

AROUND THE REGION

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Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 39(1) should be sent by 15 December 2016 to ianbirds@gmail.com or atr@osme.org.

ARMENIA

A **Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* Vedi hills 5 May (a known location for this species, first record June 2012).

AZERBAIJAN

The following records all refer to January 2015. 200 **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons*, nine **Lesser White-fronted Geese** *A. erythropus* and 500 **Eastern Greylag Geese** *A. a. rubrirostris* Shirvan national park 16 Jan. 340 **Gadwalls** *Anas strepera* also present. 300 **Red-crested Pochards** *Netta rufina* Gizil-Agach 18 Jan and over 50 **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* Mahmutchala lake 17 Jan. 16 000 **Tufted Ducks** *Aythya fuligula* Baku 28

Jan. A **Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus* near Quba 25 Jan and three **Xinaliq** 26 Jan with 12 **Eurasian Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus*. 42 **Cinereous Vultures** *Aegypius monachus* Besh Barmag 25 Jan. 205 **Western Marsh Harriers** *Circus aeruginosus* and 40 **Hen Harriers** *C. (cyaneus) cyaneus* Shirvan NP 16 Jan. 205 **White-tailed Eagles** *Haliaeetus albicilla* Besh Barmag 24 Jan. 40 000 **Little Bustards** *Tetrax tetrax* Shirvan NP 16 Jan, 2600 near Biləsuvar 19 Jan and 5000 near Ağgöl NP 20 Jan. 1300 **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Gizil-Agach 18 Jan. On 25 Jan Besh Barmag 40 000 **Common Gulls** *Larus (c.) canus*, the second record of **Glaucous Gull** *L. hyperboreus* and first record **European Herring Gull** *L.*



Plate I. Black-winged Pratincoles *Glareola nordmanni* 17 April 2016, Besh Barmag, Azerbaijan. © Andreas Sandberg



Plate 2. White-headed Wagtail *Motacilla (flava) leucocephala* 17 April 2016, Besh Barmag, Azerbaijan. © Andreas Sandberg

argentatus (both singles), plus 60 000 **Caspian Gulls** *L. cachinnans*. 10 000 **Western Jackdaws** *Coloeus monedula* and 20 000 **Rooks** *Corvus frugilegus* Shirvan NP 16 Jan. Five **Moustached Warblers** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* Gizil-Agach 18 Jan and four near Ağgöl NP 20 Jan. A **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* Shirvan NP 16 Jan, first mid winter record. Two **Wallcreepers** *Tichodroma muraria* Xinalıq 26 Jan. 34 **Hawfinches** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* near Ağgöl NP 20 Jan and 40 on steppe near Acinohur lake 22 Jan.

The following records refer to 2016. 13 **Pallid Harriers** *Circus macrourus*, 36 **Montagu's Harriers** *C. pygargus* Besh Barmag 17 Apr. Two **White-tailed Lapwings** *Vanellus leucurus* Kizil Agach 8 May (outside its range this late in spring). 2915 **Black-winged Pratincoles** *Glareola nordmanni* Besh Barmag 17 Apr (Plate 1). An adult **Great Black-headed Gull** *Ichthyiaetus ichthyiaetus* Kizil Agach 8 May (injured wing but outside its range this late in spring). A pair of '**Northern Shikras**' *Accipiter (badius) cenchroides* at breeding site Masalli 8 May. **Red-tailed Wheatears** *Oenanthe chrysopygia* near Batabat (Nakhchivan AR, at several sites in dry semi-desert) 12 May. One **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis* Batabat, 12 May (little known from this region). One '**White-headed Wagtail**' *Motacilla (flava) leucocephala* Besh Barmag 17 Apr (Plate 2). Three **Mongolian Finches** *Bucanetes mongolicus* Negram 12 May. **Grey-necked Buntings** *Emberiza buchanani* noted several sites in dry semi-desert near Batabat 12 May.

