

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, Chris Stavrou, Martin Hellicar and Johannes Honold. A full list of bird spp 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* 37 (2) the committee has accepted the following records:

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor*. One Kouklia dam, Famagusta 12–29 May 2015. (A Grey, P Beckenham, M Hellicar). First record.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*. One Akrotiri salt lake 23 September 2015 (A Turtle). Two Akrotiri salt lake 6 October 2015 (J Neal). Rare, less than annual autumn migrant.

Caspian Plover *Anarhynchus asiaticus*. One Paralimni lake 24 March 2014 (J Donaldson). One Mandria, Paphos, 9–18 March 2015 (D Gebauer). 21st & 22nd records since 2000.

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*. One Akrotiri salt lake 28 April 2015 (P Saunders, H Ewing). Rare, less than annual migrant.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. One first winter Makenzy beach, Larnaca, 6 December 2014–4 January 2015 (J Smart). Seventh record.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*. One Lady's Mile, Limassol, 21 May 2015 (P Beckenham, A Grey). Fourth record. Last record 2009.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*. Three Zakaki marsh, Limassol, 12 January 2015 (K & R Howard). One Akhna dam, Famagusta, 15 April 2015 (G Bowman). 15th & 16th records.

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*. One ringed Polis reed beds 10 March 2014 (A Crabtree). Fifth record since 1999.

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus [bonelli] orientalis*. One Souni, Limassol, 11 August 2015 (J Neal, P Smith). Spring passage migrant, very rare in autumn.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*. One ringed Polis reed beds 21 May 2015 (A Crabtree, M Preston). Rare, less than annual passage migrant.

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*. One Goudi 17 April 2014 (P Saunders). One Anavargos Hills, Paphos, 27 April 2015 (M Smith). 13th & 14th records since 1994.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. One Livadi tou Pashia, Troodos, 9 November 2014 (C & D Lamsdell). 11th record since 1993.

Western Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus*. One male Spiros pool, Larnaca salt lake 28 March 2015 (L & A Crane).

'Caspian' Stonechat *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus hemprichii*. One male Mandria, Paphos, 3 April 2015 (L & A Crane).

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*. One male Paphos headland 13 April 2015 (I Bloomer). One female Lady's Mile, Limassol, 26 April 2015 (B Rasmussen). Six females Latchi beach, Paphos, 28 April 2015 (K Dover) – largest group ever recorded in Cyprus. One male Pegeia, Paphos, 1 May 2015 (C Constantinou). One male Paphos headland 2 May 2015 (C Hughes). One female cape Drepanum, Paphos, 3 May 2015 (T Martin). Rare but increasing passage migrant.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*. One Akrotiri gravel pits 28 August 2015 (L Crane, A Crane, J Neal, J Stapley, P Curry). One Mandria, Platres, 2 October 2015 (L & A Crane). Spring passage migrant, very rare in autumn.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula [parva] parva*. One ringed Neo Horio, Paphos, 13 October 2015. (A Crabtree, M Preston). Rare, less than annual passage migrant.

Eurasian Crimson-winged Finch. *Rhodopechys (sangineus) sanguineus*. One

female Paphos headland 12 March 2015 (T Drew). Third 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 akhaleghizadeh@gmail.com.

ISRAEL

The Israel Rarities and Distribution Committee comprises Avner Cohen (secretary), Barak Granit, Yoav Perlman and Yosef Kiat. Claims should be sent to Avner Cohen israbirding@gmail.com. See also www.israbirding.com/irdc where claim forms can be downloaded. The committee has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 37(2).

Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*. One, probably of *fabalis* group, Agamon Hula, 2 March 2015 (Y Eshbol). Fourth record. The previous record was winter 2013/14 at the same site and the assumption is that this is a returning individual.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*. 1 adult Kfar Barukh reservoir, Jizreel valley, 10 November 2015–early January 2016. (E Amir, B Granit *et al*). Sixth record and the first since 1993.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhynchos*. One Idan, north Arava, 30 January 2015 to date (E Haviv, L Cabra *et al*). Second record, first in 1958.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*. Three off Nitzanim beach, south Mediterranean coast, 17 February 2015 (J Meyrav) and 18 February 2015 off Ashkelon, 15 km south (R Shaish). Eighth record.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*. One off Jaffa 6 January 2015 (S Alterman *et al*). Seventh record.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*. One North Beach, Eilat, 6–18 June 2014 (S Shalev *et al*). First record.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*. One adult North Beach, Eilat, 3–17 May 2015 (D de Boer *et al*, Plate 1). Fifth record, first since 1996.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*. One adult Km20 salt pans, Eilat, 14 November 2014–4 February 2015 (H Shohat *et al*). Second record.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*. One immature Tirat Zvi, Bet She'an valley, 17–18 September 2015 (G Leitner *et al*). 25th record. This species now occurs regularly.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*. One immature Harod and Jizreel valleys, 9 July–14 October 2015 (S London, B Granit *et al*). Eighth record.

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos negevensis*. An immature female Hai Bar Carmel national park, 13 June 2015 (Y Miller *et al*). Trapped 22 June 2015 and

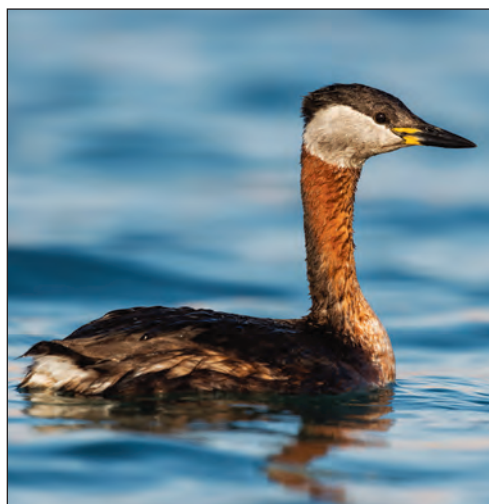
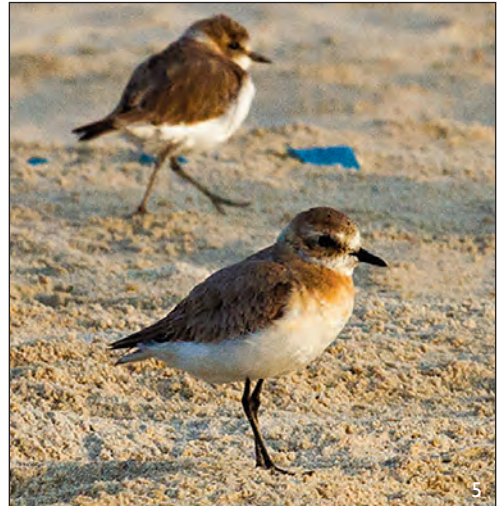


Plate 1. Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* 8 May 2015 North Beach, Eilat, Israel. © Avi Meir



Plates 2 & 3. Senegal Thick-Knee *Burhinus senegalensis*, Ma'agan Michael, Israel, 8 July 2015. © Oz Horine

Plates 4 & 5. Lesser Sand Plover *Anarhynchus [mongolus] atrifrons* 23 July 2014 Ma'ayan Zvi, Carmel coast, Israel. © Rony Livne

taken into care. Formerly bred but now only a few records.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*. An immature Bet Nir, south Judean plains, 30 January 2015–end of the year (E Hadad *et al*) and another immature, migrating over Kisra, west Galilee, 31 March 2015 (R Segali). Eighth and ninth records.

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*. An adult or near-adult Ma'ale Akrabim, northeast Negev, 28 November 2015 (E Fast) and wadi Ze'elim, Judean desert (I Donitza). Irregular. Previous record 2013.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*. One immature, picked up exhausted near Rahat, north Negev, 28 March 2015. Taken into care, released 2 May 2015 (S Landau, A Ben Dov). Second record.

Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis*. One Ma'agan Michael, 8 July 2015 (C Rozen *et al*, Plates 2, 3). First record.

Lesser Sand-plover *Anarhynchus [mongolus] atrifrons*. One Ma'ayan Zvi, Carmel coast 20–25 July 2014 (B Granit *et al*, Plates 4, 5). Fifth record.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*. One Nizzana 29 September 2014 (J Meyrav, L Tiller). Still a major rarity, previously recorded 2011.

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura*. One ringed Kfar Ruppin 7–14 October 2015 (G Goddard, D de Boer *et al*) and one Nir Oz, northwest Negev, 12–13 October 2015 (D Standing, B Granit *et al*). Ninth and tenth records.

'Western Black-backed Gull' *Larus fuscus graellsii*. One Ma'agan Michael 28 November 2014 (A Ben Dov). Identification verified by colour-ring, ringed in 2012 as adult male in mixed colony north Norway. Seen subsequently Ashdod March and December 2015. First record.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*. One second winter bird Ma'agan Michael 23 April–16 May 2009 (S Agmon, A Mayrose *et al*). Third record.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*. One North Beach, Eilat, 23 September 2014 (S Shalev). Rare; previously recorded 2012.

White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa*. Nest with three eggs on platform off Eilat, August 2015 (N Segev *et al*). First confirmed breeding record (although this species breeds regularly on islands off south Sinai).

Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena*. One first winter bird Yotvata, 6–7 November 2014 (I Shanni *et al*) and one there 12 November 2015 (C Rozen). 11th & 12th records.

Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus*. One Ashkelon national park 27 March–15 April 2015 (O Lewy *et al*), one Km20

saltpans, Eilat, 18 May 2015 (C Rozen), one Km76, central Arava, 21 November 2015 (S & Y Shiff). 15th–17th records.

Ashy Drongo *Edolius leucophaeus*. One Gan Shmuel, north coastal plains, 3–15 December 2014 (I Solnik *et al*, Plate 6). First record.

Arabian Dunn's Lark *Eremalauda dunni eremodites*. Two Haifa 28–29 March 2015 (E Peretz *et al*) and one Bet Yanay beach, central Mediterranean coast, 23 October 2015 (I Solnik). Very few records away from south Negev and Arava.

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus (trochiloides) nitidus*. One ringed Yeruham lake, central Negev, 2 October 2014 (Y Zvik, R Livne *et al*). Seventh record.

Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*. One first winter ringed Agamon Hula 18 August 2015 (Y Charka). This species is again on the rarity list.



Plate 6. Ashy Drongo *Edolius leucophaeus* 15 December 2014 Gan Shmuel, north coastal plains, Israel. © Meir Levy

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*. One ringed Eilat 5 October 2015 (C Rozen *et al*). Tenth record.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*. One ringed Yeruham lake, central Negev, 22 August 2014 (Y Zvik, R Livne *et al*). 11th record.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. One male Nafkha farm, central Negev, 20–21 November 2014 (B Granit *et al*) and another there 14 November 2015 (B Granit and S Alterman). Remains on rarities list.

‘Eastern’ Nightingale *Luscinia (megarhynchos) golzii*. One ringed Eilat 5 May 2015 (N Weiss *et al*). Sixth record.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis*. One first winter Kfar Ruppim, Bet She’an valley, 25 September 2015 (Y Popper). Fourth record (previous record 2002).

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*. One male and one female Yanuv, Heffer valley, 11 November 2014 (N Pevzner). Previously occurred regularly and bred occasionally but no records since 1994.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*. One ringed Tsor’a, Judean plains, 20 November 2014 and another Neve Eitan, Bet She’an valley, 5 December 2014 (both Y Kiat *et al*).

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*. One Km20 salt pans, Eilat, 21 November 2014 (N Eden).

