

# AROUND THE REGION

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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 2019 unless stated otherwise. Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 42(1) should be sent by 15 December 2019 to atr@osme.org or ianbirds@gmail.com.

## AZERBAIJAN

300 **White-headed Ducks** *Oxyra leucocephala* Zabrát lake 26 Dec 2018 and 33 Byulbyula lake, near Baku, 23 Feb (Plate 1). A female **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Masalli 23 May (first record). 80 **Terek Sandpipers** *Xenus cinereus* Kizil Agach bay 20 May and a male **'Black-backed Citrine Wagtail'** *Motacilla (citreola) calcarata* Kizil Agach 26 May (Plate 2).

Correction: The first breeding record of **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* near Cayli 21 May 2018, mentioned in *Sandgrouse* 41(1), was in fact the first record of a single male with no evidence of breeding.



**Plate 2.** Male Black-backed Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla (citreola) calcarata* 26 May 2019, Kizil Agach, Azerbaijan. © Olof Strand



**Plate 1.** White-headed Ducks *Oxyra leucocephala* 26 December 2018, Zabrát Lake, Azerbaijan. © Abdin Abbasov

## BAHRAIN

A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* ringed Bahrain 11 Oct 2018 was found dying four days later, 15 Oct, 1100 km away in Al Bahah, Hehaz, west Saudi Arabia. A **White-cheeked Tern** *Sterna repressa* ringed 4 Jul 2013



**Plate 3.** White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* with one chick 23 June 2019, southern Bahrain. © Abdullah Al Kaabi



**Plate 4.** Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius* with chick 20 June 2019, central Bahrain. © Abdullah Al Kaabi



**Plate 5.** Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* 21 November 2018, Al Areen wildlife park, Bahrain. © Abdullah Al Kaabi

in the south of the island was found breeding at the same location 23 Jun 2019 (one chick; Plate 3) and another ringed same area 22 July 2015 found 29 Jun, also with a chick. A good season for breeding **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* - six females starting to lay in the centre of the island from 1 Mar and second brood of one female found 20 Jun (Plate 4). An **Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* Al Areen wildlife park 21-23 Nov 2018 (Plate 5).

## CYPRUS

Turkish names of places (in brackets) for records in the northern part of the island are included to assist birders in locating records. Very heavy rainfall during the first four months of 2019 meant that all wetlands had good water levels. Unsettled weather prevailed during spring migration.

The **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons* that arrived Asprokremmos dam 2 Nov remained to 3 Feb while one of the eight at Larnaca STP (from 7 Nov) stayed to 28 Jan, the others remaining to 18 Feb. An unseasonal **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* Akrotiri salt lake 5 May-4 Jun and possibly the same bird Larnaca STP 13 Jun and a **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* Larnaca salt lake 12 Jan-1 Apr. Between 8000-10 000 **Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* Episkopi bay 21 Mar. 1550 **Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 21 Mar while at least three pairs bred for the first time since 2013 with ducklings seen Larnaca STP and Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 21 May and Akrotiri salt lake 24 May. Two pairs of **Gadwall** *Mareca strepera* and eleven **Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 17 May, both unseasonal records. Highest count of **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* was 57 Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 6 Jan; breeding records include nine chicks with ten adults same location 21 May, 14 chicks with an adult there 12 Jun (Plate 6) and seven chicks with an adult Mia Milia (Haspolat) STP same date. A female **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* Mia Milia (Haspolat) STP 12 Jan, two males and a female Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 26 Feb and three Athalassa dam 2 Mar. A female **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* Mia Milia (Haspolat) STP 12 Jan-8 Feb.



**Plate 6.** Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* with ducklings 12 June 2019, Koukليا (Kukla) Wetlands, Cyprus. © Kenan Hürdeniz

A **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* flew in off the sea at Kensington cliffs 26 Jan. For the first time since 1982 successful breeding by at least two pairs of **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* Akhna dam and Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands (nest seen 25 Apr and adult carrying chicks early Jun); a nest with eggs also found 14 Jun at Kourris dam. Up to 40 **Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* Larnaca STP during Jan, rising to 49 on 10 Feb, and up to five at other locations; eight Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands 8-12 Jun and singles Kiados dam 22 May and Paralimni lake 13 Jun were late records and possible breeders. Four **Scopoli's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea* Cape Drepanum 7 May and one Agios Filonas 22 May. Several hundred **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* remained Akrotiri salt lake and Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands into June with signs of display and possible nest mounds - indicating possible breeding for the first time. Two '**Western White Storks**' *Ciconia c. ciconia* Galateia (Mehmetçik) wetland 23 Mar-7 Apr. 220 **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands 24 Apr. An exceptional spring for **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* - singles reported from ten locations 3 Feb-14 May and two Akrotiri marsh 2 Apr. **Black-crowned Night Herons** *Nycticorax nycticorax* with fledglings Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands 14 Jun (first breeding record this site). Two juvenile **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Akrotiri salt lake 22-30 Jan with a sub-adult Larnaca salt lake 20 May. A **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* Livera (Sadrazamköy) 10 Feb.

The first migrating **Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* 24 Mar Odou and then singles many locations to 29 Apr. **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* are uncommon spring migrants but two Cape Apostolos Andreas 25



**Plate 7.** Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* 29 March 2019, Lady's Mile, Cyprus. © John East

Apr and singles Karpasia 2 May, Lara bay 9 May, Ineia 11 May, Akrotiri gravel pits and one Prodomos 5-7 Jun. A **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Clanga pomarina* Karpasia (Karpaz) peninsula 3 May and a dark morph **Booted Eagle** *Hieraetus pennatus* Secret Valley golf course 19 Mar. A **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* Paphos headland 3 Apr, one Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) 17 Apr, one Agios Theodoros, (Larnaca) 18 Apr and two Karpasia (Karpaz) 3 May.

