founded in 1998 to promote birdwatching and the conservation of birds in the region. In 2014 its name was changed to OSMEBirdNet. It has nearly 600 subscribers and covers research, conservation, bird news, recent records, identification, requests for information and exchange of information.

CONSERVATION FUNDING AND STUDIES

The Conservation Fund

Launched in 1982 as the Conservation Research Fund, the CRF was OSME's first venture into actively promoting conservation and education projects in the region. The first grant was given to Max Kasperek for the series of booklets, *Birds of Turkey*, then in 1983/4 a total of £700 was granted for *Birds of Egypt*, shipping costs for 3000 copies of the Arabic translation of *Birds of Lebanon*, for migration surveys and a White Stork census in Israel, for studies into Strickland's Wheatear in Jordan and towards the *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia* project. Overseen by a small, regularly-changing committee, the fund has given over £120 000 to cover 120 projects in its 25 year history. In 2017, grants totalled over £15 500 and helped fund projects on White-headed Ducks, Bar-headed Geese (Plate 5), Great Bustards, Bar-tailed Godwits, Sociable Lapwings (Plate 6) and Steppe Eagles (Plate 7) as



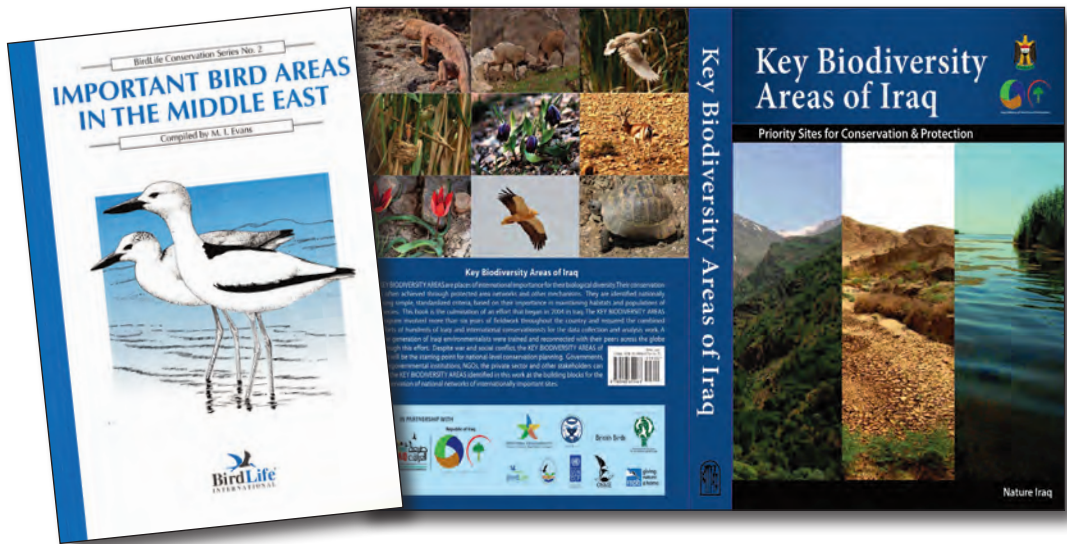
Plate 5. Bar-headed Geese *Anser indicus*, Tajikistan. © Amridor Mirakov



Plate 6. Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*, Salalah, Oman, 18 February 2014. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen. A species that symbolises the link between the old and new OSME regions. Critically Endangered it has been a focus for OSME research and conservation support.



Plate 7. Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis*, Raysut, Oman, 13 November 2013. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen. Also symbolises the link between the old and new OSME regions, breeding in Central Asia and migrating through and wintering in the Middle East. Until recently its conservation status was Least Concern, but now is globally Endangered.



Left to right: **Plate 8a.** Evans, MI. 1994. *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East*. BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK. **Plate 8b.** Nature Iraq, *Key Biodiversity Areas of Iraq*.

well as education programmes in Armenia and Azerbaijan, reflecting a shift towards the Central Asian countries. A list of grants awarded 2015 and 2016 can be viewed on the OSME website.

