



OMAN WITH BAHRAIN TOUR REPORT 2022

27 October - 8 / 10 November 2022

BY HANNU JÄNNES

Birdquest's thirteenth tour of Oman & Bahrain proved to be a great success for many reasons. We recorded a respectable total of 230 taxa and 51 Birdquest 'diamond' species (regional specialities) and saw several great migrants and interesting seabirds. Oman's special owls have always been one of the highlights of the tour, and we were successful in finding the fairly recently Desert Owl, Arabian Scops Owl, Little Owl, Arabian Eagle-Owl (a recent split from Spotted Eagle-Owl) and Pharaoh Eagle-Owl, a new bird for this tour. A mix of Middle Eastern specialities and sought-after migrants encountered on the tour included Arabian and Sand Partridges, Socotra Cormorant, Persian and Flesh-footed Shearwaters, Jouanin's Petrel, Masked and Brown Booby, Verreaux's Eagle, Lappet-faced Vulture, Red-knobbed Coot, the critically endangered Sociable Lapwing, Crab-plover, Cream-coloured Courser, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Sooty Gull, Spotted, Lichtenstein's, Crowned and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, African Collared Dove, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Forbes-Watson's Swift, Sooty Falcon, two forms of Southern Grey Shrike, Fan-tailed Raven, Greater Hoopoe Lark, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, White-spectacled Bulbul, Streaked Scrub Warbler, Arabian, Asian Desert and Ménétries's Warblers, Plain Leaf and Green Warblers, Abyssinian White-eye, Tristram's Starling, Blackstart, Hume's, Red-tailed & Arabian Wheatears, Nile Valley, Palestine and Arabian Sunbirds; Arabian Babbler, Rüppell's Weaver, Yemen Serin, Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak and Striolated Bunting. The African Openbill we found in Salalah was apparently only the second record for the country. The Kingdom of Bahrain weighed in again with a wonderful pre-roost gathering of 144 Grey Hypocolius and Persian Mourning Wheatear. Oman remains the safest country in the Middle East with stunning landscapes, a great road network, generally good food and accommodation throughout and a warm welcome for tourists. In Bahrain our wonderful host, Abdullah, made our stay a very special one as always.

The tour began in the morning at a hotel near Muscat airport, from where we headed straight to the shore of Gulf of Oman at Ras as Sawadi, a low-lying promontory just west of Muscat, and boarded two boats that took us around the small islets, where we had great views of two magnificent adult Sooty Falcons and their recently fledged offspring. Other birds noted during the boat trip included close Socotra Cormorants, adult and juvenile Peregrine Falcon, Western Reef Herons, several Striated Herons, including individuals of the very dark local colour morph together with quite standard ones. After checking the gulls, terns and waders on the beach and finding a Steppe Grey Shrike (now lumped back to Great Grey Shrike) further inland, we indulged in far too big lunch in a local restaurant. A late afternoon excursion to a nearby agricultural area yielded Grey Francolin, 80 Red-wattled Lapwings, a couple of Pallid Swifts, Eurasian Hoopoes and Indian Rollers, Delicate Prinia (a recent split from Graceful Prinia), Arabian Babbler, many colourful Blue-cheeked

Bee-eaters and Arabian Bee-eaters (one of the three species that resulted from the recent Little Green Bee-eater split), two Black-winged Kites (a write-in), Indian Silverbills, Red-vented, White-spectacled and White-eared Bulbuls.

Very early the next morning we headed for the Al Hajar mountains and Wadi 'Mac', home of the legendary Omani Owl, which unfortunately we couldn't find this time. This wasn't a completely unexpected result as both of our pre-tour visits to the same wadi on previous days had a similar outcome. We did, however, enjoy good views of a calling Pallid Scops Owl and, later in the morning, we had close encounter with a pair of Little Owls. At dawn we enjoyed a picnic breakfast in this beautiful, remote wadi, and then it was time to enjoy birding in the light after the long dark night. Birds seen included several Hume's Wheatears (what a great song it has), Red-tailed Wheatear, Streaked Scrub Warbler (a must-see bird for family listers), Long-billed Pipit, Desert Lark, Menetries's Warblers, a group of four Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, which we flushed from the bottom of the wadi, and couple of confiding Plain Leaf Warblers. After a rest at the hotel and a good lunch we headed for Jabal Akhdar at 2000m asl, arriving just before sunset. After dinner it was time for more owling in a big wadi, where we heard several Pallid Scops Owls and owl calls, unidentified at the time, emanating from the steep cliffs.