The following claims were rejected: Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* (off Betzet beach, north Mediterranean coast, 20 Dec 2014), Rüppell’s Vulture × Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps rueppellii* × *Gyps fulvus* (Gamla, Golan Heights, 15 Jul 2014). White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus* (Zikim beach, south Mediterranean coast, 2 Oct 2015). Rufous Turtle Dove *Streptopelia (orientalis) meena* (Km20 date plantations, Eilat, 16 Nov 2014). Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola* (Heimar reservoir, south Dead Sea, 21 Jul 2015). Black-crowned Sparrow-lark *Eremopterix nigriceps* (Eilat, 2 Jan and 10 Dec 2014). Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* (Ramat Hovav, north Negev, 11 Nov 2014). Record withdrawn: Saunders’s Tern *Sternula saundersi* (North Beach, Eilat, 18 Aug 2015).

JORDAN

The Jordan Bird Records Committee comprises Fares Khoury (secretary), Richard Porter, Ian Andrews, Feras Rahahleh and Khaldun Al-Omari. Claims should be sent to Fares Khoury at avijordan2000@yahoo.com.

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.

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 Kindi. 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(1).

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*. Up to ten Saham sewage treatment plant



Plate 7. Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* 2 January 2016 Saham, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen



Plate 8. Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* | March 2016, Haitham, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

Plate 9. Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* | March 2016, Haitham, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

STP, 2 January–25 February 2016 (H & J Eriksen, JD Atkins, Plate 7). Ninth record.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis*. One off Muscat, 21 June 2014 (F Güpner & J Rów). Second record.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*. Adult male Haitham, 1 March 2016 (H & J Eriksen, Plates 8, 9). Seventh record.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*. Up to seven Khawr Rawri, 28 December 2015–14



Plate 10. Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* Khawr Rawri, Oman, 12 January 2016. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

January 2016 (R Tovey, H & J Eriksen, Plate 10). Seventh record.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*. Adult Wadi Darbat, 20 November 2015 (G Sahlstrand). First record.

Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*. Juvenile Raysut, 27 January–1 March 2016 (D Forsman *et al*, Plate 11). Fifth record.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*. One Raysut waste disposal site, 20 November 2015 (L Dahlgren & R Tovey). Sixth record.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*. Adult female Khawr Rawri, 2–3 November 2015 (W Faveyts & M Watson). Eighth record.

Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius*. One Al Balid farm, 7 January 2016 (R Tovey). Third record.

Pale Martin *Riparia diluta*. One Raysut STP, 11 December 2015 (H & J Eriksen, Plate 12). Fifth record.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*. Two Hilf, Masirah, 19 November–4 December 2015 (B De Schutter & R Tovey), two Raysut STP, 26 November–11 December 2015 (B De Schutter and H & J Eriksen). Ninth and tenth records.



Plate 11. Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* 19 February 2016 Raysut, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen



Plate 12. Pale Martin *Riparia diluta* 11 December 2015 Raysut, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

European Robin *Erithacus rubecola*. One Muntasar, 8 November 2015 (M Arinder & A Ekstrand) Sixth record.

Caspian Stonechat *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus hemprichii*. Adult male Jarziz farm, Salalah, 3 December 2015 (O J Campbell *et al*). Ninth record.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*. Male Barka, 25 October 2015 (W Faveyts). Eighth record.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*. One Ayn Tobroq, 4–13 January 2016 (C Lazaro and H & J Eriksen). Eighth record.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*. One Sun farms, Sohar, 11 December 2015 (JD Atkins & A Garrido). First record.

Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus*. One Dawkah farm, 14 November 2015 (S Holmsted). Ninth record.

QATAR

Qatar Bird Records Committee members are: Jamie A Buchan (recorder), Neil G Morris (secretary), Richard F Porter (hon president), Keith Betton and Simon J Tull. Claims should be sent to jamie_buchan@yahoo.com.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Emirates Bird Records Committee EBRC comprises Oscar Campbell (chairman), Mark Smiles (secretary), Simon Lloyd, Huw Roberts and Neil Tovey (voting members) plus Tommy Pedersen (UAE bird recorder), Ahmed al Ali, Peter Hellyer and Jacky Judas (non-voting members). Records are circulated and assessments published three times/year, as 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 recently published annual reports for 2010–2014. Claims, preferably on report forms downloadable at www.uaebirding.com/ebrc.html, should be sent to ebrcuae@gmail.com or to Tommy Pedersen (tommypepe63@gmail.com). EBRC has accepted the following records since the report in *Sandgrouse* 38(1).