The Sites Register and Important Bird Areas

One of OSME's early conservation projects was the establishment in 1983 of a sites register scheme to catalogue the important sites for birds in the region. Soon after, in collaboration with the then ICBP, the register was recorded on the latter's word processor and a joint OSME/ICBP committee was set up in 1984 to promote the scheme. By 1991 data sheets for 181 sites had been received from 38 contributors. It was this backbone of site-based information, together with the Middle East wetlands' directory (Scott 1995) that helped encourage ICBP (soon to become BirdLife International) to initiate a two-year review of the important sites for birds in the Middle East. This culminated in the cataloguing by BirdLife International of 391 areas in the conservation classic, *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East* (Evans 1994, Plate 8a), a joint project with OSME in cooperation with the then IWRB and sponsored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Subsequently, *Sandgrouse* has been an important vehicle for documenting new or threatened sites for birds, including revisions to country IBAs, notably for Lebanon, Socotra and Uzbekistan, whilst OSME has also helped sponsor the 2017 publication of a major study *Key Biodiversity Areas of Iraq* (Plate 8b).

OSME expeditions to Yemen

Two expeditions to Yemen, in 1985 and 1993, took advantage of relatively quiet periods in Yemen's troubled history of tribal conflict. Each spanned two months with teams of up to ten ornithologists. Special editions of *Sandgrouse* were devoted to their discoveries. Yemen was chosen as it was probably the least known country in OSME's region with very few visits by ornithologists and a scant historical literature. It was also a country for which coverage was a high priority for the developing sites register as well as collecting distribution data for the monumental *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia* (Jennings 2010) which OSME supported.

The first expedition, in October and November 1985, focussed on the then North Yemen and was generously supported by several companies with Cable & Wireless being the major sponsor. The findings are chronicled in *Sandgrouse 9*, which was entirely devoted to the surveys and a film of the expedition can be seen on YouTube “Autumn in Arabia Felix”. Cable & Wireless became good friends of OSME in the mid 80s, hosting a reception



Plate 9a (top). OSME team seawatching on Socotra, March 1993. © RF Porter

Plate 9b (bottom left). Children at Hadibu, Socotra, using the OSME expedition telescope, March 1993. © RF Porter

Plate 9c (bottom right). Socotra Buzzard *Buteo socotraensis*, Socotra, Yemen, 14 June 2006. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen. Only recently named this taxon was studied by OSME during its 1993 expedition to Yemen. It is one of the globally threatened endemic birds in the OSME region.

in London to celebrate the expedition, and paying for Mike Rands, one of the expedition leaders, to go to Yemen to present the expedition film to the Ministry of Agriculture and Yemen TV. A video copy was presented to Yemen's Prime Minister.

Then in 1993 OSME ventured to survey southern Yemen and Socotra (Plates 9a–c) from mid March–mid May and *Sandgrouse* 17 is devoted to telling the story. The whole expedition was captured on video but has yet to be turned into a comprehensive film. Omar Al-Saghier was the Yemeni counterpart and stayed with the team throughout the whole venture. He kept up a close relationship with OSME thereafter becoming Yemen's authority on birds, started the Yemen Society for the Protection of Wildlife and is now the national co-ordinator for the small grants programme of the Global Environment Facility. Yes, even in Yemen's troubled times conservation continues.

The OSME Region List.

With the aims of updating to a world-standard taxonomy and of standardising English bird names used in publications in the region, the OSME region list programme began in 2005. Soon after it took on a wider remit and now the aim of the ORL is to provide a definitive list of bird taxa that have occurred in the OSME region. The ORL provides a basis for any country wishing to produce a checklist of its birds and is also a helpful reference source of the origin of first records for the region. Regularly updated, it can be viewed on the OSME website.

