

# MOROCCO TOUR REPORT 2023

23 April - 4 May 2023

by Diedert Koppenol

Morocco surely must be one of the best countries in the Western Palearctic to enjoy birding. Not only does it feature a hefty amount of endemic (sub)species, many of the target birds here are very enigmatic and much sought-after. Our tour this year took us through most of the country and it was a trip with many highlights. We enjoyed great views of African Crimson-winged Finch, 'Atlas' Horned Lark, Seebohm's / Atlas Wheatear, Levaillant's Woodpecker, Atlas Pied Flycatcher, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Northern Bald Ibis, Crowned and Spotted Sandgrouse, Dupont's Lark, Egyptian and Red-necked Nightjar, Pharaoh Eagle-Owl, Maghreb Magpie, Maghreb Wheatear, Tristram's Warbler, Moussier's Redstart and much more. A total of 178 species were recorded of which 41 diamond birds and thus quite some range-restricted and endemic species.

The tour started with a departure from the wonderful Marrakech as we set off for the High Atlas Mountains. Enroute, we managed to see several species already, including Maghreb Magpie, Common Wood Pigeon and Corn Bunting. Our first birding stop was halfway up the Atlas at a nice campsite with some nice lush fields. The first birds were two very active African Blue Tits and a singing Mistle Thrush. Other birds we saw here were our first Eurasian Collared Doves, a European Turtle Dove, Common Kestrels, heard several Great Spotted Woodpeckers and a Levaillant's Woodpecker, several Great Tits and Coal Tits, a Eurasian Golden Oriole, Red-rumped Swallow flying by and several Common Blackbirds. After this very productive stop we went onwards to our end goal Oukaïmeden. The lunch break was nicely interrupted by our first European Roller of the tour and a walk in the park nearby resulted in seeing Coal Tits, Mistle Thrushes, Common Firecrests, more African Blue Tits and Short-toed Treecreepers too. After another half hour drive we reached our destination in the High Atlas. We quickly dropped the luggage at our nice hotel and went out straight up the mountains to look for our main target the African Crimson-winged Finch. Distracted by many Red-billed and Alpine Choughs, a lot of Atlas / Seebohm's Wheatears and 'Atlas' Horned Larks, we had several Crimson-winged Finches fly by and giving their distinct call. Darkness started to set in so we made our way back down the trail. At the bottom of the track, a nice flock of Crimson-winged Finches was waiting for us, feeding on the plants. Dinner was very welcome after the long day and having seen a lot of target species already on the first day!

The following morning, we went straight back up the mountains. Not much new was seen but we enjoyed great views of the Horned Larks and Atlas Wheatears again. A Black Redstart at the car park was amusing as were the large flocks of Alpine and Red-billed Choughs in the village. After this, we made our way down to the mountain and with several smaller bird stops, we undertook the long drive to the Middle Atlas Mountains and our hotel in Ifrane. We saw plenty of Western Cattle Egrets, European Turtle Doves, Eurasian Collared Doves, Common Wood Pigeons and other common birds while driving past numerous fields and great sights.

We started early the next day to get the best of northern Morocco's birding. On offer were the specialities of the Middle Atlas such as the Atlas Pied Flycatcher, one of the reasons we plan our Morocco tours at this time of year. Atlas Pied Flycatchers arrive back only at the end of April and are one of the species to arrive last to their breeding grounds. Many tours go too early to connect with this stunning black-and-white bird. Our first stop was at Dayet Aoua where we found the lake to be dry, but all the target species don't care about the water supply. The lanes were filled with African Chaffinches and African Blue Tits and a group of Hawfinches showed really well! A bit of hide-and-peek resulted in great views of Levaillant's Woodpecker, we had Booted Eagles and Short-toed Snake Eagle soaring overhead, singing Golden Orioles and, as proper Maghreb birding has it, many of the species which are getting scarcer in Europe were showing very well here such as European Roller, European Turtle Dove and we also had a lovely couple of Eurasian Hoopoe present.

After this great morning, we had lunch at a local restaurant, serving the best trout of the area. It was indeed very good and after this nice break, we went back a bit further north to bird around a larger system of streams. We managed more views of the common forest birds here, but also of Western Bonelli's Warbler and most interesting were the Eurasian Scops Owls singing during daylight! We weren't able to get any views but it was a nice experience. It seems more common behaviour the further south you go.