A **Corncrake** *Crex crex* (moribund) Paphos headland 3 May and one Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) 4 May. Single **Baillon's Crakes** *Zapornia pusilla* Zakaki marsh 29-31 Mar, Oroklini marsh 30-31 Mar and Agia Varvara 7-19 Apr. Five **Little Crakes** *Zapornia parva* Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands 25 Apr. 800 **Demoiselle Cranes** *Anthropoides virgo* grounded by bad weather at Akrotiri salt lake 15-17 Mar, 50 Kormakitis (Koruçam) 24 Mar and a single Paralimni lake 8-14 Apr. 45 **Eurasian Stone-Curlews** *Burhinus oedicnemus* Koukليا (Kukla) wetlands 24 Jan. After storms on 29 Mar four **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* were at Lady's Mile (Plate 7) and a single Paphos





**Plate 8.** Female Caspian Plover *Anarhynchus asiaticus* 14 April 2019, Mandria (Paphos), Cyprus. © Dave Walker



**Plate 9.** Caspian Plover *Anarhynchus asiaticus* 29 May 2019, Kouklia (Kukla) Wetlands, Cyprus. © Kenan Hürdeniz

headland. **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta* recorded various locations from 5 Jan with a maximum of ten Akrotiri salt lake 27 May. A **Eurasian Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus* Spiros pool 26 Mar, three Morphou 30 Mar and two Pervolia 17 Apr. Two **Greater Sand Plover** *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* Trikomo (Iskele) 27 Jan. A female **Caspian Plover** *Anarhynchus asiaticus* Mandria (Paphos) 14-15 Mar (Plate 8) and a male Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 29 May (Plate 9). The regular over-wintering **Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius (phaeopus) phaeopus* was at Paphos headland until 19 Apr while up to

two migrating birds various locations 26 Mar-6 May. A **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Akrotiri salt lake 28 Apr-6 May, 21 **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 1 May and 400 **Little Stints** *Calidris minuta* and 800 **Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* there the same day. 16 **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris falcinellus* Lady's Mile 6 May (second highest count). Single **Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* Kathikas 28 Jan and Agios Nikolaos (Famagusta) 7 Feb. Two **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* Agia Varvara 22 Mar with one there 19-22 Apr and singles Kiti dam 5 Apr, Akrotiri gravel pits 15-21 Apr and Troulloi 26 Apr. Two **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* Akrotiri salt lake 22 May (16th record).

20 **Common Black-headed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 27 Mar (unusual so far inland). Two **Little Gulls** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Larnaca salt lake area 12 Jan-7 Feb, Oroklini marsh 11 and 22 Mar, one Mandria (Paphos) 23 Mar and up to five Spiros beach area 15 Mar-6 Apr. Single **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus* various locations from 1 Feb, four Paphos headland 29 Mar, two Silver Beach lagoon 26 Feb and two Trikomo (Iskele) 29 Mar, last record Akrotiri 3 Apr. A **Common Gull** *Larus canus* Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 24 Jan. Two **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* Mandria (Paphos) 27 Mar with singles Paphos headland 28 and 30 Mar and two Spiros pool 14 Apr. Two **White-winged Terns** *Chlidonias leucopterus* Morphou dam 17 Jan (an unseasonal record) and 25 Kouklia (Kukla) wetland 25 Apr. A **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* Larnaca STP 28 Apr and two Paralimni lake 12 May. Three **Common Terns** *Sterna hirundo* Spiros beach 29 Mar and then up to ten various locations to 27 May. Single **Arctic Skuas** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Lady's Mile 15 and 22 Feb, Trikomo (Iskele) 29 Mar and off Akrotiri 15 Apr.

Up to two **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Syrhaptes orientalis* Akrotiri gravel pits 11 Jan-4 Mar, 20 Galinoporni (Kaleburnu) 13 Jan, 12 Mesaoria (Mesarya) plain 8 Feb. Single **Western Stock Doves** *Columba oenas* Leonarrisso (Ziyamet) 13 Jan and Kapouti (Kalkanlı) reservoir 12 Feb. Breeding **Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis* Potamos tou Kampou (Yedidalga) 2 Jun. Two male **Namaqua Doves** *Oena capensis* two locations



**Plate 10.** Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* 30 March 2019, Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz), Cyprus. © Hüseyin Yorgancı



**Plate 12.** Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata* 27 March 2019, Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz), Cyprus. © Hüseyin Yorgancı



**Plate 11.** Turkestan Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides* 22 May 2019, Larnaca Sewage Treatment Plant, Cyprus. © Stavros Christodoulides



**Plate 13.** Melanistic Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* 24 February 2019, Kazivera (Gaziveran), Cyprus. © Ertaç Cüneyt

Karpasia (Karpaz) peninsula 26 Apr and one Akrotiri marsh (Phasouri reed-beds) 4 May (8th-10th records). Many **Common Cuckoos** *Cuculus canorus* various suitable breeding locations this spring and a pair seen mating Stavros tis Psokas 20 Apr. Single **Little Swifts** *Apus affinis* Akrotiri marsh 10 Jan, 14 Feb and 29 Apr and one Larnaca STP 20 Apr. Single **Pied Kingfishers** *Ceryle rudis* Asprokremmos dam 31 Mar, Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) 21 Apr, eastern Mesaoria (Mesarya) plain 30 Apr, Zakaki marsh 1 May and Evretou dam 9-10 May. **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops persicus* 30 Mar-11 May various locations (maximum seven Cape Greco) (Plate 10). **Eurasian Wrynecks** *Jynx torquilla* heard calling Troodos 9 May, Pera Oreinis 29 May and Stavros tis Psokas 9 Jun (usually only a passage migrant). Single **Daurian Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* Neo Horio 27 Apr and Akrotiri gravel pits 5-6 May. A **Turkestan Shrike** *Lanius phoenicuroides* Paphos headland 27-29 Apr and one Larnaca

STP 22 May (Plate 11). A male **Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* Pervolia 4-5 Jun (a very late record). Single 'Arabian Grey Shrike' *Lanius (excubitor) aucheri* Mandria (Paphos) 12 Feb and Cape Greco 27 Feb. A **Northern Raven** *Corvus corax* Agios Sozomenos 5 Jan with two there 19 Mar, two Agios Amvrosios 3 Feb, one Cape Greco 26 Mar, three over Troodos 18 Apr and a pair Eptakomi cliffs 23 & 26 Apr. A **Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug* Kouklia (Kukla) wetlands 1 May.

