

# AROUND THE REGION

Ian Harrison (compiler)

Records in *Around the Region* are published for interest only; their inclusion does not imply acceptance by the records committee of the relevant country. All records refer to 2017 unless stated otherwise.

Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 40(1) should be sent by 15 December 2017 to atr@osme.org.

## AZERBAIJAN

Two **Long-billed Dowitchers** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Liman (10 km north of Lankaran) 31 Jan (first record).

## CYPRUS

A female **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* and 13 young Mia Milia STP/Haspolat STP 3 Jun and a pair **Ferruginous Ducks** *Aythya nyroca* plus eight young there the same day. Two **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* cape Apostolos Andreas/Zafer Burnu 12 Jan circled over the cape and then out over the Klides islands. A **Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* Patriki/Tuzluca 6 Jan (fourth record, Plate 1). 13 **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Neapolis/Gülseren wetland 1 Apr was a high count. 18 **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes orientalis*

Rizokarpaso/Dipkarpaz village 12 Jan, 14 Kapoutil/Kalkanlı 3 Jan, 36 Syrianochori/Yayla 11 Feb and an exceptional count of 54 Doğu Mesaoria/Mesarya 14 Feb. A **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Aphendrika/Afendirka 17 Apr (20th record). The **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Bogazi/Boğaz lagoons first reported Nov 2016 was present 1 Apr when another bird was at Famagusta/Glabside. A **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus* Rizokarpaso/Dipkarpaz village 4 May was together with 100 **European Bee-eaters** *M. apiaster*. Four **Lesser Kestrels** *Falco naumanni* Rizokarpaso/Dipkarpaz village 12 May.

A melanistic **Crested Lark** *Galerida* [c.] *cristata* Kazivera/Gaziveren 13 Feb and a **Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala* (r.) *rufescens* cape Apostolos Andreas/Zafer Burnu 5–6



Plate 1. Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* 6 January 2017, Tuzluca/Patriki, Cyprus. © Hüseyin Yorgancı



**Plate 2.** Lesser Short-toed Lark *Alaudala (r.) rufescens* 6 April 2017, Zafer Burnu/cape Apostolos Andreas, Cyprus. © Birtan Gökeri



**Plate 3.** Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta* 5 April 2017, Zafer Burnu/cape Apostolos Andreas, Cyprus. © Hüseyin Yorgancı

Apr (Plate 2). A **Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus* Agios Amvrosio/Esentepe 7 Apr and two Livera/Sadrazamköy 5 May. A **Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka* carrying food Kayalar/Orga 10 Apr (vagrant). The first record of **Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* cape Apostolos Andreas/Zafer Burnu 5 Apr

(Plate 3), a male cape Greco 18 Apr and a male and female there 30 Apr–2 May. A **Common Rosefinch** *Erythrura erythrura* Livera/Sadrazamköy 18 May (vagrant). 4 **Red-fronted Serins** *Serinus pusillus* Livera/Sadrazamköy 24 Mar (vagrant).





**Plate 4.** Black-throated Thrush *Turdus [ruficollis] atrogularis* 25 April 2017, Azure resort garden, Wadi Lahami, Egypt. © Mattias Nilsson



**Plate 5.** Mesopotamian Crow *Corvus (cornix) capellanus* 3 February 2017, south of Helveh, Khuzestan province, Iran. © Magnus Ullman

## EGYPT

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* heard calling at mangroves Wadi Lahami 9 May. Three **Cream-Coloured Coursers** *Cursorius cursor* El Minya 28 Feb and ten flying north near Mallawi, central Egypt. **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* seen again 10 May at presumed breeding area along the Nile near Mallawi. A **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandularis* near Minya 20 Feb and a single adult male **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumani* near Mallawi 13 Mar. A **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Crocodile island, Luxor 3 Dec 2016 is further evidence of this species' southern expansion in recent years.

An **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* 23 Feb near Assiut and two 6 Mar in nearby area. A **Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus [ruficollis] atrogularis* Azure resort garden, Wadi Lahami, 25 Apr is the third record (Plate 4, previous 1833, 1983, both Sinai peninsula) and first for Africa proper. A male **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha* 22 Feb 30 km west of Tell el Amarna and a female seen there 24 Feb, indicating possible breeding. An **African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp* 8 Dec 2016 just south of Aswan, the recently discovered most northerly breeding site for the species.

