Birds in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2012–2014

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This paper presents results from field observations and limited ringing of birds carried out within a compound in the Wazir Akbar Khan area of central Kabul city, Afghanistan, where I lived and worked 2 December 2012–28 November 2014 except during periods of leave. In addition, a few observations from other locations within the city during the same period, some by other observers, are included. An important *caveat* is that the study area was in a very small urban setting with little habitat diversity.

STUDY AREA

The study area (1800 m asl) was a compound of roughly three ha, covered partly by buildings and roads but also with some gardens (Plate 1). It contained a variety of bushes and trees including numerous fruit and nut species: apple *Malus domestica*, pear *Pyrus communis*, plum *Prunus domestica*, apricot *Armeniaca vulgaris*, pomegranate *Punica granatum*, quince *Cydonia oblonga*¸ black mulberry *Morus nigra*, almond *Amygdalus communis* and grape *Vitis vinifera*. Other trees included Siberian elm *Ulmus pumila*, Turkish pine *Pinus brutia*, ash *Fraxinus* sp, tree of heaven *Ailanthus altissima* and black locust *Robinia pseudacacia*. All but the last two named are native to central or southwest Asia (Breckle & Rafiqpoor 2010). A wide range of garden flowers was also grown, including many roses *Rosa*. Kabul has hot summers and cold winters. In the summer months June–August, the temperature reaches a mean daily maximum of 32.1°C in July, with a mean daily minimum of 15.3°C in that month. Winter temperatures drop to a mean daily maximum of 4.5°C and mean daily minimum of −7.1°C in January (World Meteorological Organisation 2015).

Plate 1. Typical garden in study area, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 18 April 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

The summer months to November have very little rainfall with largely cloudless skies. In March–May there is some increase in rainfall, whilst the city experiences snow during December–February or March. There is usually little wind other than during occasional thunderstorms or dust storms.

METHODS

Studies were carried out December 2012–November 2014 except during absences on leave. During the periods of bird migration late March–early June and mid July–early November, the most productive parts of the study area were checked almost daily shortly after dawn. Given the small area involved, this activity often took as little as five minutes, but could take longer if many birds were present. Observations from a static position were also made, particularly at weekends, but also to a limited extent in the early morning and evening, which allowed some detection of birds in the sky over the city as well as of birds within the compound. Opportunistic observations were also made at other times, a few from other locations within the city. Absences that reduced coverage during the migration periods were: 22 May–4 June 2013, 25 July–11 August 2013, 14 September–4 October 2013, 14–30 May 2014, 18 July–2 August 2014, 29 August–6 September 2014.

Mist-netting and ringing of birds in garden areas was carried out on 33 days 21 August 2013–6 November 2013, 41 days 4 April 2014–2 June 2014, and on 73 days 3 August 2014–5 November 2014. Apart from one occasion when a site 500 m from the study area was used, all ringing was carried out within the compound. The structure and extent of tree and bush cover was highly suboptimal for mist-netting. In addition, the presence of feral cats meant that nets had to be kept under more or less constant observation. As a result, normally only one or two six or nine m nets were used. Rings were supplied by the Bombay Natural History Society. A range of biometric data was taken, depending on the species trapped.

RESULTS

I observed or trapped 79 species, with four or five further species that were inadequately documented. These are all listed in Appendix 1, which shows the months in which each species was recorded, the maximum daily count and brief comments where necessary. Square brackets indicate lack of sufficient documentation. Proof of breeding is denoted by B. Three species of conservation concern were recorded, each on only one occasion: Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*, Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* and Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*. One species not currently listed for Afghanistan (UNEP 2008) is Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* (Mallalieu & Kaestner 2015). 283 individuals of 17 species were ringed, with no recoveries reported so far.

Notes on selected species follow. Information is included on all species of small passerine migrants regularly seen, and all 15 species of sylviid warblers recorded (migratory movements of this group are a distinctive feature within the study area). For the species of conservation concern VU = Vulnerable and NT, Near Threatened (IUCN 2015). A few records are included where insufficient evidence was obtained to determine the species involved, but which are nevertheless of interest. 'Kabul' means Kabul city.