FIELD GUIDES

Support for country and regional bird guides in Arabic has been a thread through OSME's history. Following its first expedition an Arabic *Birds of Yemen* was published (Plate 10a). Covering 100 species it was widely distributed to schools throughout the country in the 1990s. Later, following publication of the first edition of *Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East* in 1996, OSME helped sponsor an Arabic edition (Plate 10b), published by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon in 2008. Then followed two Arabic-language country field guides (Plates 10c,d), *Birds of Iraq* and *Birds of Syria*. How ironic that these should have been produced at a time of such strife and conflict. OSME's most ambitious project of all, eclipsing even the two expeditions, was the sponsorship of the Arabic-language edition of the major revision of Porter & Aspinall's *Birds of the Middle East* (second



Plate 10a (left). *Birds of Yemen*, an Arabic language guide. Covering 100 species it was widely distributed to schools throughout Yemen in the 1990s.

Plate 10b (right). Arabic language *Birds of the Middle East*, first edition. Published by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon in 2008.



Plate 10c (above). The Arabic language Birds of Iraq in use. © RF Porter



Plate 10d (left). Birds of Syria, in Arabic.

Plate 10e (below). Arabic language Birds of the Middle East.



edition, Plate 10c). Voluntarily translated by Kuwait's AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan, for which he was made the first OSME honorary life fellow, this joint OSME/BirdLife International publication was launched at the Emirates Literary Festival in March 2017 and is being widely distributed throughout Arabia. It is now being produced as an app that will be free to download. OSME's greatest contribution to ornithology in Arabia?

GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

Meetings

The AGM with associated talks has become the main social event in the OSME calendar with the largest attendance being for OSME's 10th anniversary in October 1988 when 140 members gathered for a day at Friends' House in London. However what has now become OSME's Summer Meeting, generously hosted by the British Trust for Ornithology, is not the only occasion where members meet up and socialise.

Over the years there have been a number of joint meetings, the first in May 1986 when a Middle Eastern evening was held in London with the Fauna & Flora Preservation Society. A further event was held with FFPS along with the British Ornithologists' Union in November 1991 at the Zoological Society of London meeting rooms to consider the environmental effects following the Gulf War. Then, in April 1992, there was an all-day follow-up meeting with the BOU to discuss: "Bird Conservation in the Arabian Gulf. Action and Prescription".

OSME joined forces with the British Ornithologists' Club for an evening meeting in London in December 1998 and an all-day meeting in November 2015. The latter, jointly with the Natural History Museum, focussed on bird monitoring in the Middle East. The now discontinued journal, *Birding World*, hosted three meetings with OSME on birds and conservation in the Middle East in Cley (UK) in the early 1990s. The first, on 3 May 1992, was somewhat depleted in numbers due to a Lesser Short-toed Lark—a first for Britain, and, ironically an OSME region speciality—at Portland Bill, Dorset. They could have come as it was only there on the 2nd!

Other noteworthy events included representation at the 17th ICBP European section conference in Turkey in 1989 and attending a multi-organisation meeting in the Netherlands in September 1990 on bird conservation research initiatives in Turkey. Chaired by OSME the occasion was used to present DHKD (now DD) with a set of *Birds of the Western Palearctic* as a memorial to Stanley Cramp and Sir Hugh Elliott, past OSME vice presidents with strong connections with Turkey. OSME also attended the first Arabian ornithological and conservation conference in Bahrain in October 2000 (Andrew Grieve and Tony Morris represented OSME).

Birdfair

OSME had its first stand at the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water in England in 1990, the second year the fair was held there. Sales takings were £153.20 and 12 new members were recruited. The OSME archives for the 1993 Birdfair say, "5 new members; very wet and windy and water seeped up through the ground overnight; our book prize for the competition was stolen". The society has continued to have a successful stand at Birdfair, which has become a wonderful venue for members to meet up. And nothing more has been stolen. In addition OSME's conservation fund has benefitted greatly from the prize money of those brave members who have entered the regional bird clubs' 'Birdbrain' competition. In 2017 David Lindo won the top prize of £1000 which will go towards production of the app of the Arabic language *Birds of the Middle East* (2017). OSME, the regional bird clubs, as well as hundreds of other organisations, owe a big debt of gratitude

to the Birdfair team, for helping promote ornithology and conservation throughout the world.