## IRAN

The following records north of Ahwaz, Khuzestan province, Feb 2017. 11 **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* Tavahe 6th. A **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* north of Mazrae Seh 8th and 200 **Western White Storks** *C. c. ciconia* Sade Shavar 2nd. 100 **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Nasiriyeh 5th. **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* widespread, max 12 Mazrae Seh 8th. A **Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* Tavahe 6th and 15 **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Clanga clanga* Tavahe 5th. **Pallid Harriers** *Circus macrourus* Mazrae Seh 6th, north of Seyed Abbas 7th and two south of Mazrae Seh 8th. A **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* Mazrae Seh 2nd. Two **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Ichthyiaetus ichthyiaetus* Mazrae Seh 2nd, four Sade Shavar 6th. Two **Daurian Shrikes** *Lanius [i.] isabellinus* Helveh 3rd, two Ali Zoghayeh 4th, two Shavoor river 4th, three Karkeh Koor 5th, three Mazrae Seh 6th, two Tavahe 6th (six on 7th), six south of Mazrae Seh 8th, 1 Borvayeh 8th; c60% where sex determined were males (and no Turkestan Shrikes *Lanius [i.] phoenicuroides* recorded). Five **Mesopotamian Crows** *Corvus (cornix) capellanus* Helveh 3rd (Plate 5) and five Shadegan wildlife refuge 5th. 20 **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* north of Seyed Abbas

7th, nine Borvayeh 8th (clearly a regular winterer Khuzestan). A **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* Shushtar water mills 3rd. A **Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus [ruficollis] atrogularis* Helveh 3rd and **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* Mahmyeh 2nd and Mazrae Seh 6th. Additionally, a **Caspian Plover** *Anarhynchus asiaticus* Miankaleh, Mazandaran province, 25 Apr and a **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* there same day.

## IRAQ

440 000 **Eurasian Coots** *Fulica atra* Delmej wetlands 16 Feb was a record number. 4500 **Red-crested Pochards** *Netta rufina*, 8800 **Common Pochards** *Aythya farina*, 6200 **Ferruginous Ducks** *A. nyroca*, and 11 000 **Tufted Ducks** *A. fuligula* during surveys 10–16 Feb in various wetlands in southern Iraq (Delmej, Bahr Al-Najaf, Sweibaat and west Hammar). During March three **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* (uncommon migrant) Dalmej wetland (one killed 1 Mar) and four over Qara Dagh, Kurdistan, 3 Apr.

Four nests of **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* found Diwaniya, Babylon, and Najaf 10 May (all middle Euphrates region, a range expansion for this species). **Eurasian Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus*, **Steppe Eagles** *Aquila nipalensis*, two **Golden Eagles** *A. chrysaetos* and **Steppe Buzzards** *Buteo b. vulpinus* migrating 18 Feb over central and southern Iraq (total 77 individuals). Over 400 000 waders counted Delmej and other wetlands in southern Iraq during surveys mid Feb–Jun.

21 **Demoiselle Cranes** *Grus virgo* near Sulaymaniyah city 12 Apr. Two **Grey Plovers** *Pluvialis squatarola* west Hammar marshes 12 Feb (very rare). A **Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* camera-trapped 11 Jan, Qara Dagh, Kurdistan. A breeding colony of c125 nests of **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* on edge of Delmej marsh 15–27 May. During summer breeding surveys a new colony of **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genei* discovered Dalmej wetland (230 nests); this species was also common during the surveys at other wetlands in southern Iraq. Six **Caspian**



**Plate 6.** Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis* 2 June 2017, Delmej wetland, Iraq. © Mudhafer Salim



**Plate 7.** Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis* 18 May 2017, Diwaniya, Iraq. © Mudhafer Salim

**Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* nests found Dalmej wetland 15–27 May together with 12 nests of **Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* and **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* and a large breeding colony of **Whiskered Terns** *Chlidonias hybrida*.

35 nests of **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* (and 22 juveniles) found in different areas of *Acacia sp/Prosopis sp* trees in new areas for this species in southern Iraq. Two nests of **Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus* [s.] *scops* (with chicks) Diwaniya early June. A pair of **Common Mynas** *Acridotheres tristis*, 400 km north of where breeding was first proved in the 1990s and a few pairs of **Red-backed Lanius** *collurio* and **Lesser Grey Shrikes** *L. minor* also present in suitable breeding habitat although no breeding proved. Nests of **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* (Plate 6) and **Great Reed Warbler** *A. [arundinaceus]* *arundinaceus* found in Delmej wetland 2 Jun. Nine nests of **Yellow-throated Sparrows** *Gymnoris xanthocollis* (Plate 7) in a date palm and citrus plantation Diwaniya 18 May. High numbers of **Black-headed Wagtails** *Motacilla (flava)* *feldegg* near East Hammar marshes, southern Iraq, 27 April—some individuals

frequently observed carrying either nesting material or food, the first breeding evidence for this species.