CYPRUS

35 **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* flew into Larnaca sewage works pools 26 Jan with ten remaining to 23 Feb, four to 2 Mar and one still present into June; 15 **Kapouti reservoir** 6 Jan. A pair **Red-crested Pochards** *Netta rufina* Mia Milia 14 Apr, female sitting on active nest; pair seen again 21 Apr but subsequent visits indicated probable failure. Max 300 **Common Pochards** *Aythya ferina* Mia Milia 6 Jan. 23 **Ferruginous Ducks** *A. nyroca* Mia Milia 23 Jan and six there 12 May and 5 Jun, assumed to be nesting as were the birds at Ayios Loukas wetland (female with seven ducklings seen). Two **Tufted Ducks** *A. fuligula* Athalassa dam, Nicosia, 2–30 Jan and a female **Kapouti reservoir** 21 Mar. The three female **White-headed Ducks** *Oxyura leucocephala* first recorded Oroklini marsh 14 Dec 2015 remained to 26 Feb with one present to 5 Mar. Two **Great Crested Grebes** *Podiceps cristatus* Asprokremmos dam 8–18 Feb. Large numbers **Greater Flamingos** *Phoenicopterus roseus* counted 16 Jan waterbird count (14 000 Larnaca salt lake area, including a melanistic individual first seen March 2015, c2500 Akrotiri salt lake). Single **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* 6 Apr over Timi, Paphos, and 21 Apr over Lady's Mile, Limassol. Two **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* Agia Eirini dam 27 Jan and one over Zakaki marsh, Limassol, 28 Jan. 7+ **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* nests, 39 **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* nests, c300 **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus (i.) ibis* nests and 5+ **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* nests counted Ayios Loukas wetland 4 Jun. A French-ringed **Western Osprey** *Pandion (h.) haliaetus* Klepini reservoir 2 May. A **Booted Eagle** *Aquila pennata* cape Greco 9 Apr. Single **Corncrakes** *Crex crex* Ronnas bay 8 Apr and Akrotiri gravel pits 18 Apr. A **Baillon's Crane** *Zapornia (p.) pusilla* Phasouri reedbeds 20 Apr and another Germasogeia dam 29 Apr. 23 **Demoiselle Cranes** *Grus virgo* Kapouti reservoir 18 Mar. 600 **Common Cranes** *G. grus* East Mesaoria plain 5 Mar and 350 Kouklia village 8 Mar.

Four **Eurasian Oystercatchers** *Haematopus (o.) ostralegus* Akrotiri coast 31 Mar, four Lady's Mile, Limassol, 13 Apr and two Meneou beach, Larnaca, 29 Apr. Only one record **Eurasian Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* this spring, single Mandria, Paphos, 17 Mar. A

Greater Sand Plover *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* Akanthou 9 Apr. Single **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* Evretou dam 14 Apr, Phasouri reedbeds 18–22 Apr, Lady's Mile 21 Apr, Akhna dam 7 May and two Akhna dam 10 May. The long staying **Whimbrel** *Numenius (p.) phaeopus* remained at Paphos headland to 12 Apr with other records of this scarce passage migrant Akrotiri gravel pits 8 Apr (two), one Mandria, Paphos, 17–22 Apr and 11 May and one Larnaca airport coast 14 May. Single **Ruddy Turnstones** *Arenaria interpres* Klapsides headland 6 Feb and Paphos headland 15 Apr. A **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* Spiros pool 10 Apr with two **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* present 19 Apr and two Akrotiri salt lake area 10–14 May. Single **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* Larnaca airport pools 25–29 Apr, Akrotiri salt lake 28 Apr and Akrotiri gravel pits 13 May. 35 **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* Kouklia reservoir 26 Apr and a **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* Spiros pool, Larnaca, 19 Apr. Two **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genei* Ayios Loukas wetland 4 Jun and a **Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Larnaca salt lake 16 Jan–9 Feb. Breeding **Audouin's Gulls** *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* on Kleides islands 7 May (four nests) and 28 May (six nests). An adult **Great Black-headed Gull** *I. ichthyaeetus* Larnaca sewage works area 3–4 Feb, breeding plumage birds Lady's Mile 15 Mar, Oroklini marsh 28 Mar and Spiros pool 10 Apr. A first winter **Common Gull** *Larus (c.) canus* Fresh Water lake (south),

Famagusta, 26 Jan and others Lady's Mile 28 Jan and 3 Mar, Larnaca sewage works 5 Feb, Neapolis wetland 6 Feb. Five **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* Mandria, Paphos, three Oroklini marsh 28 Mar, three Akrotiri gravel pits 21 Apr and seven Mandria 13 Apr (largest group recorded Cyprus). The largest group of **Little Terns** *Sternula albifrons* for Cyprus (41) Larnaca sewage works 14 May while largest recorded group of **Black Terns** *Chilidonias niger* (eight) there 9 May. Singles Larnaca sewage works 14 May–14 Jun and Akhna dam 24 May. Two dark phase **Arctic Skuas** *Stercorarius parasiticus* flew west off cape Pyla 12 Feb with a pale phase flying north at Paphos headland 24 Apr.

A **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Syrhaptus orientalis* Livera 28 Jan. **Laughing Doves** *Spilopelia senegalensis* continue to colonise with more than 20 Aradippou, Larnaca, 20 May and new breeding locations in villages east of Paphos. A female **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* Mandria 21 Feb–27 Apr fourth record (if wild origin) (Plate 3). A **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Phasouri reedbeds 13–27 Jan and a **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Lady's Mile/Zakaki marsh 1 Feb–1 Mar. Small numbers of **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops persicus* recorded several locations 5 Apr–7 May, max three Phasouri reedbeds 12 Apr. Very early **Eurasian Hoopoes** *Upupa epops* Agios Ermolaos 11 Jan and Strakka, Nicosia, 19 Jan. First record **Amur Falcon** *Falco (vespertinus) amurensis* (a male) Anarita park area, Paphos, 28 Apr–15