[**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bulbulcus coromandus*]. A compact group of 30 small white egrets with yellow bills flew low west at 06.00 h, 30 April 2013. Although *B. coromandus* seems much the more likely species, *B. ibis* might conceivably occur. Neither is listed for Afghanistan (UNEP 2008), although 'Cattle Egret' has been reported from Kandahar: a single 8 April 2007 (Scheltema undated).

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus.* One flew north over the city during poor weather, 6 April 2014. This may be only the third published record for Afghanistan (Schweizer & Mitropolskiy 2008). In 1986 and 1987, a total of 13 Crested Honey Buzzards was noted migrating northwest over Islamabad, Pakistan, between 8 March and 12 April (Mallalieu 1988).

Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* NT. Two juveniles photographed soaring overhead with 13 Eurasian Griffon Vultures and two Cinereous Vultures mid morning 6 April 2014 (Plate 2), after heavy overnight rain, with low cloud and snow in the surrounding hills.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus.* One high over the west of the city 2 November 2013. 13 soaring overhead with other vulture species 6 April 2014 (Plate 2). Seven overhead in poor weather 31 October 2014. In addition, an unidentified *Gyps* vulture over the southeast of the city 18 April 2014.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* NT. Two overhead with Eurasian Griffon and Himalayan Griffon Vultures 6 April 2014.

Plate 2. Juvenile Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* (upper bird) with juvenile Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 6 April 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* VU. One photo'd flying northeast overhead 5 April 2014 confirmed as this species (D Forsman *in litt*). An eagle photo'd flying low east overhead 9 April 2013 also probably this species. Mentioned as vagrant to central and eastern Afghanistan by Naoroji (2006) but more likely to be scarce migrant given wintering range in South Asia.

'Asian' Shikra *Accipiter* (*badius*) *cenchroides.* Regularly seen April (earliest 10 April 2014) with a few sightings June–August. Display by pair or male seen on three occasions April. The presence of this species in Kabul in summer is consistent with Naoroji (2006) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), though the distribution maps in the latter and in Ayé, Schweizer and Roth (2012) do not include Kabul within its breeding range. Identification as *cenchroides* assumed.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis.* An adult flew low overhead 07.30 h, 25 October 2014, being in view for *c*20 s at *c*80 m range. Clearly a big accipiter showing a powerful hooked bill on a large head. Much larger than the Eurasian Sparrowhawks and Shikras that occur in Kabul, giving the impression of being close in size to a Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*. It had long, broad and powerful wings. The tail appeared rather long compared to Steppe Buzzard and was held more tightly closed. The head showed a striking whitish supercilium. The underbody was whitish, finely barred with grey and underwings were also pale although exact plumage details not noted. The upperparts were brownish-grey. It did not appear to have jesses or other evidence of captivity. I am very familiar with this species in the UK. Outside the mapped distribution in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) and Ayé *et al* (2012).

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri.* Common resident, seen daily, though no proof of breeding obtained and unclear whether of captive or wild origin. Rasmussen & Anderton

Plate 3. Adult Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 29 June 2013. © *Mark Mallalieu*

(2012) refer to 'sight records' from Kabul and Jalalabad, implying that further evidence of status would be useful. Many photos taken by author.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio.* Adult male photographed 22 August 2014, first or second for Afghanistan (Mallalieu & Kaestner 2015).

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach.* Fairly common spring migrant (Plate 3, earliest 7 April 2014) with some birds staying to breed. Maximum count three 29 April 2013. Latest sighting 26 August 2014. Seven individuals ringed.

[Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis*/**Pale Martin** *Riparia diluta***]**. In late August–early September, small numbers of hirundines *Riparia* spp observed some evenings, usually moving southeast and presumably to a roosting site. On one occasion, 50 seen in one hour. Although several photos taken, only one of these birds was identified with certainty (see Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* below). Many other martins were presumably either Grey-throated or Pale. Grey-throated Martin occurs as a summer visitor in Kabul and was mapped as resident in Afghanistan by Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). This appears to be at the extreme western limit of its global distribution *eg* it was not recorded from Bamiyan province *c*190 km to the west of Kabul in a 2008 survey (Bussutil & Ayé 2009). Pale Martins of the nominate race and *indica* occur in northeast Afghanistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia.* One hirundine photo'd 13 September 2014 was a Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*, probably an adult as it shows suspended wing moult, with three new inner primaries. The status of this species in South Asia is poorly understood and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) cite only specimen records from Afghanistan. However, it was found in Bamiyan province in a May/June 2008 survey (Bussutil & Ayé 2009).