Today we would travel to Midelt, halfway between the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara desert. We started early so we could still enjoy another morning in the lush forest. Another male Atlas Pied Flycatcher behaved very well and a Eurasian Golden Oriole was eager to give some glimpses of its yellow-hued feathers. After that, we went on our way towards Midelt where several stops resulted in good views of Atlas Wheatear and Moussier's Redstart, but we also saw several Ruddy Shelducks, which are part of a relict population in the Atlas highlands.

Just before you reach Midelt, you pass the famous Zaida Plains. Although it wasn't the best time of day, as the activity usually drops down to a bare minimum in the afternoon here, we went to try for the reason of the Plains' fame and see if we could locate any Dupont's Larks. Sadly, as expected, we were not successful and left with a handful of Greater Short-toed Larks flying by but a short stop at a drying riverbed was way more successful. As this would be the last birding stop of the day, we just enjoyed the birds to their fullest and had great scope views of European Turtle Dove, some Western Cattle Egrets and Barn Swallows flying past and a surprise Water Rail started screeching from the reedbed. Like a small ghost it was scurrying between the reeds but from our vantage point you could get a glimpse or two. A nice way to prepare for another lovely Moroccan meal and getting ready for the next day.

Since we had unfinished business with a certain lark, we rose well before dawn to be at the Zaida Plains when the world started waking up. This proved to be a very good move as, even though it took some time, we had wonderful views of two Dupont's Larks, singing and scurrying around like a mouse. The set of background vocals was very enjoyable as well, with at least two males Desert Wheatear showing along the path, several Calandra Larks and Greater Short-toed Larks. After we had our fill of the Dupont's Lark, we stopped by our little riverbed patch again. The Water Rail could not be relocated, but the Common Moorhen and European Turtle Doves were still there as now four Little Ringed Plovers. After this, we returned home to enjoy a well-deserved breakfast, and prepared for a rather longer drive to Merzouga, on the brink of the Sahara Desert. Several roadside birding stops resulted in some good birds such as European Roller, Eurasian Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike and Lesser Kestrel.

A longer stop was made at the Tunnel des Légionnaires, where we explored the hill sides and

some pine forest as well. A flock of Spotted Flycatchers, Blue Tits and Coal Tits was entertaining, a showy Woodchat Shrike was appreciated by all along with singing Thekla's Larks and fleetly Trumpeter Finches finished the birding there.

A final stop was made at El Borouj, where we found two Western Bonelli's Warblers along the roadside. After that, we continued to our accommodation in Merzouga, starting our days of desert birding!

We started our first day of desert birding nice and early, to get as much time outside without it being too hot. The first hours of light are the most productive in the Northern Hemisphere when it comes to birding, usually, and that applies even more to deserts! We were picked up by our local team of experts with suitable SUV's for driving through the Sahara sands. Our first stop would be a water hole on the outskirts of the settlements, as this is the best way to see and enjoy the sandgrouse of the area. And enjoy them, we did! Large groups of Spotted and Crowned Sandgrouse kept coming in to have a quick drink before flying off into the distance again. We spent several hours with the groups, allowing for great photographic opportunities and studying their behaviour, where they landed at quite a distance while slowly making their way to the drinking pool and then only spending a minute at best to enjoy a gulp of water and fill up their breast feathers before quickly taking to the skies again.

A Brown-necked Raven and a Great Grey Shrike (of the desert subspecies) were present here as well. Next, we went to visit a small house, if you could call it that, with a tented outcrop. An old lady was selling souvenirs here, while make a bit of money on the side as being the best place in the area to still see Desert Sparrows. She was feeding them and in return shared in a bit of the profits for these desert birding excursions. We had great views of a pair of Desert Sparrow, with the male stealing the show! A curious White-crowned Wheatear was also happy to share in the grains, as was a large Greater Hoopoe-Lark. We continued to look for another 'big' target, the African Desert Warbler. They can be quite difficult to locate at times, as they do seem to leave their known sites for unknown reasons. It wasn't a surprise that we found a nest first, before we had any other sign of the bird. A nice Bar-tailed Lark kept us entertained while we walked the wadi and were about to move on to a new patch, when we finally located a nice African Desert Warbler. It showed well, but only for a short while, before moving on again. We went for lunch, saving the arguably best for last! After a very nice lunch in the typical Moroccan fashion, we went out to visit Uncle Nightjar. Aptly named after his most important skill: finding Egyptian Nightjars during daytime in his garden or the surrounding area! He had found them relatively quickly today, with only two hours of searching (where it can easily be more than five hours walking in the hot sandy dunes.)! We enjoyed great views of a beautifully camouflaged Egyptian Nightjar and had another African Desert Warbler, this one a bit easier for everyone to see. A great end to an amazing day of Moroccan birding!