Next morning, we headed for the Sayiq plateau, where highlights included a total of five Lappet-faced Vultures, Egyptian Vultures, several Short-toed Snake Eagles, many Brown-necked Ravens, tens of eastern Black Redstarts, a very showy pair of Streaked Scrub Warblers, Pied, Hume's and Red-tailed Wheatears and Ortolan Bunting. In the evening it was time for more owling and we heard the previous evening's mystery owl realizing this time that the sounds must belong to a pair of Pharaoh Eagle Owls (a write-in). In addition, we found Red Fox, Arabian Golden Spiny Mouse and Desert Hedgehog during our nocturnal adventure.

Next morning, on the way to Bar Al Hickman we stopped at a site where we found the badly needed Striolated Bunting. We reached the wader paradise of the Bar Al Hickman in the afternoon and admired the hordes of wintering waders that come to feed on the shoreline as it is revealed by the receding tide. The obvious highlight of the wader show was Crab-plover, which was seen well. Other interesting species spotted amongst the hordes of feeding waders included Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers, Eurasian Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstones, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Dunlin, Little Stint and Terek Sandpiper. On the way back to Al Hij and our pleasant accommodation, we had a short stop for a roadside Greater Hoopoe Lark.

New morning saw us at Filim desalination plant, where the highlights included a very showy Plain Leaf Warbler and two Asian Desert Warblers, a new bird for us. The long drive to our next destination, Qitbit oasis, was interrupted by a couple of comfort stops, one of which resulted in a sighting of Shikra, a lunch break and a longer birding stop at the Al Ghaftayn oasis. This time the oasis was quite birdy and produced a male Asian Koel (always a good bird in Oman), Common Cuckoo, Wood Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, Green Warbler (another good find), Red-breasted Flycatcher and several Black Redstarts. At Qitbit oasis in the evening we watched a family party of Barn Owls that were flying around calling loudly.

The next day we visited Muntasar oasis, where, whilst waiting for the sandgrouse to arrive, we enjoyed views of an adult male Pallid Harrier, Daurian Shrike, a very brief Common Quail, European Turtle Doves, Citrine Wagtails and Tawny Pipits. Eventually the sandgrouse arrived, and we saw a total of 50 handsome Spotted Sandgrouse. Later we checked melon fields near Qitbit, where we found the only Bimaculated Lark of the trip. In the afternoon we drove to the truck-stop town of Thumrayt, gateway to Oman's oil and gas fields, for a two-night stay.

Next on the agenda was a visit to Mudday, a small village situated ca 80 kms west of Thumrayt, where we spent the morning. Highlights here included Nile Valley Sunbird, several confiding Blackstarts, sizeable flocks of Chestnut bellied, and smaller numbers of Crowned Sandgrouse, a few African Collared and Namaqua Doves, Sand Partridges and a Rosy Starling. In the afternoon we checked another valley, where Red-tailed Shrike was a new bird for us.

The following day saw us at Shisr, a small village in the middle of the central desert, where cultivation of grass on a large scale has created a premier staging point for migrating and wintering birds. The highlight of our morning session here was a total of nine Sociable Plovers, a critically endangered species, which is never an easy bird to find in Oman. Another important find was a flock of 14 Cream-coloured Coursers. A supporting cast of interesting birds included many White Storks (a new bird for us), a single Collared Pratincole, Greater Spotted Eagles, Eurasian Hobby, several Greater Hoopoe Larks, many Desert and Isabelline Wheatears, Great Grey Shrikes (of the form *aucheri*), and Western Yellow Wagtails including the forms *feldegg* and *thunbergi*. On the way down to Salalah we paid a short visit to Wadi Dokah, a World Heritage site for the Incense Tree *Boswellia serrata*. In Salalah an afternoon visit to the magnificent East Khwar gave us an opportunity to get close-up views of a number of wetland species, many of which were new for the trip, including Garganey, Northern Pintail, Common Moorhen, Eurasian and Red-knobbed Coots, Little Grebe, Black-winged Stilt, Black-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Phalarope, Wood Sandpiper, Common Tern, Whiskered Tern, Glossy Ibis and Little Egret.