Regional Bird Clubs' liaison

By 1994 four regional bird clubs covering ornithological interests over much of the globe had been established: African Bird Club, Neotropical Bird Club, Oriental Bird Club and OSME, and in July 1994 the first meeting of their executive officers was held in Cley. One of the topics discussed was holding a 'world birding weekend' and this duly took place at Swanwick (UK) in April 1997. It was well attended and deemed a success. However, despite consideration, it was not repeated.

Thereafter regular meetings of the regional bird clubs' chairmen and executive officers have taken place and frequent topics have been a joint data-base, birdwatchers' behaviour and the collection of specimens, resulting in agreed codes of conduct.

Tours

In the 1990s OSME ventured into the world of birdwatching holidays in the region, partnering with Sunbird. The first, to Egypt in spring 1991, was cancelled due to the Gulf War, but went ahead in April the following year. These were followed by tours to Yemen in November 1992 and April 1998.

TAILPIECE

Over the years OSME, and its precursor OST, have received great support from the RSPB, not only in allowing the use of their postal address as a point of contact, but also in helping with some of the practical side of running an active society: printing, photocopying and occasionally typing and, initially, housing OSME's reference collection and archive of literature. They also made a great contribution, through sponsorship, to the publication of the Arabic language *Birds of the Middle East*. The British Trust for Ornithology has also been very supportive in hosting the Summer Meetings and now housing OSME's extensive collection of books and archives in its library.

A close relationship with BirdLife International is something for which OSME has always strived and in 2015 a joint Memorandum of Understanding was signed which aimed to strengthen the links between the two organisations for the benefit of bird conservation in the region (Plate 11). In particular the MoU focused on supporting each other through the use of social media, organisational web-sites and printed materials as well as fundraising initiatives. It also included awareness-raising and capacity-building projects and supporting conservation and monitoring across the region to further the understanding of the East Asian/East African and Central Asian flyways.

Tangible testimonies to this close relationship have been the joint publishing of the Arabic language *Birds of the Middle East* and a study into the illegal killing of birds in Arabia, Iran and Iraq. This wanton and illegal slaughter is one of the conservation blights of the OSME region. The bird killing in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean countries is particularly notorious (Plate 12). It was against this unacceptable practice that OSME joined forces with BirdLife International to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the level of killing to complement that carried out in the Mediterranean countries by BirdLife partners. The next step will be to turn the findings into an action programme that will address this major threat so that when the next chapter in OSME's history is written it will celebrate its success.

OSME has had an evolving history, from the Ornithological Society of Turkey to an organisation embracing the entire Middle East which then spread its wings further to encompass the Caucasus and Central (Middle) Asia. During its fifty years it has made a



Plate 11. Patricia Zurita (CEO BirdLife International) and Rob Sheldon (chairman OSME) after signing the BirdLife/OSME MoU at the Birdfair, August 2015, Rutland, UK.



Plate 12. Shrike trapping in southern Turkey, 1970. © RF Porter

thoughtful and caring contribution to ornithology in a much troubled region of the world, whether through its showcase journal, *Sandgrouse*, its expeditions to Yemen, funding and support for conservation projects and research or its educational work, especially in supporting Arabic books on birds. Run by volunteers who devote hundreds of hours a year to promoting its aims, OSME has been ever mindful of the constantly changing fortunes of a region beset with conflict and strife. Let us hope that the future brings happier times not only for our feathered friends, but those who fight bravely for peace.

I can end this short history in no better way than to quote the current OSME chairman, Rob Sheldon, in his 2018 New Year message: "I'd like to thank all OSME Council members for their input and hard work. We are all volunteers who share a passion for the birds of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus. OSME is an incredibly well run Society that continues to punch above its weight, and Council members should be proud of what they have contributed to during 2017."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This short history would not have been possible without the considerable help of Effie Warr, who together with John and Pat Bartley and Geoff and Hilary Welch, has maintained the OSME archives, thus greatly facilitating this account of OSME's history. I would also like to thank others who have answered questions, notably, Mike Blair, Ian Harrison, Rob Sheldon, AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan and John Warr. Andy Stoddart and Effie Warr read the entire draft and I am grateful to them for their helpful comments.