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti.* One ssp *albiventris* trapped 26 September 2014. Within expected migration route though capture in small urban garden unexpected.

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus tristis.* Common migrant in spring (earliest 28 March 2014, latest 17 May 2014), max 25 on 18 April 2013. Return passage noted from September (Plate 4, earliest 23 September 2014), max 20 on 18 October 2013. Numbers reduced sharply early November. In 2014 a few winter records, single birds January, February and 8 March. During October and early November, but not during spring passage, song and calls heard on several occasions. 87 individuals ringed.

Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus.* Singles 18 and 20 April 2013 may have been same individual. Also, singles seen Kabul 18 and 20 May 2013 (Harrison & Lamsdell 2014).

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei.* Common migrant spring (Plate 5, earliest 4 April 2014, latest 14 May 2013 and 2014), max count 20 on 25 April 2013. Return passage noted from September (earliest 8 September 2014, trapped, remaining until at least 13 September; next bird 20 September 2014), max five on 18 and 24 October 2014. Numbers reduced sharply in early November. In 2014, a few winter records of singles January, February and 8 March. Frequently heard singing in spring but not autumn. 37 individuals ringed.

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus.* Passage noted spring, earliest 5 April 2014 (photo'd), latest 6 May 2014 (retrap of bird ringed 30 April 2014). Daily max

Plate 4. Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus tristis*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 1 November 2013. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 5. Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 18 April 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 6. Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 11 April 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 7. Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 29 April 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 8. First calendar year Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 30 October 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

three 20, 22 and 28 April 2014. Single 1st year bird trapped 30 October 2014 the only autumn migrant noted. Bird observed singing in April. 14 individuals ringed. Presence of Green Warblers suspected spring 2013 on basis of photos. Confirmed spring 2014 after ringing started. In the field, the only reliable plumage features were the yellow supercilium, ear coverts and throat, which appeared consistently different to the duller Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides* given favourable light conditions. In the hand somewhat richer olive-green upperparts and very pale lemon-yellow suffusion to much of underparts below throat were also consistent differences; the very slight and partial lemon-yellow wash to the underparts of some Greenish Warblers was never visible in the field. Several Green Warblers showed a faint, faded second wing-bar on median coverts, not seen in any Greenish Warblers in the field or trapped. In the hand no examples of either species had a supercilium extending onto the forehead, and this feature was only observed in one Greenish Warbler photo'd in

Plate 9 (top). Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 4 May 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 10 (bottom left). Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 3 May 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 11 (bottom right). Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 29 April 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

the field. On average, Green Warblers had slightly greater wing and bill lengths as shown by the following data from trapped birds. Green Warbler wing length, mean 63 mm (n 13, 58–67 mm). Greenish Warbler wing length, mean 60 mm (n 20, 57–63 mm). Green Warbler bill (to skull) length, mean 13.4 mm (n 14, 12.3–14.4 mm). Greenish Warbler bill length, mean 12.9 mm (n 20, 12.4–13.7 mm). These differences were not considered useful in the field. No sound recordings of either species were made and song differences were not studied. Both bi- and trisyllabic calls were heard from Green Warblers, whereas Greenish Warblers always gave a bisyllabic call. Examples of Green Warblers in Kabul are shown in Plates 6–8, but it should be noted that these images do not correctly represent the actual appearance of Green Warblers, since yellow tones were rather poorly captured by the camera.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides.* Common spring migrant (Plates 9, 10) arriving later than previous species and last birds moving through later. Earliest 29 April 2014, latest 20 May 2013, max count 30 on 9 May 2014. Song heard frequently May. Not observed or trapped on return passage. 25 individuals ringed.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus.* One 29 April 2014 (Plate 11) feeding on aphids in an almond tree.