Our first full day in Salalah started before sunrise in a wadi, where we easily found our main target Arabian Scops Owl. Next stop was at another wadi, where our main target was the Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak, perhaps the most wanted species in the whole of Dhofar area. This year it took some time to find this gem, but patience paid-off and in the end, we had great views of a bird that came to drink at a trough and then spent time sitting in a tree nearby giving great prolonged views for everyone to enjoy. In addition, Nick had another individual in the same area. Other important birds seen during the morning included many Forbes-Watson's Swifts, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Black-crowned Tchagra, African Paradise Flycatcher, Graceful Prinia, Arabian Warbler, Abyssinian White-eye, Palestine Sunbird, Arabian Sunbird (a recent split from Shining Sunbird), Rüppell's Weaver, African Silverbill and many Cinnamon-breasted

Buntings. After lunch and a siesta, we paid a short visit to East Khwar, where we added White-tailed Lapwing, Indian Pond Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron to our rapidly growing bird list. Our attempts to find an Arabian Eagle Owl at its day roost didn't work out as the bird was not at home, but we stayed in the area till dark and managed to locate the calling bird and obtained good views.

Next morning found us at the harbour of Mirbat, where we boarded our boat for a pelagic excursion. During the morning our captain Hateem took us nearly 10 kilometres offshore stopping at regular intervals to chum. The sea was calm, and we enjoyed a great seabird experience with many Jouanin's Petrels, Persian Shearwaters, a few Masked Boobies, Bridled Terns and a single surprise Flesh-footed Shearwater. In addition, we had a brief sighting of a Brown Noddy and Pekka glimpsed an unidentified storm petrel. After the boat trip we had a relaxed lunch in a local fish restaurant near the harbour. In the afternoon we headed for the mountains east of Salalah visiting Jabal Samhan, a wonderful site on the escarpment. Here we eventually enjoyed the wonderful experience of a pair of displaying Verreaux's Eagles. We also noted Arabian Wheatears and had close-up views of several Tristram's Starlings. The last stop of the afternoon was at Tawi Atayr, the site of an immense limestone sinkhole at which Yemen Serin was found by cavers in 1997, more than 1000km from the nearest population in Yemen (although it has since been found at another sinkhole to the west of Salalah). It took time to find the serins, but eventually we managed good views of a flock. In addition, we found a splendid family party of Arabian Partridges and watched the pair of Bonelli's Eagles that breed here. The new day started with a pre-breakfast visit to East Khwar, and then it was time to head west stopping first at a site where a Spotted Thick-knee, a new bird for us, was taking a snooze. Next came a visit to the Raysut water treatment plant, where new birds included Abdim's Stork, Little Ringed Plover, White-winged Tern, Spur-winged Plover and a Little Crake for Mika only. The mixed flock of Spur-winged and Red-wattled Lapwings also held the two hybrid individuals we first discovered here in 2018. After lunch in a local restaurant, we visited the Raysut Beach, an excellent birding site, where the highlight was an African Openbill, apparently only the second record for Oman! In the afternoon we headed for the Al Mughsail area for a seawatch, which produced Sandwich and Lesser Crested Terns, both new birds for us, many Persian Shearwaters, Brown Boobies and 200 Socotra Cormorants. At sunset we headed for the traditional Desert Owl site and bagged this handsome, and very co-operative owl, with ease.

Our last full day in Oman began with a visit to a nearby farm, where we glimpsed a Singing Bush Lark. Then we revisited some of the sites we had previously birded including the day roost site of the Arabian Eagle-Owl, seeing a pair of these magnificent owls in broad daylight, and at a remote beach, we added Pheasant-tailed Jacana and White-breasted Waterhen to the trip list. The next day it was time to say goodbye to those participants, not joining us for the extension before heading for Bahrain for a two-night stay. Thanks to unfavourable flight connections and hassle with the rental car, we didn't reach our hotel in Bahrain until midnight.

Our full day in Bahrain began around the arid hills, where, after a search, we managed to locate our main target, the Persian Mourning Wheatear, a potential split from Mourning Wheatear. The Bahrain racecourse yielded three new birds; Eurasian Skylark, Water Pipit and Greater Short-toed Lark. Later we headed for a seated lunch and then spent the afternoon in the Hypocolius pre-roost area, which consists of patches of acacia scrub, where the birds congregate before flying off to their roost presumably in the palms of VIP gardens. As usual, there was no large build up, just lots of comings and goings. The birds tower from the scrub as they leave and head off with purpose towards their roosting area. They really are unique superb-looking birds, so reminiscent of waxwings in their appearance and behaviour. We counted 144 of these excellent birds during the afternoon. In the evening our local contact, Abdullah, took us to two different farms, where we tried to locate Egyptian Nightjar, but had to settle for two hunting Barn Owls.