Plate 3. Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* 22 March 2016, Mandria, Paphos, Cyprus. © Matt Smith



Plate 4. Amur Falcon *Falco (vespertinus) amurensis* 28 April 2016, Anarita park, Paphos, Cyprus. © Matt Smith

May (Plate 4) while one **Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug* over Xylofagou, Larnaca, 15 Mar. A **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius (i.) isabellinus* at Akrotiri gravel pits 26 Mar and one **Turkestan Shrike** *L. (i.) phoenicuroides* Mandria 8–9 Apr (Plate 5). A **Grey Shrike** *L. (excubitor)* probably *elegans* Akrotiri salt lake 31 Mar. First record **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis* cape Greco 24–25 Mar (Plate 6). Two **Northern Ravens** *C. (corax) corax* (almost extinct Cyprus) Lythrodontas, Nicosia, 5 Jan, one Athalassa dam, Nicosia, 25 Jan, five Trachoni pools 28 Jan and six Rizokarpaso 10 Apr. A **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* Karpasia peninsula 24 Mar and five 2 Apr, while singles Akrotiri gravel pits 6 Apr, cape Apostolos Andreas 14 Apr (Plate 7) and Petounta point, Larnaca, 16 Apr. Fourth record **Bar-tailed Lark** *Ammomanes cinctura* Akrotiri gravel pits 2–3 Apr. Four **Lesser Short-toed Larks** *Alaudala (r.) rufescens* Spiros pool 7 Feb and five Mandria 11 Mar. Seven **Eurasian Crag Martins** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*



Plate 5. Turkestan Shrike *Lanius (isabellinus) phoenicuroides* 9 April 2016, Mandria, Paphos, Cyprus. © Dave Walker



Plate 6. Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* 24 March 2016, cape Greco, Famagusta, Cyprus. © Rajja Howard

Plate 7. Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata* 14 April 2016, Rizokarpaso, Cyprus. © Hüseyin Yorgana

Plate 8. Eurasian Crag-Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* 26 January 2016, Kapouti reservoir, Cyprus. © Birtan Gökeri

Plate 9. Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus (bonelli) orientalis* 6 April 2016, Livera, Cyprus. © Birtan Gökeri

Kapouti reservoir 26–27 Jan (Plate 8) and six Rizokarpaso 10 Apr (rare visitor).

Eastern Bonelli's Warblers *Phylloscopus (bonelli) orientalis* Rizokarpaso 26 Mar and Livera 6 Apr (Plate 9) while a possible **Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris* Paphos headland 18 Mar. One **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivatorum* Tsada 24 May and **Icterine Warblers** *H. icterina* Rizokarpaso 7 May and Filani 9 May. Single **Barred Warblers** *Sylvia nisoria* Akrotiri gravel pits 19 & 23 Apr and two ringed Neo Horio, Paphos, 20 Apr and

three 23 Apr. An **Asian Desert Warbler** *S. [n.] nana* Anarita park 26–30 Mar (seventeenth record). Last report of **Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* from Avakas gorge, Paphos, was 10 Apr while one Kensington cliffs, Limassol, 13 Jan. An unseasonal adult **Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus* Paphos headland 20 Feb & 2 Mar with singles Rizokarpaso 7 May, Livera 11 May and cape Apostolos Andreas 21 May (a rare migrant). One **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* Rizokarpaso 4 Mar (a rare visitor) and a **Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia*



Plate 10. Western Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus* 2 April 2016, Livera, Cyprus. © Ertaç Cüneyt

Plate 11. Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha* 10 April 2016, Timi beach, Paphos, Cyprus. © Dave Walker

Plate 12. White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* 24 February 2016, Cape Greco, Famagusta, Cyprus. © Matt Smith

Plate 13. Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* 20 February 2016, Trikomo, Cyprus. © Hüseyin Yorgancı

luscini Livera 19 Apr. Eight reports of **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* 21 Mar–13 Apr at cape Greco, Souni, Akhna dam, Kiti and Tala. **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus p. samamisticus* males Mesogi, Paphos, 21 Mar and cape Greco 25–30 Mar. Male **Western Siberian Stonechats** *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus* cape Greco 4 and 12 Mar, Livera 2 Apr (Plate 10) and Karpasia peninsula 2 Apr, with a female there 26 Mar. One male **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha* Timi beach, Paphos, 10–13 Apr (Plate

11) with another Baths of Aphrodite, Latchi, 13 Apr. An overwintering **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* Kalopanagiotis, Troodos, 5–9 Jan. **White-crowned Wheatears** *Oenanthe leucopyga* at cape Greco 23–26 Feb (Plate 12) and 7 May (eighth & ninth records).