Today, we had another great day of desert birding, in which we managed to see the amazing Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Common Bulbuls, Fulvous Babbler, Sardinian Warbler, the intriguing subspecies of Eastern Olivaceous Warbler known as 'Saharan Olivaceous Warbler', Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, White-crowned Wheatear, Eurasian Hoopoe, Streaked (Saharan) Scrub Warbler and more. A great last day of birding in the desert as we prepared ourselves to move out again tomorrow to the famous Boumalne Dades and its Tagdilt Track.

This morning, we made our way towards Boumalne Dades, but first we visited the Todra Gorge, a famous tourist destination which is essentially a river that has cut through a large massif and has created a very scenic canyon. That is, if you can see past all the tourist. However, it can be a good place for species like Tristram's Warbler, so we had a walk around. We didn't see much of interest

so quickly decided to move onwards. Before you reach Boumalne Dades, there are some interesting birding stops along the way, near Imiter. Our local guide for the desert birding had provided us with some great recent intel and we slowly made our way towards Boumalne Dades, as we first went to look for Maghreb Wheatear! After a small hike, which was interrupted by a nice, noisy Desert Lark, we reached the site for Maghreb Wheatear. A pair had been breeding here and it was no surprise that we quickly located a stunning male Maghreb Wheatear which soon attracted the attention of the female. From here, assisted by local guide 'Hibou' (French for 'owl'), we were looking at a nest of Lanner Falcon! The female was still sitting on the nest. It seemed like some baby creche here, as we were also shown (from quite a distance) the nest of a Long-legged Buzzard, with the youngster still sitting inside it. However, our remaining main target here was the Pharaoh Eagle-Owl. We had to drive off and turn in at a different part of the wadi system, but soon we were looking inside a Pharaoh Eagle-Owl's nest, albeit from a distance. At first, the adult was still visible but soon retreated further inside the hole/nest, leaving just the youngsters visible. After this successful clean-up, we went onwards to famous Tagdilt Track, which is one of the best birding sites in Morocco. Unfortunately, it is a track right through a junkyard, which often has pits burning plastic waste. As you can imagine, the smell is one of the worst to be found in Morocco. However, the species that can be found here with relative ease are well worth a visit. We were treated with great views of Temminck's and Greater Short-toed Larks, Red-rumped Wheatears and Trumpeter Finches. After this last stop for the day, we smelled a nice tajine cooking, so quickly returned to our hotel! Along the way, we were greeted into the gorge by an army of singing Common Nightingales and a small flock of European Bee-eaters feeding in the afternoon sun. Just after dinner, as soon as the darkness set in, the gorge was filled with Eurasian Scops Owls tuuting along.

Our hotel just above Boumalne Dades, in the Gorge du Dades, was very nicely located for a pre-breakfast birding excursion. We started off just at the start of dawn and quickly located a singing Western Subalpine Warbler. We birded along the road towards a sort of valley, where quite some birdsong was originating from. Several Common Redstarts were singing from the rooftops, with Common Blackbirds scurrying in the bushes, when a Western Black-eared Wheatear popped on a stone wall. As we made our way to the valley, we flushed a Black Wheatear from its roosting site in a small hole in a wall. Once inside the valley, we found ourselves standing underneath a remarkably showy Common Nightingale and had great views of this normally skulky bird. After a while, we also had two singing Western Orphean Warblers, chasing each other through the trees. We soon got distracted by a very loud Western Olivaceous Warbler, that also gave away good views. To top it all off, above the singing chorus of the aforementioned species combined with European Serins, Common Bulbuls and Eurasian Collared Doves, a Eurasian Golden Oriole called for attention, as it came flying in. They remain tricky birds to see, so we were happily surprised by its presence.