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Appendix 1. A listing of OSME council members (current members in bold), OSME vice-presidents, OST Foreign section council members and OST vice-presidents, based especially on material supplied by Effie Warr.

OSME council members (current members in bold):

Sajidah Ahmad co-opted 2017–; **AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan** co-opted as webmaster 2010–; Sharif Al Jbour 2005–2010, Simon Albrecht 1980–1984, 1986–1991, sales officer 1981–1989; Gary Allport 1993–1998, conservation 1993–1998; Mark Andrews 1988–1993, publicity 1988–1993; John Armitage 1993–1995, publicity 1993–1995; Dawn Balmer 2001–2006, publicity 2002–2006; John Bartley 2003–2008, co-opted as secretary Nov 2002, secretary 2003–2008; Pat Bartley 2003–2008, conservation research fund 2004–2008; Mark Beaman 1978–1981, *OST Bird Report* editor 1978, *Sandgrouse* editor 1978–end 1980; Keith Betton 2001–2007, profile in *Sandgrouse* 24 (1): 68, chairman 2002–2008, co-opted as chairman 2007–2008, information officer and librarian 2000–2008; **Mike Blair** 2008–2013, 2017–, co-opted 2005–2008, co-opted for ORL 2013–2017, *Sandgrouse* editor 2004–2008; Richard Bonser 2007–2010; Dr Christine Booth co-opted for Conservation Research Fund 2012–2013; Chris Bowden 1988–1990, conservation 1988–1991; Dr Mark Boyd 1989–1993, *OSME Bulletin* editor 1989–1993; Chris Bradshaw 1998–2003, 2003–2004, co-opted 1997–1998, conservation 1997–2004; Duncan Brooks 1986–1994, *Sandgrouse* editor 1988–1994; Simon Busuttill 1999–2002, co-opted 1998; Phil Cannings 2012–2017, secretary 2013–2014; Peter Clement 1978–mid