A single **Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia* cape Greco 30 Jan–15 Feb. Single **Dunnocks** *Prunella modularis* Anarita park 16 Jan, Tsada 9 Feb and Paphos headland 20 Mar. A **White-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) leucocephala* Paphos headland 13 Apr and one **Yellow-**



Plate 14. Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus* 30 January 2016, cape Greco, Famagusta, Cyprus. © Rajia Howard



Plate 15. Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus* 21 February 2016, Kapouti, Cyprus. © Birtan Gökeri



Plate 16. Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus* 16 March 2016, Kioneli, Cyprus. © Robin Snape

headed Wagtail *M. (f.) lutea* Lady's Mile 22 Apr (both ssp rare visitors). **Citrine Wagtails** *M. citreola*, although reported from various locations 18 Mar–16 May, were in fewer numbers than previous years. A **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* Paphos headland 8 Mar–5 Apr and two Akrotiri gravel pits 6 Apr. **Bramblings** *Fringilla montifringilla* Trikomo 20 Feb (Plate 13) and cape Greco 13 Mar while only record of **Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was one ringed Polis reedbeds 24 Jan. Up to four **Trumpeter Finches** *Bucanetes githagineus* cape Greco 30 Jan–19 Mar (Plate 14) and one Salamis 27 Feb and two Dhekelia garrison 18 Mar. Reports of **Eurasian Siskin** *Spinus spinus* from various locations this winter (Plates 15, 16) but only one **Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citronella* (Asgata, Limassol, 15 Jan). Over 100 **Cretzschmar's Buntings** *E. caesia* Livera 19 Mar.

IRAN

Most of the following records are from Hormozgan province. 13–17 **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* mainly Bandar Abbas–Minab area 19–27 Jan. 570 **Crab-plovers** *Dromas ardeola* and 18 **Great Stone-curlews** *Esacus recurvirostris* Tiab creek 20 Jan. 71 **Great Knots** *Calidris tenuirostris* Golshar coast 26 Jan. 26 **Sooty Gulls** *Larus hemprichii* Jask 24 Jan and 15 **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Ichthyiaetus ichthyiaetus* Azini creek 22 Jan and 20 Jask Markazi protected area 24 Jan. Two **Common Woodpigeons** *Columba palumbus* south Kashan 10 Mar were the first for the area. Two **Spotted Owlets** *Athene brama* Gonewordi 23 Jan. A female **Sind Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos assimilis* near Gonari 21 Jan, two Gonewordi 23 Jan and two Bahmani 25 Jan. Second record **Ashy Drongo** *Edolius leucophaeus* Jahad park 19–26 Jan (Plate 17). **Sand Lark** *Alaudala raytal*, common along coast Bandar Abbas–Azini creek 19–26



Plate 17. Ashy Drongo *Edolius leucophaeus* 19 January 2016, Jahad park, Iran. © Magnus Ullman



Plate 18. Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* 21 January 2016, Del Goraz, Iran. © Magnus Ullman

Jan (at least 50 birds recorded). Second record **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus (proregulus) proregulus* northeast Tehran 4 Apr. Two **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *P. humei* Jahad park 19 & 26 Jan and two Bahmani 25 Jan. Two **Oriental White-eyes** *Zosterops palpebrosus* Azini creek 22 Jan. Four **Song Thrushes** *Turdus philomelos* Bahmani 25 Jan. Two **Red-breasted Flycatchers** *Ficedula (p.) parva* Jahad park 19 Jan, four Bahmani 25 Jan, three Jahad park 26 Jan. Two **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* Del Goraz 21–23 Jan (Plate 18) and a **Meadow Pipit** *A. pratensis* there 21 Jan.

Two pairs **Olive-backed Pipits** *A. hodgsoni* Bahmani 25 Jan, two Jahad park 26 Jan (third and fourth records). Ten **Eurasian Siskins** *Spinus spinus* Jahad park 19 Jan (fourth record southern Iran).

IRAQ

200 **Marbled Ducks** *Marmaronetta angustirostris* Dalmaj marshes 2 Apr and ten 15 Apr Central marshes, southern Iraq. 60 **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* Dalmaj marshes 2 Apr and 40 **Glossy Ibises** *Plegadis falcinellus* there 5 Apr. One **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* western part Central marshes 15 Apr. 80 **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* Dalmaj 27 Apr and eight **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* there that day with five Central marshes 10 May. An **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Khor Khafka 29 Jun 2014 (few Iraq records). 300 **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** *Pterocles alchata* Dalmaj marshes 5 Apr. A flock of 3000 **Sand Martins** *Riparia riparia* Central marshes 10 May. 50 **Basra Reed Warblers** *Acrocephalus griseldis* Dalmaj marshes 5 Apr and 20 counted during a survey Central marshes 10 May. Three pairs of breeding **Desert Finches** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* 15–16 May Khanzad, northeast of Erbil.