## ISRAEL

The third record of **Taiga Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis* first found Agamon Hula Dec 2016 remained until end Feb. A **Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena* Km 20, Eilat, 9 Mar (sixth record). 2533 **Great Crested Grebes** *Podiceps cristatus* on lake Galilee 13 Jan. Third record of **Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* this winter Kfar Ruppin from 3 Jan (fifth record) while the Ma'agan Michael bird first recorded Dec remained to mid Jan. A **Swinhoe's Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* off Eilat 14 Jun (eighth record). A **Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* Beit-shean valley 9 Apr–end Apr with an immature Yeruam lake 30 May–30 Jun and another Ein Hamifratz, Zvulun valley, 9 Jun (ninth–eleventh records). The wintering immature **Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus* was last recorded 14 Jan at Gamla. The long-staying immature **Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* seen several locations until at least end of April.



Two different immatures seen migrating over Eilat mountains 26 and 27 Apr and another over Kisra, northwest Galilee, 15 May. c20 000 **Levant Sparrowhawks** *Accipiter brevipes* counted 27 Apr southern Arava, Eilat mountains and Eilat North Beach, with at least 13 000 28 Apr.

Two **Demoiselle Cranes** *Grus virgo* in **Common Cranes** *G. grus* flock Eilat mountains 15 Mar, seen migrating north following morning at Km 19. One Hula valley 30 Mar. A **Eurasian Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* among **Cream-Coloured Coursers** *Cursorius cursor* Nizzana 10 Apr was a very late record. **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media*: one Hamadiya fish ponds, Beit Shean valley 24–25 Apr. First **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* since 1984 Eilat Km20 salt pans 22 Apr–end Apr (second record). Single **White-eyed Gulls** *Larus leucophthalmus* Ma'agan Michael 26 May and Palmakhim 29 May (extremely rare Mediterranean).

45 **Thick-billed Larks** *Ramphocoris clotbey* Km 82, central Arava, 28 Jan. Single **Dunn's Larks** *Eremalauda dunni* Gaash 5 Apr and Hatzook beach 10–12 Apr (unusual at coast). Six **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* Kfar Rupin 24 Mar and one Yotvata 26 Mar. A **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus (proregulus) proregulus* Ein Gedi reserve 26 Jan–31 Mar (fifth record). One of the **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *P. humei* found Oct 2016 in Tel Aviv remained to end Feb while another Neot Smadar, south Negev, 24 Feb–31 Mar. Singles also Ein Gedi 15 Mar and Sde Boker 26 Mar onwards. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** *P. inornatus* Wadi Kelt, near Jerusalem, 20 Mar. A **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* trapped Sde Boker 25 Apr (11th record) while a **Western Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella (n.) naevia* singing Wadi Kelt 29 Mar was 13th record (first proven field record). An **Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia [hortensis] crassirostris* caught Og, northern Dead sea, 16 Jan had a zero fat score indicating first wintering record rather than extremely early migrant. Exceptional numbers of **Ruppell's Warblers** *S. ruppeli* 20–25 Mar with up to 40 birds seen many sites. One **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula (p.) parva* Samar, south Arava, 15 Jan (extremely rare winter). Exceptional winter for **Basalt Wheatears** *Oenanthe (lugens) warriar*: five found in southern Negev and

southern Arava 1 Jan–16 Feb and one Eilat mountains 3 Feb (eighth–thirteenth records). First wintering record of **Pied Wheatear** *O. pleschanka* (a 1st winter male) Zeelim, northwestern Negev, 8 Jan. Single **Kurdish Wheatears** *O. xanthropygma* mount Amsa 19 Jan, Orvim river, Golan Heights, 20 Jan, Eilat mountains 1 Apr. A **Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlevskii* Arsuf, near Tel Aviv, 11 Mar–16 Apr (sixth record) and an **Olive-backed Pipit** *A. hodgsoni* Dolev 2 Jan. One **Siberian Buff-bellied Pipit** *A. (rubescens) japonicus*, Urim, northwest Negev, 14 Jan and three Hamadiya 14 Mar.

Corrigendum: In the Israel section of Around the Region in *Sandgrouse* 39(1) **Taiga Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis* was described as having been recorded five times. IBRC has clarified that the December 2016 bird at Agamon Hula which remained to end February 2017 was in fact the fourth record - there has also been a record of **Tundra Bean Goose** *A. serrirostris* Eilat 2007. IRDC also emphasises that the precise identification of Bean Goose in Israel is still tentative and that further work is required on this.