Plate 12 (top left). Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon mimicus*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 27 August 2013. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 13 (top right). First calendar year Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 26 August 2013. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 14 (right). Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 13 April 2013. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 15. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 2 May 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon.* One ssp *mimicus* trapped but not ringed 27 August 2013 (Plate 12).

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola.* Passage (Plates 13, 14) noted in spring (earliest 13 April 2013, latest 10 May 2013). Max 3 21–22 April 2014, though 10 seen in 30 m line of small trees at different location Kabul 13 April 2014. A few records August (earliest 24 August 2014, latest 31 August 2013). Eight individuals ringed.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum.* Common spring migrant (Plate 15, earliest 18 April 2014, latest 2 June 2014), max 10 on 10 May 2013. Smaller return passage noted July–September (earliest 25 July 2013, latest 19 September 2014) with max two on several dates. Song heard May. 25 individuals ringed. Relevant biometrics taken confirmed none were Large-billed Reed Warblers *A. orinus*. Four had bill lengths in range 18.7–19.0 mm, above the max in Kennerley & Pearson (2010). One of these had a hind claw of 7 mm. However, other characteristics including wing-tail ratio indicated *A. dumetorum* (P D Round *in litt*), confirmed by DNA analysis (M Collinson *in litt*).

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata.* 2–3 photo'd 3 September 2013 (Plate 16).

Sykes's Warbler *Iduna rama.* One photo'd 20 July 2013. Further birds seen 21 July 2013, 6 September 2013 and 3 and 25 August 2014.

Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia.* One photo'd 26 April 2014.

Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea althaea*/'**Taiga' Whitethroat** *Sylvia* (*althaea*) *blythi*. Birds of the Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca* complex were observed and trapped April–May (earliest 12 April 2013, latest 14 May 2014) and August–October

Plate 16. Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 3 September 2013. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 17. Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia* (*althea*) *blythi*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 22 September 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 18. Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia a. althaea*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 9 May 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Plate 19. Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 21 August 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

(earliest 22 August 2014, latest 27 October 2014). Daily spring max five 5 May 2013 and autumn max eight 11–12 September 2013. Reference to Olsson *et al* (2013) suggests that the most likely clades to occur are *althaea, blythi*, *halimodendri* and *curruca*. Plumage details, notably tail pattern, extent of brown tones on upperparts and peachy tones on underparts; wing formula; and calls made by some birds (noted as an accelerating and descending "tch-che-che-che-che-che" for one bird) suggested that most or all birds were *blythi* and/or *halimodendri*. Quiet warbling subsong heard September 2014 from some birds. DNA analysis carried out on two individuals, both confirmed as *blythi* (M Collinson *in litt*, Plate 17). *Sylvia a. althaea* recorded as follows: one photo'd 17 May 2013; singles ringed 2 and 9 May 2014 (Plate 18). Extensive series of photos taken of Lesser Whitethroats in the field and hand, but apart from these examples of *S. a. althaea* and the birds for which DNA evidence was obtained, precise identification was not considered possible.

Plate 20. Adult male Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*, central Kabul city, Afghanistan, 3 November 2014. © *Mark Mallalieu*

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*. Singles 19 August 2013 and 5 September 2014. Two ringed 21 August 2014 (Plate 19). None assigned to subspecies.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*. Singles recorded occasionally February–May, October and November, consistent with text on distribution (though not map) in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). Also recorded July: a male and female 4 July 2014, then a female seen 5, 11 and 14 July. Adult male ringed 3 November 2014 (Plate 20). All presumed to be central Asian ssp *intermedius*.

Red-spotted Bluethroat *Luscinia* (*svecica*) *svecica.* Nine spring, earliest 18 April 2013, latest 1 May 2014 (one outside study area). Three autumn records 5–13 September. Four individuals ringed. Records may have included sspp *pallidogularis* and *abbotti* (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva.* Fairly common spring migrant (earliest 7 April 2014, latest 29 April 2014), max five 17 April 2013. Return passage noted from October (earliest 5 October 2013, latest 29 October 2013), max two 20–21 October 2014. 13 individuals ringed. Where possible, the colour of the uppertail-coverts was noted and for adult males the breast colouration, to check for Taiga Flycatcher *F. albicilla*. No examples of latter recorded.