After breakfast, we went down through the gorge to visit the Tagdilt Track again. Yet, we were still missing a main target in the form of Tristram's Warbler, so we had a pitstop in the gorge itself at an abandoned hotel (it went bust during Covid) midway our decent and walked down the road for a bit. The bushes in the roadsides of these gorges are great habitat and it didn't take long for us to locate a nice male Tristram's Warbler, which was very showy. Meanwhile, the river valley below us had some nice birds as well, including a male Blue Rock Thrush, several Eurasian Crag Martins and Barn Swallows and a singing pair of Common Nightingales.

We made our way down to the Tagdilt Track as we still had to find another major target: Thick-billed Lark. We drove on to the track again and quickly located another pair of Temminck's Larks. At least six Greater Short-toed Larks were present here as well and a bit further down the track we

located two Thekla's Larks. A bit of excitement when we located a raptor that flew off a bit too quickly to ID, but luckily reappeared after a while and turned out to be a Black Kit, not too common around here! Sadly, we failed to locate the hoped-for Thick-billed Lark and decided to move onwards and bird in the Perle du Dadès valley. Since there was still a bit of water present here, bird activity was quite high. We enjoyed lovely views of European Turtle Doves, Serins, two Green Sandpipers flew up when we descended into the wadi, two White Storks circled overhead, a Eurasian Hoopoe was foraging in the scrubs, a small group of European Bee-eaters was chirping and foraging along the stream while sometimes perched in the trees, a single African Blue Tit was noted, but most interesting were the Great Reed Warbler and Western Olivaceous Warblers singing here.

After this nice intermezzo in our quest for the lark, we returned to the Tagdilt Track. As recent sightings did indicate they were still being seen, we had no choice but to brave the vast plains and starting fanning out to see if we could locate a nice Thick-billed Lark. Just when we had barely any hope left, a larger bird flew up from a dip in the landscape. A quick playback blast lured it in and it decided to land right in front of us: Thick-billed Lark! It offered great views, a well-deserved reward for our trek into the scorching plains.

We quickly retreated back to the airconditioned minivan and went off to the hotel to celebrate this success!

Today, we had quite a long drive ahead of us, from the hot Boumalne Dades to coastal Agadir. On the several stops of birding we did along the way, we had a nice group of six Little Swifts, many Eurasian Collared Doves, a few European Turtle Doves, an overhead Booted Eagle, and one car park gave us nice views of several Blue-cheeked and European Bee-eaters foraging for insects in the sky, giving their nice chirps. A Eurasian Hoopoe was present here as well, along with a Common Kestrel, a Woodchat Shrike, a Maghreb Lark showing its thick, large bill very clearly and a Cetti's Warbler shouting from the top of its lungs from the reeds which also held several singing Western Olivaceous Warblers. Common Bulbuls became more and more common the further east we went, as did Common House Martins, Spotless Starlings, House Buntings and Barn Swallows. Just before we reached the more settled areas, we had two Black-winged Kites from the car which were hunting above the farmlands. We also saw our second mammal of the tour, a cheeky Barbary Ground Squirrel.

We ended our day at Oued Souss, the mouth of the river Souss. Here, we saw our first Black-headed Gull of the tour, large numbers of Common Wood Pigeons, great views of Maghreb Magpie, a couple of Laughing Doves, our first Greater Flamingo, a few Grey Plovers, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Great Cormorants, Eurasian Spoonbills, a few Little Egrets, a Grey Heron was fishing, several Crested Larks were singing in the parking lot but the highlights were a Eurasian Hobby flying past and a Melodious Warbler subsinging in the bushes near the Royal Palace entrance amongst a few Sardinian Warblers and at least four Marbled Ducks!

It turned out that the Royal Palace, situated next to the river mouth did cause an obstacle this time around, as the royals are no longer favourable to birders walking along the borders of the palace grounds. This is one of the best places to see Red-necked Nightjars in Morocco, so that was a bit of a shame. Therefore, we decided to drive away from the palace a bit and try on the other side of the adjacent golf course. This turned out to be a very smart move as there were not only less people and mosquitoes here, but it also offered a nice clearing with good views of the sky between the trees. We waited until it had turned dark and started hearing several individuals signing in the distance, until one suddenly opened its mouth right next to it. It gave away wonderful views perching in the trees while also flying around in the moonlit night. After about an hour of enjoying this wonderful Red-necked Nightjar, we called it quits and returned to our hotel in Agadir.