Plate 13. Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* 28 November 2015, Al Wathba wetland reserve, United Arab Emirates. © Oscar Campbell

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*. One female Al Wathba wetland reserve 28 November–21 December 2015 (OJ Campbell, S Bashir Khan *et al*, Plate 13). 17th record.

Swinhoe's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*. One Khor Kalba pelagic 9 October 2015 (SP Lloyd *et al*). Sixth record. Following a recent review, several previously accepted records of this species have been reassigned as unidentified dark-rumped petrel sp and are no longer included in the totals for this species.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*. Two juveniles Ajman water treatment plant 12 December 2015 (A Al Ali) with one re-found Ra's al-Khor 26 December 2015–13 March 2016 (PS Nistar, M Luqman, B Al Qasimi *et al*). The second bird recorded Khor Badiaa, Oman (277 km southeast) 31 December onwards. Eighth record and first since 2003.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*. One Mafraq rubbish tip 21 November 2015–6 February 2016 (OJ Campbell *et al*) and another (possibly same, sites 110 km apart) Zakher lake 9 February–5 March 2016 (OJ Campbell *et al*). Seventh and eighth records.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*. One Saih al Salam (Al Qudra lake) 29 October–6 November 2015 (J Johnston *et al*). Third record.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*. One first-winter Fujairah port beach 15–21 November 2015 (R Walker, D Jackson, A Pavlushkin). 16th record, third since September 2008.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyæetus melanocephalus*. One first winter Abu Dhabi Golf and Equestrian Club 7–11 January 2016 (OJ Campbell, J Gaskell) and another first winter Mafraq waste disposal site 9 January–5 March 2016 (OJ Campbell *et al*). 14th and 15th records, first '1st winters' since 2008.

Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopaceus*. One female or immature Green Mubazzarah 27 November 2015 (V Sharma) and one adult male Al Warsan lakes 6 February 2016 (M Smiles). 18th & 19th records.

Pacific Swift (*sensu lato*) *Apus pacificus* sp. One Yas island 2 January 2016 (A Dwarshuis, M van Waasdijk, M Barth, OJ Campbell). Fourth record.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*. One Wamm farms 13 November 2015 (OJ Campbell, SP Lloyd *et al*). 21st record.

Black Drongo *Edolius macrocercus*. One Zabeel park 10 December 2015 (M Daubney) with two birds 17 February 2016 (L Kihl, C Schulze, M Suanjak). Eighth record but possibly relating to bird(s) irregularly reported greater Dubai area since 2012.

Ashy Drongo *Edolius leucophaeus*. One Al Mamzar park 31 October–28 November 2015 (M Smiles). 10th record; now virtually annual since first record 2006.

Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus*. One Wamm farms 31 October 2015 (M Barth). Fourth record, previous record 2011.

White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*. One Jebel Hafit 29 October 2015 (S Böhner). 13th record, previous record 2002.

Caspian Stonechat *Saxicola (torquatus) maurus hemprichii*. One Wamm farms 7–27 November 2015–18 February 2016 (OJ Campbell, G Sanders, R Miller, A Robertson *et al*). 23rd record, but only second in autumn and first to over winter.

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*. One female Wamm farms 7 November 2015 (OJ Campbell, G Sanders, R Miller, A Robertson). 17th record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following assisted in the compilation of this review: Jane Stylianou (Cyprus), Avner Cohen, Yoav Perlman (Israel), Fares Khoury (Jordan), Jens Eriksen (Oman), Oscar Campbell, Tommy Pedersen (United Arab Emirates).

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