

FROM THE RARITIES COMMITTEES

Ian Harrison (compiler)

Observers who have had a country first record accepted by a rarities committee are encouraged to write it up as a note or paper for publication.

CYPRUS

Cyprus Rarities Committee: Jane Stylianou (chair), Melis Charalambides, Stavros Christodoulides, Hugh Buck (to end Nov 2016), Chris Stavrou, Martin Hellicar, Johannes Honold, Filippos Georgiades (from Dec 2016). A full list of Cyprus birds requiring rarity descriptions and rare bird report forms are available from Jane Stylianou janestycy@yahoo.co.uk to whom claims should be sent. Since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(2) the committee has accepted the following records:

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*. One Larnaca sewage treatment plant, 4–24 November 2015 (L & A Crane). Eighth record at least. Last recorded 2002.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*. Three females Oroklini marsh, 14 December 2015–5 March 2016 (M Smith). Rare, less than annual winter visitor.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*. One Polis Chrysochou bay, 2 August 2015 and another there 27 August 2015 (both C Richardson). Eighth & ninth records.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*. One juvenile Agia Varvara (Paphos), 10 October 2015 (M Smith) and another Acheleia dam 16–17 October 2015 (C Richardson). Rare, less than annual passage migrant.

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*. One Akhna dam 8 October 2015 (C Constantinou, G Constantinou, B Hellang). Rare, less than annual passage migrant.

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*. One Akrotiri salt lake, 28 February 2015 (S Christodoulides, D Rhoads, L Sergides). Then up to four same area to 2 May 2015. Former breeder, now less than annual vagrant.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*. One Mandria, 21 February–18 March 2016 (I & K Bloomer). Fourth record.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*. One Akrotiri gravel pits, 4 September 2015 (M Smith). 17th record.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*. One Kouklia soakaways, 23 & 29 September 2015 (J Stylianou). One Phasouri reed beds, 20 November 2015 (T & E Drew). One Phasouri reed beds, 13 & 27 January 2016 (K & R Howard, C & D Lamsdell). 14–16th records since 2000.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*. One Anarita park, 28 April–15 May 2016 (M Smith, Plate 1). First record.



Plate I. Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* 28 April 2016, Anarita park, Paphos, Cyprus. © Matt Smith



Plate 2. Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* 24 March 2016, cape Greco, Cyprus. © Stavros Christodoulides



Plate 3. Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus* 14 November 2015, Lower Ezousas pools, Paphos, Cyprus. © Neil Alderson

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*. One cape Greco, 24–25 March 2016 (K & R Howard, Plate 2). First record.

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*. A male and a female Lower Ezousas pools, Paphos, 14–19 November 2015 (N Alderson, Plate 3) and a male Zakaki marsh, 16 November 2016 (WA Stacey). 6 & 7th records since 1999.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One Paphos, 19 March 2016 (S Watkins). 15th record.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*. One Armou hills, 23 August 2015. One Agia Varvara, 11 September 2015 and one Livera, 13–14 September 2015. (All C Richardson). Rare, less than annual passage migrant.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. One Troodos, 20 November 2015 (T & E Drew). 12th record since 1993.

White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*. One Paphos headland, 16 April 2015 (K Murray). 19th record.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*. One Larnaca STP, 19 October 2015 (J Stylianou). Rare, less than annual passage migrant.

Western Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus*. One Mandria, 5 March 2015 (C Richardson).

White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*. One first-winter male cape Greco, 23–28 February 2016 (S Tidman). Eighth record.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*. One cape Greco, 5–17 March 2015 (S Christodoulides) and one same location 30 January–15 February 2016 (K & R Howard). At least ten records of this winter visitor.

Yellow-headed Wagtail *Motacilla (flava) lutea*. One Lady's Mile, 22 April 2016 (T Reeves). Eighth recent record.

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*. Up to four cape Greco, 30 January–19 March 2016 (K & R Howard) and two Dhekelia, 18 March 2016 (S Tidman). 19 & 20th records since 1999.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*. One cape Greco 4 April 2015 (A Loutsios). Fourth record.

EGYPT

The Egyptian Ornithological Rarities Committee comprises Sherif Baha El Din (chair), Frédéric Jiguet (secretary), Wed

Abdel Latif Ibrahim, Richard Bonser, Andrea Corso, Pierre André Crochet, Andrew Grieve, Richard Hoath and Manuel Schweizer. Official external advisers are Istvan Moldovan, Ahmed Riad and Mary Megalli. Claims should be sent to eorc.secretary@gmail.com. See also www.chn-france.org/eorc/eorc.php?id_content=1 where claim forms can be downloaded.