## JORDAN

Late rains in the northeast during March caused additional flooding of Qa' Al Azraq (the shallow lake remained until mid summer) with several species unusually remaining to breed or use it as a feeding station. The last time this occurred was about 20 years ago—the Qa' usually drying out before summer. Birds recorded 11 Jun included a **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*, 40 **Black-crowned Night Herons** *Nycticorax nycticorax*, three **Squacco Herons** *Ardeola ralloides*, one **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* and 25 **Little Egrets** *Egretta garzetta*. In addition there were over 120 **Black-winged Stilts** *Himantopus himantopus* including juveniles, three pairs of breeding **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta* (Plate 8), over 80 **Kentish Plovers** *Charadrius alexandrinus* including juveniles and 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa*. Finally, six **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genei*, one **Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*, three/four pairs of **Gull-billed Terns** *Gelochelidon nilotica* with three chicks seen on small islands plus one/two pairs of **Little Terns** *Sternula albifrons* were recorded. Single **Black-winged Kites**

*Elanus caeruleus* Shaumari and Al Azraq 13 Jan. A **Turkestan Shrike** *Lanius [isabellinus] phoenicuroides* (karelini type) was trapped and ringed east of Madaba 29 Apr (second record, Plate 9).



**Plate 8.** Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* 11 June 2017, Qa' Al Azraq, Jordan. © Fares Al Khoury

## KUWAIT

The fifth record of **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* Sulaibikhat bay 4 Jan. Three **Pygmy Cormorants** *Microcarbo pygmeus* Jahra pools reserve (JPR) 20 Mar (fourth record, Plate 10) while a **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* was there 25 Feb (also fourth record). Seven **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* Sulaibiya pivot fields (SPF) 9 Jan increasing to 11 on 25 Jan while five **Eurasian Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis apricaria* were there 10 Feb. 12th record of **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* at JPR 23 Apr. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* JPR 11 Apr and another Al Kout mall 18 Apr (second and third



**Plate 10.** Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmeus* 20 March 2017, Jahra pools reserve, Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al Sirhan



**Plate 9.** Turkestan Shrike *Lanius [isabellinus] phoenicuroides* 29 April 2017, east of Madaba, Jordan. © Fares Al Khoury



**Plate 11.** Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis* 21 March 2017, Mutla'a ranch, Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al Sirhan



**Plate 12.** Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* 15 November 2016, Mutla'a ranch, Kuwait. © AbdulRahman Al Sirhan



**Plate 13.** Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* 17 November 2016, Jahra farms, Kuwait. © Michael Pope

records). A **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* Mutla'a ranch 17 Nov 2016 while one **Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* was at Abraq Al Habari 8 Mar.

Three **Calandra Larks** *Melanocorypha calandra* Lyah reserve 10 Dec 2016 (third record). Five **Pale Crag Martins** *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta* JPR 4 Jan (tenth record). Third record of **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus*

*orientalis* Mutla'a ranch 21 Mar (Plate 11). Two **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *P. humei* Abraq Al Habari 5 Jan and third record of **Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* there 7 Feb. Fifth record **Black Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas podobe* Mutla'a ranch 14 Apr. An **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* Mutla'a ranch 15 Nov 2016 (Plate 12) and another Al Shallal's farm 19 Nov. Tenth record **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha* Jal Al Zor 17 Nov 2016 while fourth record **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis* Lyah reserve 31 Mar. A **Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla (alba) personata* Wafra farms 15 Nov 2016 and two **Olive-backed Pipits** *Anthus hodgsoni* Jahra farms 17 Nov 2016 (Plate 13). One **Hawfinch** *C. coccythraustes* Abraq Al Habari 16 Nov 2016 was second record.





**Plate 14.** Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia* [c.] *cantillans* 29 March 2017, Beirut waterfront, Lebanon. © James Hogg

## LEBANON

A **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* wintered off Tripoli/Mina city (first record at sea – formerly wintered in small numbers inland freshwater sites). **Black-crowned Night Herons** *Nycticorax nycticorax* bred for third year running in riparian forest, Anjar. No breeding record again at Aammiq. Over 300 **Eurasian Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis apricaria* flew high east-west 19 Jan Costa Brava/Khalde (new max). A **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* Palm islands 25 Mar (earliest spring record). **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genei* regularly recorded along coast winter 2016/2017 (previously considered irregular winter visitor). **Armenian Gulls** *Larus armenicus*, previously considered vagrants, scarce but regular, mainly between Batroun and Tripoli. **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis* fairly common along coast winter 2016/2017 (previously considered extremely rare winter visitor).

A **Eurasian Magpie** *Pica* [p.] *pica* Ghalboun 9 Apr. Up to ten **Goldcrests** *Regulus* (r.) *regulus* above Chouwan, Jabal Moussa, 25 Nov 2016. Single **Eastern Subalpine Warblers** *Sylvia* [c.] *cantillans* Beirut port 24 Mar, Beirut waterfront 28–29 March (Plate 14), Byblos archeological site 4 Apr. A male **White-Throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis* near Hadath Baalbek (eastern slopes) 12 May.