The penultimate day of the tour was all about seeing the specialities of the Atlantic Coast and more specifically of Souss Massa National Park. We started our day of birding at Oued Souss again, where we had a lot of the same species again, with highlights being a larger flock of Greater Flamingos, several more Marbled Teals, a few Zitting Cisticola's, a nice large flock of waders including more Grey Plovers, some Common Ringed Plovers, many Dunlins, Common Sandpipers, Common Redshanks and a Spotted Redshank. A Sandwich Tern flew past, while the Maghreb Magpies and Sardinian Warblers were still present.

After this, we continued towards Souss Massa NP, but not before we made a break to enjoy a hunting Osprey! At Souss Massa, we quickly located the endemic Moussier's Redstart showing nicely next to the path. Along the banks of the river, we located a nice couple of Black-winged Stilts, Eurasian Oystercatchers, Common Moorhens, plenty of Kentish Plovers, a Ruddy Turnstone and a Eurasian Whimbrel. There were quite a lot of European Stonechats about, of which many females and juveniles. Perhaps a nest or two had just emptied. After this quick success, the hunt for the second target was on. It took quite a while before we finally heard a Black-crowned Tchagra singing in the vegetation along the path. Eventually, we managed great views in the scope and a second individual joined in too, which completed our visit to this part of Souss Massa NP.

Our next birding stop was at a small bridge crossing the Massa between Aghorimze and Arhbalou. It was very pleasant birding here, albeit that the road was a tad bit busy. The muddy banks had some nice waders foraging on it, including a Ruff and three Curlew Sandpipers. The commoner birds present were three Western Cattle Egrets, a Common Moorhen, plenty of European Turtle Doves (luckily still common in Morocco!), Common Bulbuls and Western Olivaceous Warblers. After a while of checking both sides of the river, we managed to discover a nice Brown-throated Martin flying between the Barn Swallows and after a while it turned out that there were at least three foraging on the insects above the water!

Now, we were off to find one of Morocco's most enigmatic birds: the Northern Bald Ibis. Severely threatened in the past, the populations in Morocco are doing better and are steadily increasing. We made our way to the Atlantic Coast and soon located a nice feeding group of about 65 birds. We spent a long time enjoying these weird-looking creatures, feeding on insects and sometimes even a large skink or two! The Eurasian Stone-curlews present here were a nice distraction from the ibises with their large yellow eyes, as we faded into the sunset.

The final day of our tour was all about the way back to Marrakech, but we had some more birding to do first!

We made our way past Tamri, where we stopped to look out over sea for a bit. Not much activity, but the gulls kept us entertained. We had several Audouin's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the beach, a few difficult to see Spectacled Warblers and Sardinian Warblers, a quick visit from a Common Redstart and a Great Grey Shrike, but the highlight was the four Northern Bald Ibises that flew overhead.

We went onwards towards our lunch destination of Essaouira, which is also famous for the breeding colony of Eleonora's Falcons on the offshore islets. After lunch, we made a stop at the southern part of the town, at the Pont de Diabat, where the Eleonora's Falcons are often seen prowling the skies. The same was true this time, although it took some time for them to show up. The wind was quite severe but we did enjoy the birding here as there were quite some waders present. Four Moroccan White Wagtails were present, a small group of Common Ringed Plovers with a Little Ringed Plover, a few Common Sandpipers, a larger group of Spoonbills and Black-winged Stilts, two Little Egrets and a Wood Sandpiper. After a while, we suddenly noticed a falcon-type bird homing in at a high speed: Eleonora's Falcon! We had great views of this dark morph bird, while it was hunting. Just when we started to head back, we located another bird, which was a light morph. A very good ending to our birding for this day, as we had quite the drive towards Marrakech to go!

We ended the tour at the dropoff where we had also started it, while looking back on a wonderfully great tour through Morocco that enjoyed all the facets this beautiful country has to offer! Thanks to our enthusiastic group and our superb driver Lahcen, the great cultural guide Hamza and our expert local bird guides in the Saharan desert!

## BIRD OF THE TOUR

1. **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater**
2. **Northern Bald Ibis**
3. **Crowned Sandgrouse**
4. **Dupont's Lark**
5. **European Hoopoe**

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

Where species names followed by the diamond symbol (◊) indicated they are either endemic to the country, are range restricted or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g., only seen on one or two Birdquest tours, are difficult to see across all or most of its range, the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species.

## BIRDS

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

**Red-necked Nightjar** ◊ *Caprimulgus ruficollis* A nice flight show in the evening of a singing male, with multiple singing in the background.