IRAN

The Iran Bird Records Committee currently comprises Abolghasem Khaleghizadeh (recorder), Mohammad Tohidifar, Parviz Bakhtiatir, Seyed Babk Miusavi, Mohammad E Sehhatiasabet, Meysam Ghasemi, Ali Khani, Abbas Ashoori and Ahmad Barati plus Derek Scott, Richard Porter and Ian Harrison as external consultants as and when necessary. Claims should be sent to Abolghasem Khaleghizadeh at akhaleghizadeh@gmail.com.

ISRAEL

The Israel Rarities and Distribution Committee comprises Avner Cohen (secretary), Barak Granit, Yoav Perlman. Claims should be sent to Avner Cohen israbirding@gmail.com. See also www.israbirding.com/irdc where claim forms can be downloaded.

JORDAN

The Jordan Bird Records Committee comprises Fares Khoury (secretary), Feras Rahahleh, Khaldun Al Omari, Richard Porter and Ian Andrews. Claims should be sent to Fares Khoury at avijordan2000@yahoo.com. JBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(1).

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*. One juvenile Aqaba coast, 15 November 2014 (A Riad). One adult Ghor Rama, Jordan valley 18 December 2015 (F Khoury). Second record away from Aqaba. **This** species is now regularly seen in the Aqaba area and JBRC will therefore now only require documentation of sightings seen away from this area.



Plate 4. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* 14 November 2015, Madaba, Jordan. © Fares Khoury

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*. One adult Aqaba, 1 September 2015 (F Rahahleh) and another Madaba, 14 November 2015 (F Khoury, Plate 4). One 1cy Ghor Rama and one adult south Shuna 8 January 2016 (F Khoury, R Massis, R Salim, A Abdelhadi). One adult Shaumari reserve, 5 February 2016 (A Abdelhadi). One central Jordan valley, 11 May 2016 (F Khoury). Third–eighth records.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. Two Aqaba bird observatory, 19 April 2015 (S Pinder). Second & third records (first record a week earlier, 12 April).

Common Buzzard *Buteo b. buteo*. One adult Madaba, 14 November 2015–5 March 2016 (F Khoury, R Massis, Plate 5). First confirmed record of *buteo* subspecies.

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*. One adult Aqaba coast, 23 July 2015 (F Rahahleh). Fourth record.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. Fourteen Aqaba bird observatory, 18 March 2016 (F Rahahleh). 11th record.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. One adult Aqaba, 30 December 2014 (A Riad). Second record.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*. Two Aqaba coast, 18 August 2015 (F Rahahleh). Second record.

The following claim was rejected: Eurasian Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (Aqaba, 25 November 2015).



Plate 5. Common Buzzard *Buteo b. buteo* 15 January 2016, near Madaba, Jordan. © Fares Khoury

KUWAIT

The Kuwait Ornithological Rarities Committee comprises Mike Pope (chair), AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan (secretary), Markus Craig, Neil Tovey and Humoud Al-Shayji. Oscar Campbell and Peter Kennerley are both external adjudicators with voting rights. Claims should be sent to the secretary at alsirhan@alsirhan.com or the chair at mikeinq8@gmail.com. KORC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(1).

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*. One Jahra pools reserve, 13 September–20 October 2016 (N Tovey). Second record.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*. One JPR, 3–5 October 2015 (O Al Shaheen). Fifth record.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*. One Sulaibikhat bay, 25 December 2015 (R Al Hajji). Fourth record.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. One over JPR, 25 October 2015 (N Tovey). Tenth record.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*. One roosting on beach, Falaika island, 13 November 2015 (M Al Moshwah, A Al Khamees). Third record.

Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*. A single bird photographed JPR, 1 January 2015 was originally misidentified as Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* but correctly identified April 2016 (A Al Jeraiwi). First record.

Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*. Two JPR, 12–14 September 2015 (K Al Nasrallah) and seven birds flying over JPR 18 September 2016 (O Al Shaheen). 10th & 11th records.

Common Crane *Grus grus*. One 16–20 October, JPR (M Craig). Ninth record.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*. Two JPR, 9–11 November 2015 (O Al Shaheen). 15th record.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*. Two Jahra East outfall, 19 November 2015 (K Haataja, H Palojärvi). Two JPR 18 April 2016 (M Craig *et al*) and two there 4 May 2016 (N Tovey). Fourth–sixth records.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*. One Abu Hasaniya, 28 October 2015 (O Al Shaheen, H Al Shajji). Seventh record.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. One JPR, 30 July 2016 (N Tovey, M Pope). Seventh record.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. One JEO, 4 October 2015 (A Al Juraiwi). 15th record.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*. One JPR, 21 November 2015 (O Al Bathali). Ninth record.

Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena*. Single birds JPR, 30 September 2015 (M Khorshed) and 2 November 2015 (A Salem). 13th & 14th records.

Pallid Scops Owl *Otus brucei*. One JPR 15 October 2015 (M Craig). 15th record.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*. One Al Abraaq farm, 1 March 2016 (O Al Shaheen). Seventh record.

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. A 1cy bird Mutla'a ranch, 21 August 2015 (M Pope, M Craig) and one, un-aged, JPR, 7 October 2015 (O Al Shaheen, A Al Juraiwi). 12 & 13th records.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*. One on farm near Salmi, west Kuwait, 12–22 November 2015 (reported as being present from 12 November, identification confirmed 19 November) (Sheikh Sabah Al Sabah, O Al Shaheen). First record.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*. One Al Abraaq farm, 5 November 2015 (A Al Sirhan) and one Mutla'a ranch 17 November 2015 (P Fagel). Sixth & seventh records.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*. One Mutla'a ranch 14 October 2015 (M Craig) and one Al Abraaq farm 20 November 2015 (K Haataja, P Fagel). Third & fourth records.

Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus*. One male Sea city, 5 December 2015 (M Pope). 11th record.

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*. One Al Abraaq farm, 11 March 2016 (M Craig). Ninth record.

Variable Wheatear *Oenanthe picata*. One Kabd, 25 April 2015 (M Craig). Second record.

Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*. One JPR, 25 May 2015 (O Al Shaheen) and one Al Abraaq, 22 December 2015 (H Bourseli). 14th & 15th records.

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani*. One Al Abraaq farm, 20 September 2015 (H Al Shayji, A Al Yousef). Fifth record.

OMAN

The Oman Bird Records Committee comprises Jens Eriksen (recorder), Ian

Harrison, Dave Sargeant, Graham Searle, John Atkins, Peter Cowan, Waheed Al Fazari, Zahran Al Abdulasalam and Manal Al Kindy. Claims should be sent to Jens Eriksen hjoman@gmail.com from whom claim forms can be obtained. OBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(2).

Cinereous Vulture *Aegyptius monachus*. One Raysut, 28 November 2016 (K Ateeq). Sixth record.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. One Qatbit, 15–20 November 2016 (M Watson). Seventh record.

Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*. Two Ayn Hamran, 15 November 2016 (C Bocos). Fourth record.

The following claim was rejected: Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* (Raysut, 19 November 2015).

QATAR

The Qatar Bird Records Committee comprises Gavin C Farnell (recorder), Neil G Morris (secretary), Richard F Porter (hon. president), Simon J Tull and Keith Betton. Claims should be sent to gavinfarnell@yahoo.co.uk. QBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(1).

Eastern Greylag Goose *Anser anser rubrirostris*. Eight West Sailiya, 6 November 2016 (J van Duffelen). Tenth record.

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. Three Irkaya farm lagoons, 12 November 2016 (J Hardacre). Tenth record.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*. Two IF, 25 November–2 December 2016 (G Farnell, J Hardacre). Both birds killed through falconry activity. Seventh record.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*. Two Al Thakira, near Al Khor sewage treatment plant, 29–30 November 2016, (M Alnoubi). First record.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*. One Doha golf club 29 February–31 December 2016 (at least) (G Farnell, S Price). First record.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*. One IF, 22 July 2016 (J Thompson). One (ssp *vociferus*) Doha golf club, 8 September 2016 (S Price). Fifth & sixth records (first *vociferus*).

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. One Doha golf club, 27 September 2016 (S Price). Second record.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*. One rufous type ssp *cirtensis* IF, 11–18 November 2016 (G Farnell). One pale morph IF, 14–31 December 2016 (G Farnell, S Tull, J Thompson). A dark morph IF, 11–26 November and 29 December 2016 (G Farnell, S Tull, J Thompson). 19th–21st records.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*. At least two 4 November–2 December 2016 (S Tull, J Hardacre, S Price, G Farnell). 16 & 17th records.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*. One IF, 25 November 2016 (G Farnell). Seventh record.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*. One IF lagoons, 12 November 2016 (S Tull, J Hardacre). Third record.

Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*. Two IF, 1–31 December 2016 (G Farnell, D Bishop, S Tull, D Anthikad). Eighth record.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*. One IF lagoons 21 September–12 November 2016 when two seen (D Bishop, S Tull, J Thompson). 17th record.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*. Fifteen IF, 20 September 2016, numbers reducing until final sighting of one 21 October 2016 (S Price, S Tull, D Bishop). Thirteenth record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. One pale phase Al Wakra beach, 9–23 August 2016 (J Thompson, G Farnell). 11th record.

Western Barn Owl *Tyto (alba) alba*. One IF, 6 December 2016 (J van Duffelen, S Price). Rare in Qatar.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*. One IF, 4 November 2016 (S Tull, D Bishop). Second record.

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*. Two IF 11–12 November 2016 (D Bishop, G Farnell, S Tull). Fifth record.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One Al Ruwais park, 30 September 2016 (G Farnell). Third record.

Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia minula*. Two IF, 3–31 December (G Farnell, S Tull). Eighth record.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*. One IF, 18 November 2016, gradually increasing to a peak of c30, 23 December (birds still present 31 December 2016) (J Thompson, S Tull, G Farnell). Second record.

Caspian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*. A male IF, 10 December 2016 (S Tull, P Fawcett). Sixth record.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis*. Four Al Ruwais coast, 9 September 2016 (D Bishop, S Tull). Eighth record.

Masked Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) personata*. One Shamal park, 14 October 2016 (G Farnell). Third record.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*. One IF, 26 October 2016 (J Thompson, G Saunders). Sixth record.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Emirates Bird Records Committee comprises Oscar Campbell (chair), Mark Smiles (secretary), Simon Lloyd, Huw Roberts and Neil Tovey (all voting members) plus Tommy Pedersen (UAE bird recorder), Ahmed al Ali, Peter Hellyer and Jacky Judas (all non-voting members). Records are circulated and assessments published three times per year, according to the timetable outlined at www.uaebirding.com/ebrc.html. Decisions on assessments, plus the EBRC's constitution and information about the assessment process and downloadable report forms are all available at the same location. The UAE Bird Checklist, in both short and annotated forms, is available at www.uaebirding.com/uaechecklist.html, along with annual reports for 2010–2014. The annotated checklist was updated extensively in July 2016 with category definitions adjusted, categorisation of a number of species altered, and a number of records of certain species reviewed. Claims, preferably on the downloadable report forms, should be sent to ebrcuae@gmail.com or Tommy Pedersen at tommypepe63@gmail.com. EBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(2).

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*. One adult Wamm farms, 26 March 2016 (M Smiles) and at least one, possibly three present 8 April 2016 (SP Lloyd, M Smiles). 11 previous records (probably some duplication), mainly from this site.

Swinhoe's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*. Records on pelagics off Khor Kalba are as follows: two 24 June 2016 (M Smiles, OJ Campbell *et al*), one 5 Aug

2016 (SP Lloyd, A Alzaabi *et al*), one 2 September 2016 (M Smiles, A Alzaabi *et al*) and two 30 September 2016 (J Judas, A Alzaabi *et al*). Seventh–tenth records. It appears that this species is present in some, possibly most, years in very small numbers well offshore.

Little Crake *Porzana parva*. One male Al Warsan lakes, 27 March 2016 (K Ectay). 24th record.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*. One Khor al Beida, 13 September 2016 (M Smiles). 12th record, first since 2013.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. Three (two adults and one 2cy) from pelagic off Khor Kalba 24 June 2016 (OJ Campbell *et al*). Fifth record.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*. Adult from Dalma island ferry, 6 March 2016 (T Christansen, S Pihl). 21st record but exceptional in Gulf.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*. One Dubai polo and equestrian club, 25 September 2016 (T Pedersen, G Duquemin). Ninth record but eighth since January 2012 and possible that several birds resident in greater Dubai area, accounting for many of these sightings.

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*. One Mushrif palace gardens 4 May 2016 (OJ Campbell *et al*). 15th record, first in spring since 2007.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*. Up to three Mushrif palace gardens 19–26 August 2016 (SP Lloyd *et al*). 12th record.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*. One Sila'a fodder field 3 April 2016 (SP Lloyd). Seventh record.

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps*. One male Al Mamzar park, 3 September 2016 (M Smiles). Ninth record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following assisted in the compilation of this review: Jane Stylianou (Cyprus), Fares Khoury (Jordan), Mike Pope (Kuwait), Jens Eriksen (Oman), Gavin Farnell, Simon J Tull (Qatar), Oscar Campbell, Tommy Pedersen (United Arab Emirates).

Ian Harrison, Llyswen Farm, Lôn y Felin, Aberaeron, SA46 0ED, UK. ianbirds@gmail.com