1979, 1984–1985; Dr Nigel Collar 1981–1985 conservation; Adrian Colston 1993–1998, 1999–2000, treasurer 1993–1998, co-opted 1998–1999; Peter Conder 1980–1982; Sal Cooke 2012–2017; Dr Lindon Cornwallis 1982–1987; Major David Counsell 1987–1993, treasurer 1988–1993; Dr **Peter Cowan** co-opted as *Sandgrouse* editor 2008–; Ray Daniel 1999–2004, co-opted 1998–1999, librarian 1998–2004; Peter Davidson 1995–2000, information officer 1995–2000; Helen Demopoulos 2011–2016, events co-ordinator 2011–2016; Lieuwe J Dijkens 1978–1979; Shane Enright 1984; Mike Evans 1988–1991, Middle East IBA coordinator; David Fisher 1979–1990, publicity 1978–1981, *OSME Bulletin* editor end 1980–1989, co-opted 1978; Andrew Grieve 1996–2002, 2003–2008, co-opted 1995–1996, chairman 1997–2002, publicity/advertising 1995–2003; Richard Grimmett 1991–1993; **Tomas Haraldsson** 2016–; Chris Harbard 1981–1985, 2003–2008, publicity 1982, *OSME Bulletin* editor end 1980, 1981–1985; **Ian Harrison** 2008–2013, 2015–, co-opted 2007–2008, 2014–2015, secretary 2008–2013; Mike C Harrison 1978–1980, sales 1978–1980; Dr Derek Harvey 1996–2001, *Sandgrouse* features editor; Peter Heathcote 1990–1993, secretary 1991–1993; Phil Hollom 1990–1995; Stan Howe 1991–1996; **Chris Hughes** 2012–, treasurer 2012–; Irene Hutson co-opted as postal clerk at RSPB July 1991–1994; Tim Inskipp 1978–1983; Michael Jennings 1978–1983, 1985–1990, 1991–1994, profile in *Sandgrouse* 20 (1): 17, treasurer 1978–1983, membership secretary 1978–1980; Guy Kirwan 1991–1996, 2007–2012, Turkey officer 1992–1994, information officer 1995, *Sandgrouse* editor 1995–2004, librarian 2004–2015; F J Köning 1978–1980; Chris Lamsdell 2006–2011, advertising 2008–2011, co-opted for advertising 2011–2013; Dr Tom Lawson 1980–1981, sales 1980–1981, co-opted mid 1980 for sales; Steve Madge 1978–1981; Rod Martins 1986–1991, *Turkey Bird Report* editor 1988–2005, co-opted for *Turkey Bird Report* 1991–2005; Dominic Mitchell 2006–2008; Derek Moore 1998–2002, co-opted 1997–1998, publicity 1997–2003; **Nick Moran** 2010–2015, 2016–, co-opted 2015–2016; Rob Morris 1993–1995, secretary 1993–1995; Tony Morris 1995–2000, 2000–2005, secretary 1995–2000; David Murdoch 2003–2008; Tom Nightingale 1990–1993; Bill Oddie 1987–1990; Donald Parr 1978–1988, secretary 1978–1983, *Sandgrouse* editor 1981–1988; Steve Parr 2001–2002, co-opted for conservation 1997–1998, conservation 2001–2002, secretary 2002; Rosemary Parslow 1993–1998, membership secretary 1993–1998; Richard Porter 1979–1987, 1989–1993, profile in *Sandgrouse* 23 (2): 104–105, co-opted 1978, *OSME Bulletin* editor 1978–early 1979, publicity 1981, chairman 1982–1987, conservation 1991–1994; Hew Prendergast 1994–1994, *OSME Bulletin* editor 1994–1995; Richard Prior 2006–2011; **Dora Querido** 2014–; Dr Michael Rands 1983–1992, chairman 1987–1992, conservation 1985–1988; Nigel Redman 1981–1988, membership 1981–1983, treasurer 1983–1988, co-opted mid 1980 for membership; Tristan Reid 2013–2016; Colin Richardson 2005–2010, profile in *Sandgrouse* 21 (2):119; Owen Roberts 1998–2003, co-opted 1997–1998, publicity 1997–1998, membership 1998–2001, secretary 2000–2002; Steve Rooke 2006–2007; Irene Sabiniarz 2015–2017, secretary 2015–2017; CDW Savage 1978–1980; Dr Derek Scott 1980–1982; Harry Scott co-opted as publications officer 1994–2000; Dr **Rob Sheldon** 2009–, chairman 2013–; Elizabeth Smith Bowden co-opted as membership secretary 1989–1990; **Paul Stancliffe** 2017–; Mark Thomas 2004–2008, advertising 2004–2008, acting as postal clerk at RSPB to 2015; Chris Tucker co-opted as paid postal clerk July 1990, membership secretary 1990–1993; Alan Vittery 1979–1985, co-opted as *OSME Bulletin* editor 1978. *OSME Bulletin* editor 1978–1980; **Effie Warr** 1983–1988, secretary 1983–1988, membership secretary 1983–1989, co-opted for sales & distribution 1989–; **John Warr** 1999–2004, co-opted as treasurer 1998–1999, treasurer 1999–2004, co-opted as treasurer 2004–2012, co-opted as joint treasurer 2012–, membership 2001–2003, co-opted for membership 2004–; Richard Webb 1991–1994, co-opted 1990–1991, Turkey information officer 1990–1992; Geoff Welch 1986–1991, 1992–1997, 2007–2013, profile in *Sandgrouse* 22 (2):148, co-opted 1991–1992, publicity 1986–1988, librarian 1987–1993, joint secretary 1988–1991, chairman 1992–1997, 2008–2013, conservation 2008–2013; Hilary Welch

1988–1993, profile in *Sandgrouse* 22 (2):148, co-opted 1986–1988, co-opted 1993–1997, joint secretary 1988–1991, librarian 1987–1998; Matthew White 2013–2014; William Wilkinson 1978–1982, chairman 1978–1982.