60 **Calandra Larks** *Melanocorypha calandra* eastern Mesaoria (Mesarya) plain 6 Mar. Single **Bimaculated Larks** *M. bimaculata* various locations 20 Mar-18 May (Plate 12), maximum three Mandria (Paphos) 21-25 Mar. A **Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala rufescens* Akrotiri gravel pits 14-17 Mar and one Mandria (Paphos) 20-22 Mar. Two melanistic **Crested Larks** *Galerida cristata* Kazivera (Gaziveran) 24 Feb (Plate 13). An **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* Mandria (Paphos) 25-26 Apr and



**Plate 14.** Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* 9 January 2019, Larnaca tis Lapithou (Kozanköy), Cyprus. © Daniel Ghetu

one Paphos headland 26 Apr while single **Icterine Warblers** *Hippolais icterina* Smygies 22 Apr, Arodes and Paphos headland 24 Apr, Akrotiri gravel pits 30 Apr, Karpasia (Karpaz) 2 May and Lara 9 May. The third and fourth records of **Common Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* Mandria (Paphos) 23 Mar and Paphos headland 1 Apr. **Barred Warbler** *Curruca nisoria* numbers greater than usual - up to five seen 17-29 Apr various locations and a high count of 15 Karpasia (Karpaz) 30 Apr, last record Larnaca STP 21 May. A late **Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* Kantaras (Kantara) 2 May (rare in this area).

A **Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* Tunnel beach 5 Jan and 10 Feb and possibly the same bird Kensington cliffs 2 Feb; one Larnaca tis Lapithou (Kozanköy) 9 Jan was the first record from the north of the island since 2002 (Plate 14). A **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* Trikomo (Iskele) 7 Jan. **Rose-coloured Starlings** *Pastor roseus* various locations 27 Apr-24 May, maximum seven Karpasia (Karpaz) 18 May. 1500 **Common Starlings** *Sturnus vulgaris* Famagusta Fresh Water lake (Ayluga) 3 Mar. Single **Thrush Nightingales** *Luscinia luscinia* Livera (Sadrazamköy) 30 Apr and Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) 22 May where there was also a **White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis* 27 Apr. A **Red-breasted Flycatcher**



**Plate 15.** Female Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha* 30 March 2019, Paphos headland, Cyprus. © Dave Walker



**Plate 17.** Eastern Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* 19 February 2019, Cape Drepanum, Cyprus. © Jan Walker

*Ficedula parva* Paphos headland 1 Apr and one Karpasia (Karpaz) 19 May. Both '**Western Siberian Stonechats**' *Saxicola maurus maurus* and '**Caspian Stonechats**' *S. maurus hemprichii* various locations 25 Mar-1 May. A male **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* Cape Greco 23 Jan - a very early record. A female **Hooded Wheatear** *O. monacha* Paphos headland 28 Mar-2 Apr (Plate 15) and the tenth record of **White-crowned Wheatear** *O. leucopyga* Tremithousa 14 Apr. An **Eastern Mourning Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugens* Livera (Sadrazamköy) 10 Feb (Plate 16) and another Cape Drepanum 18-21 Feb (Plate 17) were the fourth and fifth records. A **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Manglis lake, Nicosia 5 Feb and another Cape Apostolos Andreas 23 Apr. At least nine **Pale Rockfinch**





**Plate 18.** 'East Siberian Wagtail' *Motacilla (alba) ocularis* 4 April 2019, Akrotiri Marsh, Cyprus. © John East

*Carpospiza brachydactyla* Cape Greco 7 May increasing to 27 on 12 May (14th record - and the highest number). Only two records of **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* this spring - one Paphos headland 29 Mar and one Timi beach 26 Apr. A **Blyth's Pipit** *A. godlewskii* Karpasia (Karpaz) peninsula 25 Apr (fourth record). A **Sykes's Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) beema* Rizokarpaso (Dipkarpaz) 25 Apr. Up to five **Citrine Wagtails** *M. citreola* various locations 20 Mar-15 Apr, last record 10 May Lower Ezousas. Photographs of an '**East Siberian Wagtail**' *M. (alba) ocularis* Akrotiri Marsh 30 Mar (Plate 18) suggest it was the same bird that appeared there Mar 2018 (second record). Two **Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* Marathounta 2 Jan, one there 24 & 27 Jan, one Paphos headland 4-22 Mar, one Agia Napa STP 21 Mar and one Prastio 25 Mar. A **Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus* 23 Feb near Coral bay, Paphos (15th record). A '**Western Cinereous Bunting**' *Emberiza (cineracea) cineracea* Cape Greco 30 Mar, two Agia Napa STP 3 Apr and one Timi beach 26 Apr. 10 male **Black-headed Buntings** *E. melanocephala* Pentadactylos (Beşparmak) mountains singing at one location 10 Jun.

## EGYPT

A sub-adult **Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus* Elba protected area 20 Mar and a female **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Gebel el-Zayt 8 May. A **Black Scrub**



**Plate 19.** Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* 13 February 2019, Hour-al-Azeem, Khuzestan Province, Iran. © Radoslaw Gwozdz

**Robin** *Cercotrichas podobe* Lahami, near Berenice, and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Berenice, both 5 Jan.

## IRAN

A **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* Hour-al-Azeem, Khuzestan province, 13 Feb (Plate



**Plate 20.** African Darter *Anhinga rufa* 13 February 2019, Hour-al-Azeem, Khuzestan Province, Iran. © Zbigniew Kajzer



**Plate 21.** Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* 10 February 2019, Bandar Abbas, Iran. © Radosław Gwozdź



**Plate 22.** Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* 8 February 2019, mouth of River Gaz near Bandar-e Sirik, Hormozgan Province, Iran. © Zbigniew Kajzer

19). 48 **African Darters** *Anhinga rufa* Hour-al-Azeem, Khuzestan province, 5 June 2018 with 30 there 13 Feb (Plate 20). A pair of **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* feeding young Qazvin province Nov 2018 - first breeding for northern Iran. 18 **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* at seven sites in Hormozgan province 19-21 January 2018. An adult **Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Golil and Sarani protected area, north Khorasan province 11 Aug 2018. A **Demoiselle Crane** *Grus virgo* Zarivar lake, Kurdistan province, 12 Apr. A first-winter **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, 10 Feb (first record; Plate 21). An **Omani Owl** *Strix butleri* Bandar Lengeh, Hormozgan province, 1 July 2018, and another with a **See-see Partridge** *Ammoperdix griseogularis* as prey was picked up after heavy rain Shadab, Dezful, Khuzestan province 31 Dec 2018 and then released a few hours later after recovering. A pair of **Long-tailed Shrikes** *Lanius schach* with one juvenile near Bideskan, Ferdows, south Khorasan province, 27 July 2015 - first breeding record for Iran and the Middle East. An **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Tang-e Takab, Behbahan, Khuzestan, province, 7 Dec 2018 (sixth record). The first **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* since 1975 Parke Shahr, Tehran, 14 Oct 2018. Three **Oriental White-eyes** *Zosterops palpebrosus* mouth of river Gaz near Bandar-e Sirik, Hormozgan province 8 Feb (Plate 22). A **White-crowned Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucopyga* Ghatroyeh national park, Fars province, 14 Feb (second record, last 1904; see article in this issue).