ISRAEL

The first breeding record of **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* near Nizzana, a pair with nine ducklings first noted 21 Jun. Second record **Red-billed Teal** *Anas erythrorhynchos* first found north Arava, 30–31 Jan 2015 remained there to at least 7 May 2016. Two **Red-breasted Mergansers** *Mergus serrator* Bnei Israel reservoir, Golan, 12 Jan–27 Feb. Sixth record **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* off Eilat, 8 May. Two **Red-billed Tropicbirds** *Phaethon aethereus* off North Beach, Eilat, 20 May. A **Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* Bet Shean valley 5–7 Mar. Second record **European Shag** *Gulosus aristotelis* off Jaffa 18 Jan. A **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* north of Eilat throughout March. One **Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotos* Eilat mountains 31 Mar. Long-staying immature **Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* south Judean plains until at least 31 Mar while another migrated north over Eilat mountains 9 May. One **Rough-**

legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* near Kiryat Gat 3 Feb–31 Mar while a second long-stayer 10 km north, near Kedma, 17 Feb (fourth & fifth records). Fifth record of **Crab Plover** North Beach, Eilat, 7 May while a **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* at Uvda 26 Mar. Single **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* Kfar Etzyon 11 Apr, Hamadiya, Jordan valley, 15–16 Apr and Hama'apil fishponds, Hefer valley, 19 Apr. **White-eyed Gull** *Ichthyaeetus leucophthalmus* is very rare in the Mediterranean but one off Tel Aviv 25 Jan. **White-cheeked Tern** *Sterna repressa*: a single pair bred Eilat and hatched one chick. Single **Arctic Terns** *Sterna paradisaea* North Beach, Eilat 5 & 12 May. Five **Long-tailed Skuas** *Stercorarius longicaudus* off North Beach, Eilat, 27 Mar, nine 12 Apr and one 23 Apr. A **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* Einot Gibton, coastal plains, 6 May was 13th record and first for May. Breeding of **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* confirmed in northern Dead sea region where a pair was seen throughout June with a recently fledged juvenile 24 Jun. One **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* Uvda valley 16 Jan and one Km76, Arava, all Jan. Several breeding pairs **Thick-billed Lark** *Ramphocoris clotbey* southern Arava April/May. During March several mobile groups and single **Dunn's Larks** *Eremalauda dunni* south Negev and Eilat mountains where recently fledged juvenile seen 16 Apr. A few **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* southern Arava, March. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Oranit, east Dan region, 26–28 Feb and one **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *P. humei* Dafna, Hula valley, 5–6 Feb. One, 11th record, **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* ringed Eilat 8 May. An **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia (n.) nana* Tel Aviv 25 Apr was a very late record and only the third one for the coastal plains. A pair of **Black Scrub Robins** *Cercotrichas podobe* bred March/April Hai Bar Yotvata nature reserve (first record 2015) and several more individuals in southern Arava. An influx of **Collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula albicollis* mid April mainly southern and central areas: 56 Neot Smadar 12 Apr, 50 Yeruham 15 Apr and 30 Tel Aviv 13 Apr. Single **Red-breasted Flycatchers** *F. (p.) parva* Jerusalem 16–26 Feb, Lotan 22 Apr and Km82, Arava, 23 Apr. Seventh record **Basalt Wheatear** *Oenanthe (lugens) warriar*,

a first-winter bird, Km95 Arava 12 Jan–16 Feb. One male **Kurdistan Wheatear** *O. (x.) xanthopyrmyna* near Lotan, Arava, 23 Jan–29 Feb and another Tsvia, Gilboa, throughout Jan/Feb. Third bird at Majdal Shams, mount Hermon, 18 Mar. Third record **Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla (alba) personata* southern Dead sea region 23–25 March. Sixth record **Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii* near Arsuf, north of Tel Aviv, 19 Mar.

OMAN

Five–ten **Lesser Whistling Ducks** *Dendrocygna javanica* Saham sewage lagoons 2 Jan–28 Feb (ninth record). **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons* Khawr Rawri Nov/Dec 2015 last seen 23 Feb while three Khawr Taqah 10 Apr. Five **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* Raysut lagoons 19 Feb, eight **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* also there. A single **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* off Mirbat 26 Feb (Plate 19). Five **Lesser Flamingos** *Phoeniconaias minor* Khawr Rawri 12–13 Jan and three 23 Feb presumably some of the birds first seen December 2015. At least 20 **Yellow Bitterns** *Ixobrychus sinensis* East Khawr 3 May (74 sightings in two hours) and one in north at Seeb, 12 May (very rare in north, although one 22 Oct 2015 Al Qurm park, Muscat). Two **Eastern Cattle Egrets** *Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus* Salalah area 13 Apr–18 May. Sixth record **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* Khawr Razat 9 Jan. One **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Khawr Badiaa, Musannah, 8 Jan seen again Azaibah 9 Feb. Seventh record **Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*, an adult male, Haitham 1 Mar. One **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Seeb, 14–15 Apr, 12 May. Two **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* East Khawr park 21 Feb. A **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Clanga pomarina* Raysut sewage treatment plant 9 Feb while one **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* at nearby Raysut lagoons 19 Feb (possibly the 20 Nov 2015 bird). Fifth record **Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucorhynchus*, a juvenile, Raysut area 27 Jan–1 Mar. Over 20 **Montagu's Harriers** *Circus pygargus* Jarziz farm, Salalah, 30 Jan was an unusual concentration. A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Khawr Rawri 23 Feb and three Raysut STP 16 Mar. 14 **Spotted Thick-knees** *Burhinus capensis* Al Baleed park 20 Feb, an unusual



