

Breeding range extension of Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti* in Uzbekistan

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On 20 May 2013 I observed a Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti* singing (simple song of trill interspersed with 'choops') at dusk on an arid stony 'plateau' almost devoid of vegetation (*c*255 m asl) at the western end of the Kuldjuktai hill/mountain range (40° 52' N, 63° 19' E) *c*2.5 km northwest of Dzhangeldy village, northern Bukhara province, Uzbekistan. The following morning, two Desert Larks (one of which sang briefly) were associating together. One was seen quite well (reddish outer tail visible). Another single was in the vicinity. This locality lies *c*250 km southeast of the mapped breeding range (assuming a breeding pair was observed) indicated in Ayé *et al* (2012).

LITERATURE CITED

Ayé R, M Schweizer & T Roth. 2012. *Birds of Central Asia*. Christopher Helm, London.

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First Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta* record and first breeding observations of Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*, for Iraq

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Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*

On 17 June 2016, a survey was conducted near Darbandikhan lake in Kurdistan region, northeast Iraq. On Mortka mountain, dominated by deciduous oak forest, three agitated birds were seen on the branches of an oak *Quercus* sp (35° 04' 41" N, 45° 48' 30" E, c1153 m asl). Two of the birds flew away and one stayed. The latter bird was making alarm calls then it sang for a while. It had a graduated tail and it was at first thought to be a Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis*, but it was relatively bigger and had a different song. Through binoculars, it had a distinct dark eye-stripe, white supercilium, flat crown and streaked breast (Plate 1). Clearly a Scrub Warbler, first record for Iraq (Salim *et al* 2012). In view of the sedentary nature of this species, the date and the behaviour of the birds it is likely they were breeding (Porter & Aspinall 2010).

Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

On 24 April 2012, a pair of Desert Finches was seen drinking water near a stream, collecting food then visiting their nest inside the hedge of a farm near Homer Qawm village, northwest of Sulaimani city. On 9 May 2015 in Hawari Shar park, north of Sulaimani city, a Desert Finch was observed feeding its young on a tree branch, c1 m height from



Plate 1. Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta* 17 June 2016, Mortka mountain, Kurdistan, Iraq. © Korsh Ararat



Plate 2. A Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta* carrying food at Khanzad tourist site, northeast of Erbil city, Iraq, 15 May 2016. © Mariwan Rahim



Plate 3. Pair of Desert Finches *Rhodospiza obsoleta* with their juvenile at Khanzad tourist site, northeast of Erbil city, Iraq, 15 May 2016. © Mariwan Rahim



Plate 4. Pair of Desert Finches *Rhodospiza obsoleta* with their juvenile at Kasnazan tree plantation, northeast of Erbil city, Iraq, 16 May 2016. © Mariwan Rahim

the ground. A Desert Finch was observed carrying food (Plate 2) 15 May 2016 at 36.1901° N, 044.0916° E (c706 m asl) northeast of Erbil city at the Khanzad tourist site. A pair of Desert Finches with their juvenile (Plate 3) was observed that day at a second location in the Khanzad tourist site (36.1859° N, 044.0917° E, c708 m asl). They were interacting with their juvenile and perching on a metal fence. They were watched for less than an hour though many photos were taken. The next day, a pair of Desert Finches with their juvenile was observed at Kasnazan tree plantation, northeast of Erbil city (36.1318° N, 044.1123° E, c807 m asl). They were perching on a pine tree and flying to the ground to eat (Plate 4). According to Salim *et al* (2012), Desert Finch in Iraq is a fairly widespread winter visitor that may breed. These are the first breeding records for Iraq.

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