## IRAQ

All records Kurdistan Region.

A **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* nest with four young found Chami Razan 20 May (first breeding record; Plate 23). Two **Egyptian Vultures** *Neophron percnopterus* and two **Barbary Falcons** *Falco pelegrinoides* also seen same location on the same date. An occupied nest of **Common Kingfisher** *Acedo atthis* Parazan 18 May (first record for Kurdistan Region; Plate 24). Four **Iraq Babbblers** *Argya altirostris* Tanjaro stream, A'Sulaimaniyah,





**Plate 23.** Adult Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* at nest, 20 May 2019, Chami Razan, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. © Korsh Ararat



**Plate 24.** Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* 18 May 2019, Parazan Area, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. © Korsh Ararat



**Plate 25.** Iraq Babblers *Argya altirostris* 19 Apr 2019, Tanjaro stream, A'Sulaimaniyah, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. © Korsh Ararat

19 Apr showing signs of breeding activity (Plate 25).

## ISRAEL

The first record of **Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis* reported in *Sandgrouse* 41(1) remained at Agamon Hula to end Feb. The **Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus* first reported in Jan 2018 and which has commuted since then between Eilat and Aqaba bird observatory, Jordan, remained in the area until at least 19 Jun. A **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* off Eilat 8 Feb. A **Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus* Yahudiya nature reserve, Golan Heights, 5 Feb. Up to nine **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* in the Eilat area Jan-May and one Oranit 14 Jun. A **Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* over Km20 salt pans, Eilat, 20 Apr and a **Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* over IBRCE, Eilat, 21 Apr (fourth record).

Four **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* recorded during April in Yotvata, Jerusalem, Golda park (north Negev) and Dalton reservoir (Upper Galilee), while one ringed Tel Aviv 1 May with another Habesor reservoir, north-west Negev, 17-24 May. Two **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* Eilat Km20 salt pans, 16 May. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* off north beach, Eilat, 13 Mar and a **Common Gull** *Larus canus* IBRCE Eilat 7 Jun. Two **Greater Crested Terns** *Thalasseus*

*bergii* Eilat 4-18 Apr while sea-watching at the same location during May produced the usual **Lesser Crested Terns** *Thalasseus bengalensis*, **Bridled Terns** *Onychoprion anaethetus* and **White-cheeked Terns** *Sterna repressa*. A **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* North Beach, Eilat, 4-8 Apr.

The first record of **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* Eilat 27 Mar and the first record of **Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* south of Haifa 1 and 24 Jan. A **Thick-billed Lark** *Ramphocoris clotbey* Km94, Arava valley, 29 Jun and an **Arabian Lark** *Eremalauda eremodites* near Kfar Szold, western Golan Heights, 6 May.

A **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* near Ashalim, north Negev, 20 Mar, two in Eilat parks from 25 Mar and one Tel Aviv 5 Apr. A **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus* Tel Aviv 16 Apr. A **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* ringed Yeruham 10 May (15th record). Above average numbers of **Eastern Subalpine Warblers** *Currucacantillans* recorded during Mar as were **Rüppell's Warblers** *C. ruppeli* including 50 near Hadera 26 Mar.

Unusually high numbers of **European Pied Flycatchers** *Ficedula hypoleuca* and **Collared Flycatchers** *F. albicollis* 17-24 Apr including concentrations of hundreds in various sites. Smaller but also unusual numbers of **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *F. semitorquata* accompanied these two species. A **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *F. parva* near Eilat 22 Mar (a very early spring record) and singles in Apr at Jerusalem bird observatory and Nir Oz.

A female **Red-rumped Wheatear** *Oenanthe moesta* Uvda valley 14-15 Jan was probably the one that returned there 2 Nov. A new **Basalt Wheatear** *O. (lugens) warriar* was also found there 14 Jan. The '**Iranian Wheatear**' *O. (lugens) persica* recorded Mount Amasa, north Negev, 10 Mar-2 Apr 2018 and that returned 8 Nov 2018 remained there until early Apr. A **Kurdistan Wheatear** *O. xanthoprymna* near Sartaba, Jordan valley, 13 Feb.

Many hundreds of **Pale Rockfinch** *Carpospiza brachydactyla* arrived from 12 Mar onwards with concentrations at the Hameishar plains (400 on 23 Mar) and the Ovda valley; numbers decreased by Apr although many remained to breed in northern Negev, Nizzana and Samaria. The seventh

record of **Yellow-throated Sparrow** *Gymnoris xanthocollis* Mount Keta northern Golan heights, 21 May. A **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis* Ofra 17-25 Feb. Up to three **Pine Buntings** *Emberiza leucocephalos* Jerusalem area 1-28 Jan. **Western Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza cineracea* arrived from 11 Mar in good numbers including 27 Wadi Tzviya area, 23 Mar, including two **Eastern Cinereous Buntings** *E. (cineracea) semenowi*.

## JORDAN

The **Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus* first reported in January 2018 has continued to commute between Eilat and Aqaba bird observatory (last reported date 10 Jun); it continues to consort with an **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*. Three **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* overwintered in the area, last sighting 19 Apr.

## KUWAIT

JPR - Jahra Pools Reserve, SPF - Sulabiya pivot fields

A **Sooty Shearwater** *Ardenna grisea* Ras Al Salmiya 30 Apr, two JPR 16 May and four there 21 May (sixth-seventh records). The first record of **Black Throated Diver** *Gavia arctica* JPR 25-27 Jan. Two **Great Crested Grebes** *Podiceps cristatus* with two chicks JPR 22 Apr (first breeding record; Plate 26). **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Al Abra 25 Feb and JPR 28 Feb. Four **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Kuwait City 14 Mar, one JPR 26 Mar, one Rumaithya park 17



**Plate 26.** Adults with two young Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* 24 May 2019, Jahra Pools Reserve, Kuwait. © Omar Al Shaheen.