[**White-browed Wagtail** *Motacilla maderaspatensis*]. Brief and rather distant views of single bird in west of city 8 March 2013 and one seen briefly over study area 18 April 2014. Species not properly documented for Afghanistan though A Kullberg found it "along the Kabul river and in Kabul" in 2002, noting that it was uncommon (Kullberg undated).

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis.* Several records 2013 and 2014 of singles or flocks up to five birds 18–25 April. Singles 1 and 6 September 2013. All birds except one flying overhead.

Common Rosefinch *Erythrina erythrina.* Common spring migrant usually seen in flocks (earliest 16 April 2014, latest 14 May 2014), max 300 on 26 April 2013. No return passage seen.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris.* One male 7 February 2014 after heavy snow. A male and a female 8 March 2014. A male at different site in the city 20 February 2014.

Only known as winter visitor to northwest Afghanistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Possibility of birds being escapes cannot be completely ruled out, but arrival of first bird after bad weather suggests wild origin. None showed any trace of captivity.

DISCUSSION

Although very little information was collected on species of conservation concern, the records of Himalayan Griffon Vulture and Cinereous Vulture over Kabul at least confirm the continued presence of these in the area. Both were recorded Bamiyan province in 2008 in small numbers (Bussutil & Ayé 2009). The numbers of migrant warblers and other small passerines recorded in such a small study area indicates that thousands of these birds use Kabul's parks and gardens as refuelling sites during spring migration. Abundance of native trees may be an important factor in the attraction of the city to such birds, which appeared to be able to locate food-rich trees very quickly. For instance, after overnight rain in April and May aphid-infested almond trees could be full of warblers just after dawn whilst other trees held few or no birds. During return passage numbers of migrant passerines were smaller. This could be because in late summer and autumn extensive areas around Kabul, including mountain valleys, present feeding opportunities that are not available in spring. On return passage, Greenish Warblers are common in Islamabad, Pakistan, only 370 km ENE of Kabul (Mallalieu 1988), which suggests that at least this species uses a more mountainous return route across the Hindu Kush that is too inhospitable in spring. There was a positive correlation between poor weather (rain and cloud) and numbers of small passerine migrants, suggesting that with the clear skies and light winds that predominate around Kabul, most such birds will continue their migration without resting and feeding in the city area. Poor weather, especially in April, also results in more birds of prey passing over Kabul, presumably displaced from their usual migration route. Large numbers of captive wild birds are offered for sale in Kabul, with the author having seen photos showing caged White-capped Buntings *Emberiza stewarti*, Red-headed Buntings *Emberiza bruniceps* and Common Rosefinches. The possibility of escaped cage-birds always needs to be kept in mind. There remains considerable scope for further ornithological studies in and around the city of Kabul and many further species are likely to be recorded. For example, an adult male Asian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* was seen and photo'd in the city over a two week period from 22 April 2015 (Amy Jennings pers comm).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Raffael Ayé commented on an earlier version of this paper and assisted with identification of certain species. The Bombay National History Society, notably Asad Rahmani, Dr Balachandran, Sujit Nardwade and Nikhil Devasar, supplied the rings used in this study and Bill Harvey helped facilitate this arrangement. The Wetland Trust permitted me to undertake refresher training in ringing techniques at Icklesham, UK, and Ian Hunter provided helpful advice there. Prof Phil Round gave valuable support and advice with the ringing activities. Prof Martin Collinson arranged for DNA analysis from samples. Mark Bowden facilitated ringing at a second site in Kabul. Anssi Kullberg provided a number of records and comments on my observations. Nigel Redman helpfully commented on my observations. Dick Forsman, Annika Forsten, Peter Kennerley, Guy Kirwan, Manuel Schweizer and Lars Svensson assisted with identification of some species from photos. Peter Kaestner provided comparative information on birds in Mazar-e-Sharif, northern Afghanistan. Dr Sabina Knees (Centre for Middle Eastern Plants, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh) helped with tree identification. Through the assistance of Andrew Scanlon (UNEP) and Amy Jennings (Bremen Research and Development Organisation) I was able to demonstrate bird ringing to young Afghan scientists on two occasions.