Plate 19. Swinhoe's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis* 26 February 2016, off Mirbat, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

concentration. **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* records Raysut STP 9 Feb, 19 Feb and 18 May probably refer to same bird, possibly the same bird recorded there late 2015. 14 **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* on farms near Barka 8 Jan while a single Dawkah farm 5 Feb. The **Asian Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus* first seen 3 Nov 2015 Al Ansab wetland, Muscat, remained there to 11 Feb. One **Common Gull** *Larus* (c.) *canus* Raysut 19 Feb.

A **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* Raysut 7 Feb and 15 **African Collared Doves** *Streptopelia roseogrisea* 16–17 Feb Al Mazyunah. A **Tambourine Dove** *Turtur tympanistria* Sahanawt 11 Apr (unknown origin). Third record **Common Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx varius* Al Balid Farm 7 Jan while 13 **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarptis melba* over Sahanawt farm 26 Feb. Two **Malachite Kingfishers** *Corythornis cristatus* Khawr Rawri late 2015 still present 10 Mar. **Amur Falcons** *Falco (vespertinus) amurensis* Sahanawt farm 25 Apr and Jarziz farm 16 May while fifth record of **Merlin** *F. columbarius* Sahanawt farm 26 Feb. Two **Lanner Falcons** *F. biarmicus* Mudayy

oasis, 1 Apr. **Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* recorded Mudhay 15 Jan (ten), 18 Feb (eight) Al Beed farms 18 Mar (one). A **White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus (leucogenys) leucotis* East Khawr 20 May (first record south Oman). One **Pale Martin** *Riparia diluta* Raysut STP 7 Feb (sixth record). Single **Red-rumped Swallows** *Cecropis daurica* at farms near Barka 8 Jan, Al Beed farms 18 Mar (two 24 Mar) and Qitbit 18 Mar. A **Streak-throated Swallow** *Petrochelidon fluviicola* Raysut STP 7 Feb (seventh record). A **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* and one **Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon* (ninth record) Qatbit 14 Jan. Four **Wattled Starlings** *Creatophora cinerea* Sahanawt farm 3 May and six **Yellow-throated Sparrows** *Gymnoris xanthocollis* there 23 Feb. The **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* at East Khawr park first reported 21 Nov 2015 last seen 29 Feb. Single **Olive-backed Pipits** *Anthus hodgsoni* Al Beed farms (18 Mar) and Qatbit 18–26 Mar. A **Cretzschmar's Bunting** *Emberiza caesia* Mudhay 19 Feb (fifth record) and **Black-headed Buntings** *E. melanocephala* Al Beed farm 18 & 24 Mar.

SAUDI ARABIA

A minimum of three calling **Harlequin Quails** *Coturnix delegorguei* were heard and seen near Sabya 2 Jun. A **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* at Dammam corniche 12 Feb was fourth record for Eastern province while a **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* at KAUST, north of Jeddah, 16 Jan–14 May was a first for the area and well north of its normal range. The second **Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* for Saudi Arabia was at KAUST 14 May. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* was near Tabuk 25 Mar. A wintering **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* remained at Rabigh dam to 29 Jan and at least fifteen **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* wintered Sabkhat Al Fasl until Mar. One **Booted Eagle** *Aquila pennata* SAF 8 Jan (vagrant Eastern province) and another 10 Jan Tabuk (rare

winter visitor). Second **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* for KAUST 22 Apr. 425 **Northern Lapwings** *Vanellus vanellus* Haradh 5 Feb, the largest recorded flock for Saudi Arabia. One **Spur-winged Lapwing** *V. spinosus* Haradh west pivot fields 5 Feb while a **Red-wattled Lapwing** *V. indicus* was near Shaybah (Empty Quarter) 8 Mar. 16 **Sociable Lapwings** *V. gregarius* Haradh 5 Feb (Plate 20), only the second record for Eastern province, with three **Caspian Plovers** *Anarhynchus asiaticus* same field/date. Two winter-plumaged **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* SAF 26 Feb. A single **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* SAF 12 Feb (third record Eastern province) while six Al Hayer, Riyadh, 3 Jun also unusual.