Apr. A **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* JPR 16 Jan and 40+ **Steppe Eagles** *Aquila nipalensis* there 17 Feb.

Three **Little Crane** *Zapornia parva* and a new high count of 35 **Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana* Khiran 8 Apr. A **Grey-headed Swamphen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus* with two chicks JPR 9 Mar. A **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* JPR 2-15 Apr and four **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* SPF 22 Jan. Five juvenile **White-tailed Lapwings** *Vanellus leucurus* SPF 17 May and a nest with four eggs JPR 19 May. The 11th record of **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* JPR 20-21 May and a **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* there 26 Mar. A **Great Black-headed Gull** *Ichthyophaga ichthyophaga* Souk Sharq 19 Jan and Khiran 23 Jan. 178 **Little Terns** *Sternula albifrons* JPR 20 May. A **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* and two **Arctic Skuas** *S. parasiticus* Ras Salmiya 12 Apr with four there 30 Apr.

The 13th record of **Western Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* Abraq al Habari 30 Jan. Breeding **Pharaoh Eagle Owl** *Bubo ascalaphus* – one chick in nest - Salmi, 6 Apr. A **Lilith Owllet** *Athene (noctua) lilith* Jal Al Zour 16 Apr while single **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* SPF 20 Jan and Kabd 31 Jan. **Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis* numbers have declined in Kuwait as elsewhere in the Gulf so two SPF, one Abdali and one Adan hospital during January were notable. 80 **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops persicus* and 120 **European Bee-eaters** *M. apiaster* Abraq al Habari 11 May. A **Merlin** *Falco columbarius* Doha spur 14 Feb. Single ‘**Steppe**’ **Grey Shrikes** *Lanius excubitor lahtora* Liyah south 2 Mar and Khiran 6 Mar. The seventh record of **Arabian Grey Shrike** *Lanius (excubitor) aucheri* Sabah Al Ahmad natural reserve 26 Feb was also breeding – a nest with four eggs. A single (ship-assisted) **Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* Shuwaikh free trade zone 14-15 Feb (first record). Over 30 **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Kuwait University 31 Jan. A **Eurasian Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* collecting nesting material JPR 3 Feb and a **Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Jal Al Zour 16 Apr.

35 **Bar-tailed Larks** *Ammomanes cinctura*, 12 **Desert Larks** *A. deserti*, one **Arabian Lark** *Eremalauda eremodites* and one **Temminck’s Lark** *Eremophila bilopha* Salmi 4 Apr. Breeding

records include **Greater Hoopoe-Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* with chicks Liyah 11 Mar, juvenile **Bar-tailed Larks** *Ammomanes cinctura* Liyah 9 Apr and **Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala rufescens* with a chick (17 years since last recorded breeding) Liyah 26 Mar.

Five **Willow Warblers** *Phylloscopus trochilus* and 50 **Chiffchaff** *P. collybita* ssp. Abraq al Habari 10 Apr while single **Hume’s Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus humei* there 25 Feb and 2 Mar, Jahra farms 28 Feb. Four **Basra Reed Warblers** *Acrocephalus griseldis* Al Shaheed park 15 Apr and one Abraq al Habari 11 May and five **Great Reed Warblers** *A. arundinaceus* there 11 May. Over 40 **Sedge Warblers** *A. schoenobaenus* SPF 17 May and 40 **Marsh Warblers** *A. palustris* Abraq al Habari 11 May. A **Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* Jahra farms 13 Apr and a **Savi’s Warbler** *L. luscinioides* JPR 10 Mar. 30 **Eurasian Blackcaps** *Sylvia atricapilla* Abraq al Habari 10 Apr and a **Hume’s Whitethroat** *Curruca (curruca) althaea* Kubbar island 16 Apr.

A **Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* and 20 **White-throated Robins** *Irua gutturalis* Abraq al Habari 10 Apr. **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* recorded SPF 7 Mar, Liyah south 9 Mar, Al Shaheed park 15 Mar, Abraq al Habari 16 Mar and Fahaheel park 6 Apr. 50 **Common Redstarts** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Abraq al Habari 10 Apr. A **White-crowned Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucopyga* Al Shaheed park 21 Apr and three **Finsch’s Wheatears** *O. finschii* chicks Salmi 30 Mar (first breeding record for GCC countries). **Spanish Sparrows** *Passer hispaniolensis* nest building SPF 6 Apr. A **White-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) leucocephala* Kubbar island 16 Apr. An **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza (cineracea) semenowi* Fahaheel park 6 Apr and four Al Shaheed park 15 Apr. Four **Ortolan Buntings** *E. hortulana* Abraq al Habari 10 Apr.

## LEBANON

Two **Pygmy Cormorants** *Microcarbo pygmeus* 23-29 Mar between Mina/Tripoli and Palm Islands nature reserve. Six **Spur-winged Lapwings** *Vanellus spinosus* displaying territorial behaviour, Ammiq wetland 7 Apr and three **Sociable Lapwing** *V. gregarius* Kawkaba village (near mount Hermon) 15 Mar (third record). Nine **Armenian Gulls**





**Plate 27.** Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus* 8 April 2019, Aanjar, Lebanon. © Emin Yoğurtcuoğlu

*Larus armenicus* 10 Mar Sanani island (Palm Islands nature reserve) – highest number recorded at one location. A **Lesser Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bengalensis* Chekka coast, northern Lebanon 2 Mar - second record, last 1895 (for further details see article in this issue). 25 pairs of **Syrian Serin** *Serinus syriacus* Hermel early Apr, 22 birds at the usual site of Aanjar, 8 Apr (Plate 27) and in mid-May other populations discovered in Rachaya, Kawkaba and Kfarmishky (all Jabal El Cheikh - Hermon) but precise numbers not yet determined.

## OMAN

10 **Lesser Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* Khawr A'Dahariz, Salalah, 7-25 Jan. An **Eastern Greylag Goose** *Anser anser rubrirostris* Hilf, Masirah Island, 3-4 Feb. Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* Khawr Baqlah 11 Jan, one Raysut beach 26 Jan and 10 Feb. Nine **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* Khawr Setima 11 Jan-11 Feb. Two **Cotton Pygmy Geese** *Nettapus coromandelianus* West Khawr, Salalah, 10 Jan. A **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* Hilf 3 Feb. The first record for Arabia of **Tahiti Petrel** *Pseudobulweria rostrata* off Mirbat 23 Feb. Two **Black Storks** *Ciconia negra* Al Mughsayl 10 Jan and two Khawr Setimah 11 Feb. Four **African**

**Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Khawr Setimah 11 Jan and two Raysut beach 26 Jan and 10 Feb (ninth/tenth records). Two **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus oncorotalus* West Khawr 10 Jan and presumably the same two birds Raysut beach 26 Jan and 10 Feb.