## OMAN

One **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons* Khawr Dhurf 20 Mar. The single **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* recorded 29 Dec 2016 in the Raysut area increased to 22 by 5 Jan, reducing gradually until last record of one 5 May while the 15 **Ruddy Shelducks** *T. ferruginea* also gradually decreased until last record was of eight, 27 Mar. Up to 14 **Cotton Pygmy Geese** *Nettapus coromandelianus* at khawrs in Salalah area early Jan–21 Apr (last record). A **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* Saham STP 6 Jan. One **White-faced Storm Petrel** *Pelagodroma marina* (third record) and a **Black-bellied Storm Petrel** *Fregetta tropica* (fourth record) 80 km east of Al Qibliyah, Al Halaniyat islands, 3 Jun. A **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Wadi Razit (upstream from Wadi Darbat) 4 May.

Single **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Sun farms, Sohar, 17 Mar, Muscat airport 18 Apr, Al Mouj golf course, Seeb, 4 May. Three **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Qurum park 2 Jan (unusual date northern Oman) while nine in Salalah area 12–18 Mar (one dark adult and eight light morph juveniles). Vultures seen Tawi Atayr area included 18 **Eurasian Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus* 13 and 26 Mar (very high number), one **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* 13 Mar (eighth record) and six **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos tracheliotos*. An adult pale

phase **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* Jebel Shams 30 May (date suggested local breeding; no breeding records Arabia). A **Black Kite** *Milvus [migrans] migrans* Sohar 2 May and four **Black-eared Kites** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* Raysut STP area 15 Mar.

Single **White-breasted Waterhens** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Wadi Razit 4 and 7 May, Muscat Hills golf course, 11 Jun. **Baillon's Crakes** *Zapornia (p.) pusilla* Al Mughsayl 21 Mar (two), East Khawr 24 Mar, Wadi Razit 7 May. Second record **Ruddy-breasted Crake** *Z. fusca* Wadi Razit 4 and 7 May. One 2cy **Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo* Raysut STP 12–21 Mar. Three **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Raysut lagoons 21 Mar. The three **Spur-winged Lapwings** *Vanellus spinosus* reported 27 Dec 2016 Raysut STP remained in the Salalah area, with four birds 25 Feb, reducing to one by 14 Mar, last record 2 May. Three **Pheasant-tailed Jacanas** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* East Khawr 12–14 Mar. The **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* first reported East Khawr 18 Nov 2016 remained to 24 Mar. Two juvenile **Cream-coloured Coursers** *Cursorius [c.] cursor* Sun farms, Sohar, 10 Jun indicated probable breeding in the area and several fledged young **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* there on the same date. A **Common Gull** *Larus [c.] canus* Khawr Sallan, Sohar, 21 Mar. 150 **Little Terns** *Sternula albifrons* Khawr Dhurf 3 May (regular passage along Oman coast Apr but rare May).

Four **Pharaoh Eagle-Owls** *Bubo ascalaphus* Jebel Madar 5 May. 30+ **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarptis melba* Salalah 14 Mar. 30 **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops persicus* Sun farms, Sohar, 6 May and 50, 10 Jun but no breeding activity at the usual nest site area. A **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* seen on pelagic trip 60 km east of Ras al Hadd 4 Jun. Early **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* Ayn Jarziz 16 Feb. 50 **Greater Hoopoe-Larks** *Alaemon alaudipes* Dawqah 12 May (highest concentration since 2014). A **Hume's Whitethroat** *Sylvia [curruca] althaea* Barik 18 Feb (4th record), while a survey of Hayl al Jawari area (2300 m asl) of Jebel Akhdar, 26 Apr–31 May recorded a number of individuals singing and indicating imminent breeding. A **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* Masirah island resort, 15–21 Feb (unusual away from Musandam/

Jebel Akhdar). 42 **Black-throated Thrushes** *T. [ruficollis] atrogularis* Sayq plateau 1 Jan (new max), 36 on 1 Mar. One **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* Sayq plateau 1 and 29 Jan, probably one of the two wintering birds seen Nov–Dec 2016, and 20 '**Central Asian**' **Black Redstarts** *P. (ochruros) phoenicuroides* also there 1 Jan. A **Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla (alba) personata* Sur STP 4 Jan (unusual away from Sohar). A **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Saham rubbish dump 17 Mar.