Two male **Diederik Cuckoos** *Chrysococcyx caprius* Al Mehfar park, Tanoumah, 30–31



Plate 20. Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* 5 February 2016, Haradh, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

Plate 21. Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* 22 January 2016, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

Plate 22. Woodlark *Lullula arborea* 15 January 2016, Sarrar, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Philip Roberts

Plate 23. Dead Sea Sparrow *Passer (m.) moabiticus* 4 March 2016, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

May, one of which trapped/ringed. A juvenile **Pharaoh Eagle Owl** *Bubo ascalaphus* SAF 3 Jun (unusual site for sp) and a pair with two young Al Hayer, Riyadh, 3 Jun. An **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* SAF 8 Jan (unusual winter record). One **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Deffi park, Jubail, 22 Jan–26 Feb and one SAF 4 Mar. Two **Collared Kingfishers** *Todirhamphus chloris* trapped/ringed Either mangroves, Jizan province, 1 Jun. Six of the wintering **Pied Kingfishers** *Ceryle rudis* at SAF until at least 4 Mar (Plate 21) with one remaining to 15 Apr and another remaining at Al Hair, Riyadh, to 22 Apr. A reeling **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* NADA dairy farm, Hufuf, 8 Apr. Three ‘mangrove’ white-eyes *Zosterops (abyssinicus?)* sp, trapped/ringed Either mangroves 1 Jun. One **Black Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas podobe* near Sarrar 15 Jan was fifth record Eastern province, although sp common in west Saudi Arabia. Two **African Pipits** *Anthus cinnamomeus eximius* trapped/ringed Al Mefah park, Tanoumah, 31 May & 1 Jun. Two **Woodlarks** *Lullula arborea* near Sarrar, Eastern province, 15 Jan (Plate 22) only second record while flock of eleven **Dead Sea Sparrows** *Passer (m.) moabiticus* SAF 26 Feb–4 Mar (Plate 23) also only second record.

TURKEY

Short period of extreme cold during generally very mild winter brought many northern migrants to Black-sea coast. A record five **Common Eiders** *Somateria [m.] mollissima*, an increasingly frequent winter visitor, near Hersek Lagünü, sea of Marmara, 6–20 Jan and three Istanbul 2 Feb. 52 **Velvet Scoters** *Melanitta fusca* and a **Common Scoter** *M. nigra* at traditional site Yeşilirmak delta 20 Jan. One **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* İğneada 9 Jan. One **Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* İğneada, Kırkareli, 8 Jan. A single **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* lake Kulu 28 Mar–5 Apr possibly same individual as previous years. Single **Scopoli’s Shearwaters** *Calonectris (d.) diomedea* off Mileyha 22 Feb & 5 Mar. A **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* 2 Jan Samsun, Kurupelit harbour (latest in series of overwintering records).

A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Mileyha, in well-watched Hatay province, 6



Plate 24. Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* 23 May 2016, Kızılırmak delta, Samsun, Turkey. © Kiraz Erciyas Yavuz

Feb and another 14 May at known Şanlıurfa breeding site. One **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* on passage over Hatay Subaşı 3 Apr, while a wintering bird Manyas Kuş Gölü 22 Jan. Five **Little Bustards** *Tetrax tetrax* 29 Feb Mogan lake while unusually large group (75) **Demoiselle Cranes** *Grus virgo* there 23 Mar. One **Caspian Plover** *Anarhynchus asiaticus* 4 Apr Göksu delta (extremely rare migrant). A **Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus* remained lake Küçükçekmece area, Istanbul, 1 Jan–17 Mar while two Sultanahmet area, also Istanbul, 2 Feb & 15 May (unclear if two or three birds involved). One **European Herring Gull** *L. argentatus* Black-sea coast Istanbul (Rumelifeneri) 16 Feb. A single, probably over-wintering **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* Mileyha 9 Jan. Possibly first over-wintering **Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* Mileyha, Hatay, 9 Jan while one **Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata* there 12 Apr (month earlier than previous record). A single **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* ringed 23 May Kızılırmak delta (Plate 24). One **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia (n.) nana* 29 Mar Antalya, following strong storms from the south (sp seems regular there). Mileyha beach, Hatay, again produced rare pipits: a **Blyth’s Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii* overwintered 9 Jan–26 Mar and three **Siberian Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* 2 Jan–6 Feb. One **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* Çıralı beach, Antalya, 1 May and a **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* Yahyalı, Kayseri, 25 Jan.



Plate 25. Common Gull *Larus (c.) canus* 30 January 2016, Mafraq rubbish tip, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

Plate 26. Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* seen during pelagic trip from Kalba, United Arab Emirates, 24 June 2016.

Plate 27. Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* seen during pelagic trip from Kalba, United Arab Emirates, 24 June 2016.