A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Al Mouj golf course, Seeb, 3 and 14 Jan. 433 **Egyptian Vultures** *Neophron percnopterus* Al Amerat waste disposal site (WDS) 30 Jan. A **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Hilf 3 Feb. Three **Pallid Harriers** *Circus macrourus* Al Beed farm 6 Feb and one Jarziz farm, Salalah 7 Feb. Counts of **Steppe Eagles** *Aquila nipalensis* at Raysut WDS 22-24 Jan were respectively 907 (age sample seven juveniles, seven subadults 25 adults), 704 (age sample 19 juveniles, 27 subadults 21 adults) and 1287 (age sample 22 juveniles, 30 subadults 39 adults); 21 were at Al Amerat WDS 30 Jan. A '**Northern Shikra**' *Accipiter (badius) cenchroides* Wadi Hinna 24 Jan. A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Hilf 4 Feb. 12 **Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis* Al Baleed park 2 Jan and two **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* there 10-21 Jan. A **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Khawr Setima 11 Jan. 100 Common Sandpipers *Actitis hypoleucos* Al Baleed, Salalah, 2 Jan was a high count. A

**Small Pratincole** *Glareola lactea* Al Mouj golf course, Muscat, (more unusual in the north) 14 Jan and a **Common Gull** *Lasus canus*, a rare winter visitor, East Khawr 10 Feb.

A **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* Jarziz farm, Salalah 7-11 Feb and a **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* also there 7 Feb - and one Mudday 3 Jan. An **Asian Koel** *Eudynamus scolopaceus* Mudday 3-20 Jan and one Duqm, 12 Jan. A **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Al Ghaftayn 7 Jan. Single **Barbary Falcons** *Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides* Khawr Rouri 8 Jan and Tawi Attair 9 Jan. Seven **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Mudday 9 Jan. Two **Red-rumped Swallows** *Cecropis daurica* Khawr Sawli 21 Jan. A **Plain Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus neglecta* Wadi Hinna 24 Jan - extremely unusual in the south. A **Brahminy Starling** *Sturnia pagodarum* Al Ghaftayn 1-5 Feb and six **Wattled Starlings** *Creatophora cinerea* Raysut lagoons 26 Jan. A **Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis* Jebel Samhan 8 Jan and a **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* Duqm 12 Jan. Six **Nile Valley Sunbirds** *Hedydipna metallica* Mudday 9 Jan and two Duqm 12 Jan (first record for this area) where there were also two **Indian Silverbills** *Euodice malabarica* - again unusual in this area of Oman (possible escapes). Two '**Siberian Buff-bellied Pipits**' *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* Raysut lagoons 8 Feb and one Jarziz farm 11 Feb. 32 **Yemen Serin** *Fiseya* 27 Jan.

## SAUDI ARABIA

A **Grey Francolin** *Francolinus pondicerianus* near Berri Gas Plant, Jubail, 13 Mar, a species thought to have been extirpated from the country. Three **Harlequin Quail** *Coturnix*

*delegorguei* near Sabya 10 Mar, indicating resident breeders. Further to the report in Around the Region in *Sandgrouse* 41(1) at least 176 **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* recorded south of Jizan, 8 Mar and 23 nests counted. Several sightings of **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in early Feb and throughout Mar continues a series of records since 2018 - see also *Sandgrouse* 41(1). This is currently the only known site for the species in the Kingdom. Two **Black-headed Herons** *Ardea melanocephala* Yanbu creek 19 Sep 2018, well north of their normal range.

An adult female **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Alheefah park, Tanoumah 17 May. A **Mediterranean Golden Eagle** *Aquila (chrysaetos) homeyeri* was around Shaybah February and March a vagrant to the Eastern province. Two **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* Sabkhat Al Fasl (SAF) intermittently from 10 Apr seen displaying 10 May indicating possible breeding; one, possibly two, present 24 May. A single **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* KAUST 22-26 Jan and fourteen in ploughed fields near Haradh 25 Jan (Plate 28), the fourth consecutive year birds have wintered at this site. Three adult **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* Khafrah marsh, Jubail, 9 Mar. A flock of 20 '**European Black-tailed Godwit**' *Limosa (limosa) limosa* several kilometres south of Jizan on the coast, 8 Mar, a high number. A **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* was at SAF 6-10 May (Plates 29,30). A **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* Al Asfar lake, well inland at Al Hassa, Eastern province, 22 Dec 2018. A group of over 50 **Chestnut-bellied**



**Plate 28.** Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* 25 January 2019, Haradh, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



**Plate 29.** Great Snipe *Gallinago media* 6 May 2019, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia. © Phil Roberts



**Plate 30.** Great Snipe *Gallinago media* 6 May 2019, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia. © Phil Roberts



**Plate 31.** Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes exustus* 25 January 2019, Haradh, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington



**Plate 32.** Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* 17 May 2019, Alheefah Park, Tanoumah, Asir Province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

**Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes exustus* flying near Haradh 25 Jan (fourth record for the Eastern province; Plate 31).

A male **Diederik Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx caprius* Alheefah park, Tanoumah, 17 May (Plate 32). A **Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* KAUST 26 Mar. Three **Egyptian Nightjars**

*Caprimulgus aegyptius* near Judah 9 Feb and a single KAUST 9 Mar. A **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* KAUST 22 Jan-6 Mar and another SAF 4 Apr where there was a female **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* 11 Jan-29 Mar and one KAUST 6 Mar. A group of over 30 **Bimaculated Larks** *Melanocorypha*





**Plate 33.** Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata* 9 February 2019, Jebal Hamrah, Judah, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

*bimaculata* near Jebal Hamrah, Judah, 9 Feb (Plate 33) while five **Arabian Larks** *Eremalauta eremodites* were at the stony edge of large irrigation fields 30 km west of Tabuk 18 Jan. A calling **Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus tristis* SAF 11 Jan (third fully documented record). An **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* Quraish Valley near Tanoumah, 17 May. A **Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* Jeddah eastern woods, 5 Jan-1 Mar (second record, last 17 Oct 1993). A female **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cypriaca* KAUST 24 Mar and a **Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis* there 13 May (new species for the location). At least 150 **Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra* 15 km west of Tabuk 18-19 Jan, the largest flock seen in recent years while over 100 were near Jebal Hamrah, Judah, 9 February. A male **Cretzschmar's Bunting** *E. caesia* KAUST 30 Mar.