## QATAR

Two adult and one juv **Sacred Ibises** *Threskiornis [a.] aethiopicus* (local feral population) Sailiya STP 11 Jun. A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus vociferus* Irkayya farm 24–25 Feb (eighth record) while sub-adult **Short-toed Snake Eagles** *Circaetus gallicus* there 20 Feb, 26 Mar (same bird) and a juvenile 27 Apr. A juvenile **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Doha golf course 22 Mar (fourth record). A Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* in a kettle Al Shamal 5 May. Third record **Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata* IF 13 May and 10–16 Jun. 14 **Black Kites** *Milvus [migrans] migrans* displaying characteristics of **Black-eared Kite** *Milvus (migrans) lineatus* in a kettle Al Shamal 5 May. One dark and one pale morph **Long-Legged Buzzard** *Buteo [r.] rufinus* IF 16 Jan–11 Feb, two there 4 Mar and one in the Al Shamal kettle 5 May. A **Steppe Buzzard** *B. b. vulpinus* IF 12 May (fifth record) and first record **Shikra** *Accipiter (badius) cenchroides* Shamal coast 13 May. A juvenile **Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni* IF 11 Jan (first record) and **Corncrakes** *Crex crex* Al Ruwais park, 13–20 May, one Shamal park and one Saudi border 20 May (Eighth–tenth records). A **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* west Sailiya STP 23 Mar–9 Jun (second bird present 24 Mar (fourth record) while the ninth record of **Sociable Lapwing** *V. gregarius* IF 7 Jan. Two **Eurasian Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis apricaria* IF 24 Feb–4 Mar (fourth record). Four **Cream-coloured Coursers** *Cursorius cursor* IF 10 Jun.

First record **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis* Al Kharsaah 17–22 Jan. A **Pharaoh Eagle Owl** *Bubo ascalaphus* 10 Jun (location withheld). One **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus uniwini* IF 28 Apr and 12 **Egyptian Nightjars** *C. aegyptius* at day roost

near IF 10 Jun (*cf* 34 same date 2016). Three **European Rollers** *Coracias garrulus* IF 28 Apr. A female **Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis* west Saliya STP 9–13 Jun (fifth record).

A **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* Al Ruwais 20 May (first record) and the tenth record of **Hume's Whitethroat** *Sylvia althaea* IF 11 Apr. A **Brahminy Starling** *Sturnia pagodarum* south of Al Shamal 27 Mar was considered an escape. After the Nov 2016 influx, **Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus [ruficollis] atrogularis* numbers declined gradually until 3 Mar (IF). A **Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* Al Ruwais park 13 May (12th record) and up to 12 **Eastern Nightingales** *L. (megarhynchos) golzii* IF 28–29 Apr. A pair of **Caspian Stonechats** *Saxicola maurus hemprichii* IF 24 Feb and two different birds there 4 Mar (seventh & eighth records). An **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* IF 11 Mar and an influx of **Pied Wheatears** *O. [h.] pleschanka* IF end Feb–11 Mar (at least) included two *vittata* birds. A **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* IF 18 Apr (seventh record) while a **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* Al Zowair north, 19 Apr, was the fourth record.

## SAUDI ARABIA

An adult and juvenile **Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus (columbianus) bewickii* near Al Jawf 14–15 Dec 2016 with three more adults in the north of the Kingdom 19 Dec 2016 (second and third records). Four **See-see Partridges** *Ammoperdix griseogularis*, including a calling male, at a remote desert site two hours from Sakaka, Al Jawf province, 23 Apr, the first record for many years. A **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* Al Khobar corniche 13 Jan (fifth record Eastern province; species spreading north up Gulf coast. A **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* remained at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Thuwal, near Jeddah (KAUST) until at least 18 May with two present 6–19 Apr. A **Macqueen's Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, a species in serious decline in the Eastern province, was near Al Hassa 6 Jan. A juvenile **Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata* Dhahran hills 25 Feb (fourth record Eastern province). An overwintering immature male **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Deffi park 16 Dec 2016 and up to eight wintering birds in Dhahran

until mid Feb, a single remaining until 12 Apr. An adult **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* bottom of Raydah escarpment 31 Mar.

350 **Northern Lapwings** *Vanellus vanellus* Haradh 13 Jan second largest flock recorded. 26 **Spur-winged Lapwings** *V. spinosus* Haradh pivot fields 13 Jan with six there 3 Feb. Two further birds Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail (SAF) 7 Apr, one staying until 27 May at least. A single Haradh 21 April appeared to be defending a territory aggressively from other birds suggesting possible breeding. A record 24 **Red-wattled Lapwings** *V. indicus* Shaybah water ponds 14 Feb (previously regarded as vagrant to Eastern province). Seven **Sociable Lapwings** *V. gregarius* Haradh 13 Jan where they have wintered since 2016, at least five remained until 3 Feb, only the third record for the Eastern province (wintering at this site since 2016). The bird first recorded 21 Nov 2016 at KAUST wintered in the area until 23 Feb at least. A **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* at KAUST 4 Feb while a **Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* in wadi south of Zulfi 20 Dec 2016. A **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* Dhahran 20 Jan and the **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*, first recorded 23 Sep 2016 at KAUST remained until 23 May. A **Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus* was at the bottom of the Raydah escarpment 31 Mar while two **Arabian Magpies** *Pica (p.) asirensis* Sallal al-Dahna, Tanoumah, 1–2 Apr. 20 **Blanford's Larks** *Calandrella blanfordi* Talea'a valley 31 Mar–2 Apr (Plate 15) and