Plate 28. Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* seen during pelagic trip from Kalba, United Arab Emirates, 24 June 2016.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Two **Swinhoe's Petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis* (seventh record) off Kalba 24 Jun. One **Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus* seen on trip from Kalba 14 Apr, three on trip from Fujairah 3 May and one off Fujairah-port beach 13 May. A **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* Zirku island 1 Feb. One **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* Saih al Salam 28 May (exceptionally late record). One **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Wamm from 26 Mar (presumably long-stayer from July 2015). One of the juvenile **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* first found December 2015 last seen Ras al Khor, Dubai, 13 Mar. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Bidiyah 10 Jan. Two **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos trachielotus* near Green Mubazzarah, Al Ain, end of May increasing to three throughout June. An unseasonal **Great Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga* there end of May into June. One **Water Rail** *Rallus (a.) aquaticus* Ajman 15 Jan. **Corncrakes** *Crex crex* Sila 1 May and Mamzar 14 May and one **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Ghantoot 31 Mar–5Apr and male **Little Crane** *Porzana parva* Al Warsan 27 Mar. Up to two **Spotted Crakes** *P. porzana* regularly reported near Green Mubazzarah early May.

Breeding **Grey-headed Swampheens** *Porphyrio porphyrio* *poliocephalus* Al Wathba January.

The **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* first seen Mafrq November 2015 remained throughout January while the winter's second record was at Zakkher 9 Feb–early Mar (eighth record). A **Sociable Lapwing** *V. gregarius* Al Zorah, Ajman, 19 Feb. One **Caspian Plover** *Anarhynchus asiaticus* Hamraniyah 15 Jan (unusual mid winter record) and presumably same bird there 21–22 Mar, and one Al Zorah 5 Mar. A **Jack Snipe** *Lyimnocyptes minimus* Green Mubazzarah 17 Feb remained into March. A **Mediterranean Gull** *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* at Abu Dhabi Golf and Equestrian Club 7–11 Jan and another Mafrq rubbish tip/STP 9–23 Jan, both 1st winter birds (14th & 15th records). One **Common Gull** *Larus (c.) canus* Mafrq rubbish tip 30 Jan (Plate 25) while a **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* seen during pelagic trip from Fujairah 3 Jun and another, from Kalba, 24 Jun (Plate 26) when three **Arctic Terns** *Sterna paradisaea* also seen (fifth record, Plates 27, 28). One **Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Al Warsan 7 Feb. First confirmed breeding record **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* was a bird incubating two eggs at



Plate 29. Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius* 24 May 2016, desert location, Abu Dhabi emirate, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell



Plate 30. Sykes's Warbler *Iduna rama* 13 May 2016, Kalba, United Arab Emirates. © Simon Lloyd

Plate 31. Black Scrub-Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* 3 April 2016, Sila, United Arab Emirates. © Simon Lloyd

Plate 32. Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* 3 April 2016, Sila, United Arab Emirates. © Simon Lloyd

Plate 33. Hybrid Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* × Pied Wheatear *O. [h.] pleschanka* 18 March 2016, Sila, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

Plate 34. Hybrid Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* × Pied Wheatear *O. [h.] pleschanka* 18 March 2016, Sila, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

undisclosed site Abu Dhabi emirate (Plate 29) where birds have been singing for several years. An **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* Wamm farms 4 Jan while fourth record **Pacific Swift** *Apus (p.) pacificus* Yas Island 2 Jan. The **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* first found Al Ajban 19 Oct 2015 stayed until 5 Feb while another bird remained Dubai creek, Al Badia

shoreline, 18 Jan–3 Mar. A **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Masafi 15 Apr. Two **Black Drongos** *Edolius macrocerus* Zabeel park, Dubai 17 Feb with over-wintering bird still present Mushreef park (from 10 Jun 2015). An **Ashy Drongo** *Edolius leucophaeus* (11th record) Al Ain 10 Mar. 70 **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Lulu island 19 Feb with flock

remaining into March. First record **Banded Martin** *Riparia cincta* Green Mubazzarah, Al Ain, 23 Jun.

Hume's Leaf Warblers *Phylloscopus humei* Ghantoot 15 Jan, Bhalghelam island 22 Jan, Abu Dhabi 13 Feb while one **Green Warbler** *P. (trochiloides) nitidus* (15th record) singing Mushrif Palace gardens 4 May. A **Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus (arundinaceus) arundinaceus* Sila 5 May and two **Sykes's Warblers** *Iduna rama* Khor Kalba 13 May (Plate 30). A late **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Abu Dhabi 3 Jun and one **Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* there 18 Mar. Seventh record **Black Scrub-Robin** *Cercotrichas podobe* Sila 3 Apr (Plate 31) while rather early **White-throated Robins** *Irania gutturalis* Mamzar 11 Mar. **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* Dubai 12 Mar, with more arriving late Mar (max four Abu Dhabi 24 Mar) and more reported many sites first half April (Plate 32). The **Caspian Stonechat** *Saxicola [torquatus] maurus hemprichii* found Nov 2015 Wamm farms remained to Feb. Three **Eastern Black-eared Wheatears** *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* Lulu island 10 Mar. One hybrid **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** × **Pied Wheatear** *O. [h.] pleschanka* 18 Mar (Plates 33, 34). A **White-crowned Wheatear** *O. leucopyga* Jebel Hafit 6 Feb and one **Eastern Mourning Wheatear** *O. [l.] lugens* there 19–20 Feb. One **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* Mushrif Palace gardens 12 Feb.

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