## TURKEY

Three **Tundra Bean Geese** *Anser serrirostris* Manyas Gölü 5-7 Jan - first record since Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* was split into two species. Previous photographs at Kızılırmak in Feb 2015 and at Amasya Yedigöller Gölü in Feb 2013 are also of Tundra Bean Goose. A single **Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus* Manyas Gölü 13 Jan. Four **Egyptian Geese** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* with breeding potential near Ephesus, Pamucak, 11 Mar - the first record in western Turkey. A single **Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila* Karkamış, Euphrates,

12 Jan, in the south-east, far from the usual Black Sea areas. The first record of **Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* for western Turkey - Gediz Deltası 15 May. A good year for **Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* - one Terkos Gölü 1 Jan, one Çardak Lagünü 2 Jan-2 Feb and one Hersek Lagünü 2 Feb-15 Mar. A single adult **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* Gediz Deltası 11-14 Apr and probably the same individual Kulu Gölü 23 Apr.

Single **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Kilis 7 Apr and Kayacık Barajı, Gaziantep, 12 Apr and a **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* near the southernmost migration bottleneck of Subaşı, Hatay, 9 Mar. A **Grey-headed Swamphen** *Porphyrio poliocephalus* Manavgat 1 May was outside the regular range for this species. A large flock of 125 **Demoiselle Cranes** *Anthropoides virgo* Kulu Gölü 6 Mar. A wintering **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Gediz Deltası 2 Jan and three Mogan Gölü 3 Jan. A **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* Birecik 18 May and two Diyarbakır 27 May, suggesting a possible range expansion. The first recent **Audouin's Gull** *Ichthyophaga audouinii* recorded near Istanbul at Eskişehir Topçular ferryline 27 May. The long staying **Great Black-Backed Gull** *Larus marinus* Küçükçekmece, İstanbul, 5 Feb while a single **European Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* İstanbul 3 Jan and Menekşe beach, İstanbul, 2-14 Feb. A single **White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* Burdur Gölü 23 Jan and two Yedikır Barajı during mid-winter counts in January.

Wintering **Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* Antakya 24 Jan and Perge 27 Jan. The first record of **Sykes's Warbler** *Iduna rama* trapped Aras ringing station, Iğdır, 7 Jun. An **Asian Desert Warbler** *Curruca nana* Gazipaşa, Antalya, 11 Apr. A **Spectacled Warbler** *Curruca conspicillata* Malatya 19 May confirms the third breeding location (after Karacadağ, Şanlıurfa, and Kırıkhan, Hatay). A single **Cyprus Warbler** *Curruca melanothorax* Manavgat 22 Mar and two Göksu delta 11-17 Mar. A single **Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* Riva, İstanbul, 17 Mar. Up to three **Cyprus Wheatears** *O. cypriaca* Göksu Deltası 14-23 Mar, up to four Manavgat 22-23 Mar, and singles Antalya 24 Mar and Milleyha 30 Mar. A **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* Milleyha 5 Jan-2 Feb and a single **Olive-backed Pipit** *A.*



**Plate 34.** Siberian Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* 31 January 2019, Kocaçay, Bursa, Turkey. © Alper Tüýdeş



**Plate 35.** Siberian Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* 30 March 2019, Trabzon, Turkey. © Murat Saluk

*hodgsoni* Subaşı 7 Feb (both Hatay province). However the regular ‘**Siberian Buff-bellied Pipits**’ *A. (rubescens) japonicus* were not in Hatay as normal although singles occurred Kocaçay, Bursa, 31 Jan (Plate 34) and Trabzon 30 Mar (Plate 35). A single **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* Gerede, Bolu 16 Feb and one trapped Aras ringing station 28 Mar.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Two female **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* Al Barsha pond 6-20 Mar (sixth record). 130 **Wilson’s Storm Petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus* on a pelagic trip off Kalba 31 May (70 on 14 Jun) together with two **Swinhoe’s Storm Petrels** *Hydrobates monorhis*. A **Sooty Shearwater** *Ardenna grisea* on a trip from Kalba, 17 May and a **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Ardenna carneipes* off Kalba 14 Jun. A **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* on a private estate near Green Mubazzarah, Oct 2018-1 Apr when seen departing northwards; one Al Qudra lake, 1 Feb (25th-26th records). The eighth record of **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Ajman WTP 3-12 Apr and an **Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* in full breeding plumage at Ra’s al-Khor wildlife reserve 3 Apr (two 15 Apr; Plate 36). An adult male **Frigatebird** sp. over Jumeira public beach, Dubai, 17 Mar (first record). Single **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* Wamm

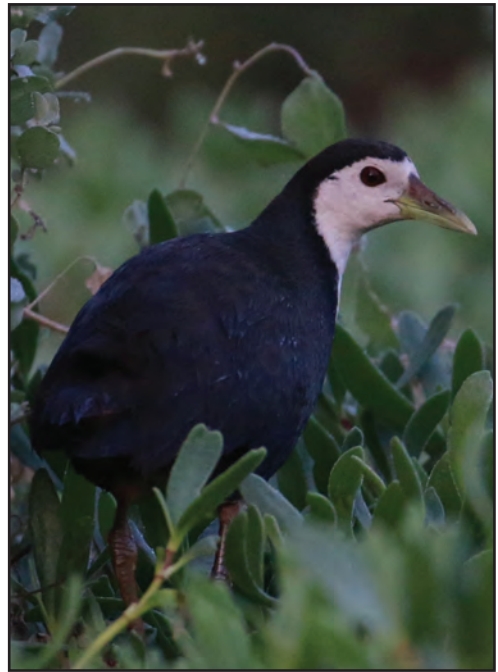


**Plate 36.** Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* 15 April 2019, Ra’s al-Khor wildlife reserve, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. © Khalifa Al Dhaheeri

farms 11 Jan-17 May (Plate 37), Saadiyat island 12 Feb and 15 Apr and Hamraniyah fields 6 Apr and possibly the same bird at the



**Plate 37.** Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* 17 May 2019, Wamm Farms, Fujairah, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell



**Plate 38.** White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* 26 January 2019, Abu Dhabi Golf Club, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

nearby Banyan fodder field, 23 May and 8 Jun; in addition two juveniles with adults 24 May at an undisclosed location, where breeding occurred in 2018, indicate a second successful breeding attempt.