**Plate 15.** Blanford's Lark *Calandrella blanfordi* 2 April 2017, Talea'a Valley, Asir mountains, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington





**Plate 16.** Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis* 27 January 2017, Deffi park, Jubail, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



**Plate 17.** Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* 24 February 2017, Sarrar, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



**Plate 18.** Female Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* 29 January 2017, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail, Eastern province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

15 **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* SAF 10 Feb. A **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus*

*griseldis* SAF 26 May, a **Moustached Warbler** *A. melanopogon* KAUST 19 Apr (first for site) while a large fall of migrants at Sarrar 24 Feb included the first record of **Thick-billed Warbler** *Arundinax aedon*.

An adult male **Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula* SAF 29 Dec 2016–20 Jan with a female there 29 Jan. Four **Black-throated Thrushes** *T. atrogularis* (an adult male and three first year males) at Deffi park 20 Jan, first record for the Eastern province since the 1980s, increasing to 12, (two adult males, two adult females and eight first year males) 27 Jan–10 Feb (Plate 16) remaining until 10 Feb—all records part of the influx into Arabia winter 2016–2017. Two **Redwings** *T. iliacus* Deffi park 27 Jan (tenth record). A pair of **Black Scrub Robins** *Cercotrichas podobe* and one single near Sarrar 24 Feb (Plate 17) with additional records from the Al Hassa area indicate that this species is now resident, mainly on farms, in Eastern province. A female **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* SAF 29 Jan (Plate 18) was first record since 2000. One **Sinai Rosefinch** *Carpodacus synoicus* Yanbu STP dump 4 Feb was well south of its normal range.

## TURKEY

Turkey experienced a cold winter 2016/2017 which resulted in a number of northern species sighted. Five **Lesser White-fronted Geese** *Anser erythropus* found during crane surveys Akyatan Gölü, Adana, 24 Jan (second record for site). **Red-breasted Geese** *Branta ruficollis* seen at three sites: two Büyükçekmece Gölü, İstanbul, 24 Jan, one Kamil Abduş Gölü 4–12 Feb and a remarkably late individual Kuyucuk Gölü, Kars, 13–17 May. An adult **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis* İğneada harbour 28 Jan–4 Feb. **Common Scoters** *Melanitta nigra* at two sites 20 km apart along the Black sea coast, İstanbul, two at Karaburun 28 Jan and three Kilyos 17 Feb. Single **Horned Grebes** *Podiceps auritus* Büyükçekmece Gölü 3 Feb and Kamil Abduş Gölü, 12–19 Feb.

A **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* Kulu Gölü 10–30 Apr was probably the returning bird from previous years (last recorded 5 Apr 2016). It was accompanied by a possible hybrid **Greater/Lesser Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus/Phoeniconaias minor* (Plate 19). A **Grey-headed Swamphen**



**Plate 19.** A possible hybrid Greater × Lesser Flamingo, a Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* and a Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* 10 Apr 2017, Kulu Gölü, Turkey. © Cenk Polat

*Porphyrio poliocephalus* Ekşisu Sazlığı, Erzincan, 30 Apr was at least 340 km from the nearest breeding area and was also in the middle of the country at 1146 m asl. A **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* Karkamış (Euphrates) 19 May (most westerly record). A single **Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* Rize 3 Jan – this species now occurs regularly on the Black sea coast. A 3rd year **Great Black-backed Gull** *L. marinus* Küçük Çekmece Gölü, İstanbul, 29 Jan while an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus intermedius* was at the **Yellow-legged Gull** *L. michahellis* colony at Oymapınar Barajı, Antalya. Five **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus* off Erdemli, Mersin, 16 Jan indicates a regular wintering population off the Mediterranean coast while a **Long-tailed Jaeger** *S. longicaudus* Milleyha, Antakya, 12 Feb.