OSME vice-presidents (10 year term, chosen by OSME council, current VPs in bold):

Prof Dr Abdulaziz Abuzinada 1991–2001, profile in *Sandgrouse* 18(1):22; Shaika Noora Bint Isa Bin Sulman Al Khalifa 1991–2001; Ali bin Amer Al Kiyumi 2006–2016; Dr Omar Al-Saghier 1997–2007, profile in *Sandgrouse* 22 (1):12; Dan Alon 2007–2017; **Azzam Alwash** 2009–; Imad Atrash 2002–2012; Sherif Baha el Din 1994–2004, 2006–2016, profile in *Sandgrouse* 19 (2): 96; Sir Derek Barber (later Lord Barber of Tewkesbury) 1987–1997; B. Behrouzi-Rad 1996–2006; Prof Dr Wilhelm Büttiker 1987–1997; **Melis Charalambides** 2010–; Stanley Cramp 1978–1987; Dr Akram Eissa Darwish 2007–2017; Sir Hugh Elliott 1978–1987; RD Etchécopar 1978–1985; Major Michael Gallagher 1987–1997, profile in *Sandgrouse* 19 (1):16; Dr **Nabegh Ghazal Asswad** 2013–; Ramaz Gokhelashvili 2006–2016; Dr Luc Hoffman 1978–1985; Phil Hollom 1979–1989; Dr Hans Kumerloeve 1979–1989; Dr Yossi Leshem 1997–2007; Prof H Mendelssohn 1982–1992; Dr **Ali Adhami Mirhosseyni** 2008–; Dr Saeed Mohamed 1996–2006; Amis Mouasher 1997–2006; Samer Mouasher 2006–2008; Richard Porter 1997–2007, profile in *Sandgrouse* 23 (2):104–105; Dr Ghassan Ramadan-Jaradi 2002–2012; Mrs Mona Ramadan-Jaradi 2002–2012; Dr **Sergey Sklyarenko** 2008–; Dr G Tohmé 1982–1992; Sir William Wilkinson 1988–1996, knighted January 1989; Mrs Nergis Yazgan 1987–1997, profile in *Sandgrouse* 18 (2): 30.

OST foreign section (1968–1977) council members (those who continued as OSME council members in bold):

Mark Beaman 1974–1978, *OST Bird Reports* editor 1973–1978; JC Beaudoin 1968–1978; Peter Clement 1975–1978, treasurer mid 1975–late 1977, membership & sales mid 1977–1978; Liewe Dijkzen 1975–1978; Tansu Gurpinar 1968–1969; **Mike Harrison** 1973–1978, *OST Bulletin* editor 1973,1974, secretary 1973–end 1975; Hayo Hoekstra 1968–1970; Phil Hollom 1971–1977, chairman 1972–1977; **Tim Inskipp** 1978; **Mike Jennings** 1978, acting treasurer/membership secretary late 1977–mid 1978; JP Knowles 1968–1970, treasurer & membership secretary 1968–1970; **Fred Koenig** 1971–1978; David Lea Acting Committee during launch of OST 1968; **Steve Madge** 1976–1978; Andrew Mountford 1976–1977, minutes secretary mid November 1975–1976; G Mueller 1968–mid 1978; PJS Olney Acting Committee during launch of OST 1968; **Don Parr** 1978, assistant secretary 1977–1978; Richard Porter 1968–1978, secretary 1968–1973, 1975–1978; Martin C Robinson 1975–1978, *OST Bulletin* editor late 1975–; **CDW Savage** 1972–1978; S Sogard 1976–1978; Dr J Szijj 1968–1972; Jacques Vielliard 1968–1974; AJ (Tony) Vittery 1971–1975, treasurer 1971–1975, membership & sales 1972; Alan Vittery 1968–1973, *OST Bird Report* editor 1968–1973; **WHN Wilkinson** 1968–1976, 1977–1978, chairman 1968–1972; 1977–1978.

OST VICE-PRESIDENTS (those who continued as OSME VPs in bold)

Stanley Cramp 1978–; Sir **Hugh Elliott** 1968–; **RD Etchécopar** 1968–; Dr **Luc Hoffman** 1968–; Dr C Kosswig 1968–Jan 1975.