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Appendix 1. Bird species recorded in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2 December 2012–28 November 2014, showing months in which each species was recorded, maximum daily count and brief comments where necessary. Square brackets indicate lack of sufficient documentation. Proof of breeding is denoted by B.

		Months recorded	Maximum daily count	Fewer than five records	Comments (B = confirmed breeding)
ARDEIDAE					
Black-crowned Night Heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*	iv–v	12	x	Two records, flying overhead
[Eastern Cattle Egret]	*Bulbulcus coromandus*	iv–v	30	x	See main text; *Bulbulcus ibis* not ruled out
ACCIPITRIDAE					
Crested Honey Buzzard	*Pernis ptilorynchus*	iv	1	x	Single bird flying north
Himalayan Griffon Vulture	*Gyps himalayensis*	iv	2	x	
Eurasian Griffon Vulture	*Gyps fulvus*	iv, x–xi	13	x	
Cinereous Vulture	*Aegypius monachus*	iv	2	x	
Greater Spotted Eagle	*Clanga clanga*	iv	1	x	
Booted Eagle	*Hieraaetus pennatus*	iv	1	x	One pale phase bird
Steppe Eagle	*Aquila nipalensis*	iii–iv	1	x	
Asian Shikra	*Accipter* (*badius*) *cenchroides*	iv–viii	2		Display seen; subspecies assumed
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	i–v, x	3		
Northern Goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis*	x	1	x	
Western Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	iv	1	x	Overflying Kabul
Hen Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	x	1	x	Overflying Kabul

		Months recorded	Maximum daily count	Fewer than five records	Comments (B = confirmed breeding)
Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	iv, viii–x	5		Subspecies not determined, though one photo'd bird is either nominate *migrans* or *M. m. lineatus*
Long-legged Buzzard	*Buteo rufinus*	x	1	x	
Steppe Buzzard	*Buteo buteo vulpinus*	ii, x		x	
SCOLOPACIDAE					
Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	viii	1	x	Flying overhead
LARIDAE					
[Gull sp]	*Larus sp*	iv	2	x	Two immatures high overhead, considered likely to be *L. cachinnans* ssp *cachinnans* or *barabensis*, or *L.* (*fuscus*/*heuglini*) *heuglini*
COLUMBIDAE					
Feral Pigeon	*Columba livia domestica*	i–xii			Common in Kabul, not recorded systematically
Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	iv-ix	10		Some evidence of southeasterly migration in August/September
Laughing Dove	*Spilopelia senegalensis*	i–xii			Common in Kabul, not recorded systematically
CUCULIDAE					
Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	x		x	
CAPRIMULGIDAE					
European Nightjar	*Caprimulgus europaeus*	viii	1	x	Outside study area
APODIDAE					
Alpine Swift	*Tachymarptis melba*	iv–v, viii–x	50		
Common Swift	*Apus apus*	iv, viii–ix	6		
Little Swift	*Apus affinis*	iv–x	20		
CORACIIDAE					
European Roller	*Coracias garrulus*	vii–viii	4		Nearly always observed flying overhead just after dawn
MEROPIDAE					
European Bee-eater	*Merops apiaster*	iv–viii	22		
UPUPIDAE					
Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	iv–v, vii–x	2		Song heard in April, pair in May
FALCONIDAE					
Common Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	iii–iv, x–xi	2		
Eurasian Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*	v–vi	2	x	Pair in June
PSITTACIDAE					
Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	i-xii			Assumed to breed in Kabul but not proven