Single **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos tracheliotus* Al Maha pivot fields 9 Mar and near Green Mubazzarah, 12 Mar. An immature **Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* Wadi Wurayah national park 3 Feb (seventh record, last 2006) and a ringtail **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* Hamraniyah fields/Ras Al Khaimah motocross track 25 Jan. A **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Abu Dhabi golf club 25 Jan-1 Mar (Plate 38) and one Al Ain zoo 11 Mar. The **Baillon's Crake** *Zapornia pusilla* near Green Mubazzarah reported in *Sandgrouse* 41(1) remained to 31 Mar while a **Little Crake** *Zapornia parva* was there 19-31 Mar. A **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* at the same location 4 Apr-9 May, with up to four birds 23 Apr-2 May; one Wathba wetland reserve 20-27 Apr and one Abu Dhabi golf & equestrian club 5 May. 21 **Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* Bhalghelam island 21 Jan (a recently discovered wintering

site). A **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus* near Green Mubazzarah remained Oct 2018-22 Apr and a remarkable peak of eight 20 Mar. Confirmed breeding of **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* at two pivot field sites between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, with young seen throughout May. A **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* Dibba port 12 Jan was an unusual winter record while a **Little Gull** *Hydrocoleus minutus* Fujairah port beach 24 Jan was the 18th record.

A male **Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Abu Dhabi golf club 1 Mar and at least two near Green Mubazzarah, Nov 2018-21 Apr. An '**Arabian Spotted Eagle-owl**' *Bubo (africanus) milesi* Al Hajar mountains 12 Feb and two fledged young with two adults 16 May (Plate 39); this species now known to be a breeding resident, possibly widespread. A **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Wamm farms 16 Mar. **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* present at breeding site at Ajban from late Feb and over 15 birds there by early May; a migrant bird Lulu island, Abu Dhabi, 16 Mar. The **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* reported in *Sandgrouse* 41(1) at Al Sila'a peninsula 21 Nov





**Plate 39.** Arabian Spotted Eagle-owl *Bubo (africanus) milesi* 16 May 2019, Al Hajar mountains, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

2018 remained to 15 Mar while another Palm Jumeirah 13 Mar. A **Merlin** *Falco columbarius* near Qudra lake 22 Jan and a **Bay-backed Shrike** *Lanius vittatus* Wadi Wurrayah national park 28 Mar.

The **Black Drongo** *Edolius macrocerus* occasionally seen in the area in the past few years was at Mushrif national park 9 Jan. Four **Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* Qudra 18 Jan (new site) and up to 100 Lulu island until late Mar. An **Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Wamm farms 9 Feb (rare this winter). The two **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus humei* reported in *Sandgrouse* 41(1) Al Mamzar park 29 Dec 2018 were present in Jan, one remaining to 5 Feb; one Safa park 14 Feb. Single **Savi's Warblers** *Locustella luscinioides* Al Maha pivot fields 9 Mar and Mushreef Palace gardens, Abu Dhabi, 14-18 Mar. A **Hume's Whitethroat** *Curruca (curruca) althaea* Jebel Dhanna 13-16 Mar (Plate 40) and another Ain al-Waal also 13 Mar (second and third records).

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* confirmed breeding at a pivot field site



**Plate 40.** Hume's Whitethroat *Curruca (curruca) althaea* 15 March 2019, Jebel Dhanna, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. © Khalifa Al Dhaheri



**Plate 41.** Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* 12 March 2019, Jebel Dhanna, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. © Khalifa Al Dhaheeri



**Plate 42.** European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* 6 May 2019, Umm al-Emarat park, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell



**Plate 43.** Male Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* 22 March 2019, Al Mamzar Park, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

between Dubai and Abu Dhabi (seen entering nesting holes) 24 May. A **Black Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas podobe* Jebel Dhanna hotels 12-13 Mar (Plate 41) and another Al Sila'a peninsula 15 Mar (eight-ninth records). A **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* Al Mamzar park 22 Mar. A 2cy male **European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* Umm al-Emarat park, Abu Dhabi, 6 May (second record; Plate 42) while a male **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *F. semitorquata* Al Mamzar park 22 Mar (Plate 43) and a female Al Sila'a peninsula 19 Apr. A male **Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus* Munay dam 23 Feb. An influx of many '**Western Siberian**

**Stonechats'** *Saxicola maurus maurus* early Mar with widespread **Caspian Stonechats** *S. maurus hemprichii* (max four Abu Dhabi 9 Mar; Plate 44) - normally a rare migrant. The 21st record of **Pied Bushchat** *S. caprata* Green Mubazzarah 18 Apr (Plate 45). Many '**Eastern Black-eared Wheatears'** *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* (Plate 46) including five Saadiyat island 11 Mar and **Pied Wheatears** *O. pleschanka* (maximum 60 including two *vittata* Abu Dhabi island 11 Mar) also arrived early Mar. The regular over-wintering '**Eastern Mourning Wheatear**' *O. lugens* Jebel Hafeet 1 Feb. Single '**Siberian Buff-bellied Pipits**' *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* Hamraniyah





**Plate 44.** Caspian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus hemprichii* 9 March 2019, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell



**Plate 46.** Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* 10 March 2019, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell



**Plate 45.** Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata* 18 April 2019, Green Mubazzarah, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. © Huw Roberts



**Plate 47.** Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* 16 March 2019, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

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fields 25 Jan and Wamm farms 9 Feb (rare this winter). A **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* Jebel Hafeet 25 Jan. An '**Eastern Cinereous Bunting**' *Emberiza (cineracea) semenowi* Jebel Dhanna 9 Apr, a **Cretzschmar's Bunting** *E. caesia* Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, 14-16 Mar (third record; Plate 47) and a **Black-headed Bunting** *E. melanocephala* Mushreef Palace gardens 30 Apr.