A **Bohemian Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus* İğneada, Kırklareli, 28 Jan. **White-eared Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus leucotis* Avclar, İstanbul, 26 Apr, were considered escapes. A **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* Köyceğiz Gölü 10 Apr and a **Cyprus Warbler** *Sylvia melanothorax* Göksu delta 18 Mar. At least three **Common Mynas** *Acridotheres tristis* at Fuar, İzmir, during February. A wintering male **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Subaşı, Antakya, 7 Jan and one **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* Göksu

delta 25 Mar. The seventh record of **Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii* Milleyha, Hatay, 5 Feb (third record at location). An influx of **Trumpeter Finches** *Bucanetes githagineus* this spring: singles Göksu delta 22 Mar, Çorum, central Turkey, 14 May and Rize, Black sea coast, 14–17 May.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The female **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* first seen Al Ain 29 Nov 2016 seen 6 Jan, two others Al Wathba wetland reserve 14 Jan, one remaining to 4 Feb and another Al Warsan lakes 17 Feb (19th & 20th records). 100 **Wilson's Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus* 50–60 km offshore Kalba 9 Jun and a **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates monorhis* (eighth record) on another trip 19 May. Two **Sooty Shearwaters** *Puffinus griseus* on an earlier trip from Kalba 9 Apr with an inshore bird off Bidiyah 29 Apr. Other trips produced four **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** *Ardenna carneipes* 9 Jun, 30 **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax* 7 Apr (earliest spring record) and 80 on 5 May. A **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* off Kalba beach 26 May, a very rare east coast inshore record. A **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* Hatta 6 Apr. One **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Ajman STP 1 Apr (fifth record) and two Wamm farms 19–27 May (considered same fourth record as

previous sightings at this site). A **Dalmatian Pelican** *Pelecanus crispus* Umm al Qaiwain 1 Mar and Ras al Khor 4 Mar (third record). Single **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Lahab fields 18 Feb, Hamraniyah fields 3 Mar, Safa park, Dubai, 6 Apr. 36 **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Clanga clanga* Ras al Khor 28 Jan plus a **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* which stayed to early Feb, single **Steppe Eagle** Dubai desert conservation resort 23 Mar. A male **Hen Harrier** *Circus [cyaneus] cyaneus* Ras al Khor 1 Jan.

Two **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* Wamm farms 17 Feb and a **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* there 18 Feb (12th record). Five **Black-winged Pratincoles** *Glareola nordmanni* Hamraniyah fields 2 Mar (28th record), last recorded 2014. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** Khor al Beida 3 Feb (seventh record). A **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* well offshore from Fujairah 5 May and another 9 Jun; a **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii* on Fujairah beach 5 May. One **Common Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus* Al Ain 5 Apr (seventh record if wild, there are frequent

apparent escapes in the Dubai area). Three **Asian Koels** *Eudynamys [s.] scolopaceus* Al Ain 1 Apr (record number). A **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* Wamm farms 4 Feb (fifth record) and a **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* (dead) Abu Dhabi 5 Jan (very rare mid winter). 11 **European Nightjars** *Caprimulgus europaeus* Madinat Zayed 28 Apr and five Mamzar 29 Apr. **Egyptian Nightjars** *C. aegyptius* present at Ajban breeding site, Abu Dhabi emirate, 17 Jun (Plates 20 & 21). One **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* Sila'a peninsula 28 Apr and a **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Ajman STP 27–28 Jan.

The wintering **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Lulu island first seen 1 Dec 2016 remained to 20 Jan at least while singles at Masafi 24 Mar, Palm Jumeirah park, Dubai, 30 Mar–14 Apr and Mushrif Palace gardens, Abu Dhabi, 30 Apr. A late **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* Wamm farms 7 Apr. Single **Wire-tailed Swallows** *Hirundo smithii* 3 Feb Wamm farms and Warsan lakes and two Al Ain 14–20 Mar (16–18th records). A **Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*



**Plate 20.** Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius* 17 June 2017, Ajban, Abu Dhabi emirate, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell





**Plate 21.** Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius* 17 June 2017, Ajban, Abu Dhabi emirate, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

Mamzar park 12 May. One singing **Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus [collybita] tristis* Emirates Palace hotel, Abu Dhabi, 28 Apr. A **Common Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* Abu Dhabi 23 Mar and a singing bird Wamm farms 7 Apr. A **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* Jebel Dhanna 24 Feb remaining until early March. After the Nov–Dec 2016 influx, **Black-throated Thrushes** *T. atrogularis* widespread with peak counts of up to 12 Lulu island and seven Mamzar park. A **Redwing** *T. iliacus* Mushrif Palace gardens 3–4 Feb (ninth record). A **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Mamzar park 28 Mar–early Apr was a late record. A male **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* Sharjah 1 Jan (fifth record this winter) while the Wadi Bih bird first seen Dec 2016 remained to 20 Jan. A **Caspian Stonechat** *Saxicola [torquatus] maurus hemprichii* at Sila'a 17 Feb. A **Common Linnet** *Linaria cannabina* Safa park, Dubai, 25 Apr (fifth record, first since 2005). One **Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* Wathba wetland reserve 18 Mar (ninth record).

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Ian Harrison, Llyswen Farm, Lôn y Felin, Aberaeron, SA46 0ED, UK. [ianbirds@gmail.com](mailto:ianbirds@gmail.com)