BIRD OF THE TRIP (MAIN TOUR)

1st: Verreaux's Eagle

2nd: Desert Owl

3rd: Crab-plover

4th: Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak

5th: Arabian Partridge

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

BIRDS

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Grey Francolin *Ortygornis pondicerianus*

Sand Partridge ♦ *Ammoperdix heyi* Endemic to Arabian Peninsula and Middle East.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Arabian Partridge ♦ *Alectoris melanocephala* Endemic to southern half of the Arabian Peninsula.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Forbes-Watson's Swift ♦ *Apus berliozii* Endemic to southern Oman and Socotra.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus*

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*

Spotted Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles senegallus*

Crowned Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles coronatus*

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse ♦ *Pterocles lichtensteinii*

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

African Collared Dove ♦ *Streptopelia roseogrisea*

Laughing Dove (Palm D) *Spilopelia senegalensis*

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Bruce's Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron waalia*

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Little Crake ♦ *Zapornia parva*

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Spur-winged x Red-wattled Lapwing Two hybrid individuals we discovered in 2018 were still alive and well at the sewage works in Salalah.

Sociable Lapwing ♦ *Vanellus gregarius* Critically endangered.

White-tailed Lapwing ◊ *Vanellus leucurus*

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius [mongolus] atrifrons* If the two-way split of Lesser Sand Plover is accepted, the form we encountered will become Tibetan Sand Plover.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Broad-billed Sandpiper ◊ *Calidris falcinellus*

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Crab-plover *Dromas ardeola* Noted at Barr Al Hikman and in Salalah.

Cream-colored Courser *Cursorius cursor*

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*

Sooty Gull ◊ *Ichthyaetus hemprichii*

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Lesser Black-backed Gull ◊ (Baltic G) *Larus [fuscus] fuscus*

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus [fuscus] heuglini*

Lesser Black-backed Gull ◊ (Steppe G) *Larus [fuscus] barabensis*

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

White-winged Tern (W-w Black T) *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Ardenna carneipes*

Persian Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus persicus* Endemic to seas surrounding the Arabian Peninsula.

Jouanin's Petrel ◊ *Bulweria fallax* Endemic to seas surrounding the Arabian Peninsula.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus* The one we found in Salalah was apparently only the second record for Oman.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Socotra Cormorant ◊ *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* Endemic to seas surrounding the Arabian Peninsula.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Western Reef Heron (W R Egret) *Egretta gularis*

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental HB) *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* Great flight show by a displaying pair in the Salalah area.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Pallid Scops Owl ◊ (Striated S O) *Otus brucei*

Arabian Scops Owl ◊ *Otus pamelae* Endemic to southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Pharaoh Eagle-Owl ◊ *Bubo ascalaphus* Heard only.

Arabian Eagle-Owl ◊ *Bubo milesi* Endemic to southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Desert Owl ◊ *Strix hadorami* Endemic to Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Arabian Green Bee-eater ◊ *Merops cyanophrys* Endemic to Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Sooty Falcon ◊ *Falco concolor*

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Isabelline Shrike (Daurian Shrike) *Lanius isabellinus*

Red-tailed Shrike (Turkestan S) *Lanius phoenicuroides*

Great Grey Shrike (Southern G S) *Lanius [excubitor] aucheri*

Great Grey Shrike ◊ (Steppe G S) *Lanius [excubitor] pallidirostris*

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

House Crow (introduced) *Corvus splendens*

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*

Fan-tailed Raven ◊ *Corvus rhipidurus*

Grey Hypocolius ◊ *Hypocolius ampelinus* A total of 144 were counted at the pre-roost gathering in Bahrain.

Greater Hoopoe-Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark ◊ *Eremopterix nigriceps*

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra cantillans*

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*

Red-vented Bulbul (introduced) *Pycnonotus cafer*

White-eared Bulbul (introduced) *Pycnonotus leucotis*

White-spectacled Bulbul ◊ (Yellow-vented B) *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia*

Pale Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Streaked Scrub Warbler ◊ *Scotocerca inquieta*

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Plain Leaf Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus neglectus*

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Green Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus nitidus*

Clamorous Reed Warbler (Indian R W) *Acrocephalus [stentoreus] brunnescens*

Common Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* Heard only.

Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis* Common around Salalah.

Delicate Prinia *Prinia lepida* This recent split from Graceful Prinia was common around Muscat and in Bahrain.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca* The form we encountered is *halimodendri*.

Arabian Warbler ◊ *Curruca leucomelaena*

Asian Desert Warbler ◊ *Curruca nana*

Menetries's Warbler ◊ *Curruca mystacea*

Abyssinian White-eye (White-breasted W-e) *Zosterops abyssinicus*

Arabian Babbler ◊ *Argya squamiceps* Endemic to Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Rosy Starling (Rose-coloured S) *Pastor roseus*

Tristram's Starling ◊ (T Grackle) *Onychognathus tristramii*

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

European Stonechat (B) *Saxicola rubicola*

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Blackstart ◊ *Oenanthe melanura*

Hume's Wheatear ◊ *Oenanthe albonigra*

Mourning Wheatear ◊ (B) (Iranian W, Persian W) *Oenanthe [lugens] persica* One in Bahrain.