		Months recorded	Maximum daily count	Fewer than five records	Comments (B = confirmed breeding)
LANIIDAE					
Red-backed Shrike	*Lanius collurio*	viii	1	x	
Daurian Shrike	*Lanius isabellinus*	viii	1	x	
Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*	iv–viii	4		B adult seen with recently fledged young; also passage migrant
ORIOLIDAE					
Indian Golden Oriole	*Oriolus kundoo*	iv–ix	5		Heard singing in May
CORVIDAE					
Eurasian Magpie	*Pica pica*	i–xii	6		B Common urban bird
Carrion Crow	*Corvus corone*	iv	1	x	
Northern Raven	*Corcus corax*	iv, x	1	x	
ALAUDIDAE					
Crested Lark	*Galerida cristata*	iv	1	x	Outside study area; probably common in open areas
HIRUNDINIDAE					
[Grey-throated or Pale Martin]	*Riparia chinensis/Riparia diluta*	viii–ix	50		Daily maximum relates to all *Riparia* spp
Sand Martin	*Riparia riparia*	ix	1	x	Probably under-recorded as most *Riparia* spp not identified
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	iii–ix	50		B
Eurasian Crag Martin	*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*	x–xi	50		
Red-rumped Swallow	*Cecropis daurica*	iv–x	50		B
SYLVIIDAE					
Cetti's Warbler	*Cettia cetti*	ix	1	x	
Siberian Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus tristis*	i–xi	25		
Sulphur-bellied Warbler	*Phylloscopus griseolus*	iv–v	1	x	
Hume's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus humei*	i–xi	20		
Green Warbler	*Phylloscopus nitidus*	iv–v, x	3		
Greenish Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochiloides*	iv–v	30		
Clamorous Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus stentoreus*	iv	1	x	
Moustached Warbler	*Acrocephalus melanopogon*	viii	1	x	
Paddyfield Warbler	*Acrocephalus agricola*	iv–v, viii	3		Maximum count of 10 outside study area
Blyth's Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*	iv–ix	10		
Booted Warbler	*Iduna caligata*	ix	2	x	
Sykes's Warbler	*Iduna rama*	vii-ix	1	x	
Common Grasshopper Warbler	*Locustella naevia*	iv	1	x	
Hume's Whitethroat	*Sylvia althea althaea*	v	1	x	

		Months recorded	Maximum daily count	Fewer than five records	Comments (B = confirmed breeding)
Central Asian/Taiga Lesser Whitethroat'	*Sylvia* (*althea*) *halimodendri/ blythi*	iv–v, viii–x	8		Two birds were shown by DNA analysis to be *S. c. blythi* (see main text). Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia c. curruca* may also occur
Common Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*	viii–ix	2	x	
STURNIDAE					
Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	i–xii	20		B
Brahminy Starling	*Sturnia pagodarum*	iv–ix	4		
Rose-coloured Starling	*Pastor roseus*	vii–viii	3		
TURDIDAE					
Common Blackbird	*Turdus merula*	ii–v, vii, x–xi	2		
Black-throated Thrush	*Turdus atrogularis*	iv	1	x	
MUSCICAPIDAE					
Spotted Flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	iv, ix	1	1	
Red-spotted Bluethroat	*Luscinia* (*svecica*) *svecica*	iv–v, ix	2		Possibly included other races (see main text)
Red-breasted Flycatcher	*Ficedula parva*	iv, x	5		
Central Asian Black Redstart	*Phoenicurus* (*ochruros*) *phoenicuroides*	iv	1	x	
Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola maurus*	iv, ix	3	x	
PASSERIDAE					
Indian House Sparrow	*Passer 'domesticus' indicus*	iv–ix, xi	50		200 at another location in city in April
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	i–xii	200		B
MOTACILLIDAE					
Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	iv–v	1	x	
White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	iv	8		Subspecies not determined: all birds flying high overhead
[White-browed Wagtail]	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*	ii–iv	1	x	Not adequately documented: see main text
Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*	iv, ix	5		
FRINGILLIDAE					
Common Chaffinch	*Fringila coelebs*	i–iii, x–xii	2		6 at another location in city in November
Brambling	*Fringilla montifringilla*	xi	2	x	Single record was outside main study area
Common Rosefinch	*Erythrina erythrina*	iv–v	300		
European Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	ii–iii	2	x	
Eastern Goldfinch	*Carduelis* (*carduelis*) *caniceps*	iv–v	1	x	
Emberizidae					
Red-headed Bunting	*Emberiza bruniceps*	v, viii	1	x	May bird was male found dead: possible escape from captivity. August bird 1st year, likely wild.