Arabian Wheatear ◊ *Oenanthe lugentoides* Endemic to southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Red-tailed Wheatear ◊ (Persian W, Rufous-t W) *Oenanthe chrysopygia*

Nile Valley Sunbird ◊ *Hedydipna metallica*

Palestine Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris osea* Endemic to Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

Arabian Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris hellmayri* Endemic to southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Rüppell's Weaver ◊ *Ploceus galbula*

African Silverbill *Euodice cantans*

Indian Silverbill ◊ *Euodice malabarica*

Western Yellow Wagtail ◊ (Yellow-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] lutea*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] feldegg*

Western Yellow Wagtail (Grey-headed W) *Motacilla [flava] thunbergi*

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak ◊ *Rhynchostruthus percivali* Great views near Salalah! Endemic to southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Yemen Serin ◊ *Crithagra menachensis* Endemic to southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Striolated Bunting ◊ (Striated B) *Emberiza striolata*

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (African Rock B) *Emberiza tahapisi*

MAMMALS

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Five-striped Palm Squirrel (introduced) *Funambulus pennata*

Desert Hedgehog *Paraechinus aethiopicus*

Arabian Golden Spiny Mouse *Acomys russatus*

REPTILES

(List compiled by Bob Orenstein)

Bosc's Fringe-toed Lizard *Acanthodactylus boskianus*

Cat Fringe-fingered Lizard *Acanthodactylus felcis*

Hadramawt Sand Lizard *Mesalina adramitana*

Rock Semaphore Gecko *Pristurus rupestris*

Northern House Gecko *Hemidactylus flaviviridis*

Toad-headed Agama *Phrynocephalus sp.*

Desert Agama *Pseudotrapelus sp.*

Oriental Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor* Introduced.

Green Sea Turtle *Chelonia mydas*

Loggerhead Sea Turtle *Caretta caretta*



Greater Crested Tern (image by Mika Bruun)



Western Reef Heron (image by Mika Bruun)



Verreaux's Eagle (image by Mika Bruun)



Sooty Gull (image by Mika Bruun)



Sooty Falcon (image by Mika Bruun)



Purple Heron (image by Mika Bruun)



Red-tailed Wheatear (image by Mika Bruun)



Camels at Salalah (image by Mika Bruun)



East Kwhar, Salalah (image by Mika Bruun)



Sand Partridge (image by Mika Bruun)



Socotra Cormorant (image by Mika Bruun)



Birding in Muscat (image by Mika Bruun)



Plain Leaf Warbler (image by Mika Bruun)



Persian Shearwater (image by Mika Bruun)



Long-billed Pipit (image by Mika Bruun)



Little Owl (image by Mika Bruun)



Lesser Sand Plover (image by Mika Bruun)



Red-knobbed Coot (image by Mika Bruun)



Dhofar Mountains (image by Mika Bruun)



Desert Wheatear (image by Mika Bruun)



Desert Owl (image by Mika Bruun)



Desert Lark (image by Mika Bruun)



Flesh-footed Shearwater (image by Mika Bruun)



Greater Hoopoe-Lark (image by Mika Bruun)



The group photo! (image by Mika Bruun)



Sooty Falcon (image by Mika Bruun)



Indian Pond Heron (image by Mika Bruun)



Jouanin's Petrel (image by Mika Bruun)



Crab-plover (image by Mika Bruun)



Black-winged Kite (image by Mika Bruun)



Blackstart (image by Mika Bruun)



Arabian Partridge (image by Mika Bruun)



African Openbill (image by Mika Bruun)



Arabian Green Bee-eater (image by Mika Bruun)



Arabian Babbler (image by Mika Bruun)



Asian Desert Warbler (image by Mika Bruun)



Al Hajar Mountains (image by Mika Bruun)



Asian Koel (image by Mika Bruun)



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (image by Mika Bruun)



Bridled Tern (image by Mika Bruun)



Bruce's Green Pigeon (image by Mika Bruun)



Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark (image by Mika Bruun)



Arabian Eagle-Owl (image by Mika Bruun)



Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak (image by Mika Bruun)



Black-crowned Tchagra (image by Mika Bruun)



Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (image by Mika Bruun)