**Egyptian Nightjar** ♦ *Caprimulgus aegyptius* One resting during daylight found by our expert local guide, who had been searching since 5 AM!

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba*

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis*

**Spotted Sandgrouse** ♦ *Pterocles senegallus* Many hundreds at the drinking pool in the desert area around Merzouga.

**Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* Leader-only.

**Crowned Sandgrouse** ♦ *Pterocles coronatus* A little less common in the first hour or so at the drinking pool, but still several hundreds present.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia*

**Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

**Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis*

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*

**Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C)** *Fulica cristata*

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*

**Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

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

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

**Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

**Ruff** *Calidris pugnax*

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

**Audouin's Gull** ♦ *Ichthyaetus audouinii* On the beach of the last morning between the other resting gull flocks.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

**Lesser Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bengalensis* Present on the beach near Tamri.

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

**Great Cormorant** ♦ (Moroccan C) *Phalacrocorax [carbo] maroccanus* Several along the Atlantic coast.

**Northern Bald Ibis** ♦ *Geronticus eremita* Large foraging flock of 30+ along the Atlantic coast between Agadir and Tiznit. Two smaller flocks flying overhead near Tamri on the beach.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*

**Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

**Long-legged Buzzard** ◊ (Atlas B) *Buteo [rufinus] cirtensis*

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

**Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus scops*

**Pharaoh Eagle-Owl** ◊ *Bubo ascalaphus* Two chicks and one adult (showing very briefly) in a nest situated in one of the cliffs near Boumalne Dades.

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

**European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus*

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

**Levaillant's Woodpecker** ◊ (L Green W) *Picus vaillantii* Quite common in the correct habitat.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*

**Black-crowned Tchagra (B-h Bush Shrike)** *Tchagra senegalus*

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis*

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

**Maghreb Magpie** ◊ *Pica mauritanica* Relatively common in the urban areas of Marrakech and Agadir.

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

**Alpine Chough (Yellow-billed C)** *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

**Western Jackdaw** *Coloeus monedula*

**Brown-necked Raven** ◊ *Corvus ruficollis* Several in the desert around Merzouga.

**Northern Raven** *Corvus corax*

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

**African Blue Tit** ◊ (North A B T, Ultramarine T) *Cyanistes teneriffae* Very common.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

**Greater Hoopoe-Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes*

**Thick-billed Lark** ◊ *Ramphocoris clotbey*

**Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti*

**Bar-tailed Lark (B-t Desert L)** *Ammomanes cinctura*

**Woodlark** *Lullula arborea*

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

**Thekla's Lark** ◊ *Galerida theklae*

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*

**Maghreb Lark** ◊ *Galerida macrorhyncha* Several prime examples seen in the southern parts of Morocco.

**Horned Lark** ◊ (Atlas H L) *Eremophila [alpestris] atlas*

**Temminck's Lark** ◊ *Eremophila bilopha* Nice showy individuals along the Tagdilt track.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*

**Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra*

**Dupont's Lark** ◊ *Chersophilus duponti* Wonderful sighting in the early morning, signing and showing beautifully!

**Mediterranean Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala rufescens* Leader-only.

**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*

**Sand Martin (Bank Swallow)** *Riparia riparia*

**Brown-throated Martin (Plain M, African P M) *Riparia paludicola***

**Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris***

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

**Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum***

**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica***

**Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti***

**Streaked Scrub Warbler ◊ (Saharan S W) *Scotocerca [inquieta] saharae***

**Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli***

**Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus***

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler ◊ (Saharan O W) *Iduna [pallida] reiseri***

**Western Olivaceous Warbler ◊ *Iduna opaca***

**Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta***

**Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed Warbler) *Cisticola juncidis***

**Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

**Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin***

**Western Orphean Warbler *Curruca hortensis***

**African Desert Warbler ◊ *Curruca deserti***

**Tristram's Warbler ◊ *Curruca deserticola*** wonderful views of very showy individual in the Boumalne Gorge.

**Sardinian Warbler *Curruca melanocephala***

**Western Subalpine Warbler ◊ *Curruca iberiae***

**Fulvous Babbler ◊ *Argya fulva***

**Common Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla***

**Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes***

**Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea***

**Short-toed Treecreeper ◊ *Certhia brachydactyla***

**Spotless Starling ◊ *Sturnus unicolor***

**Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus***

**Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

**Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** ◊ *Cercotrichas galactotes*

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

**European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Atlas Pied Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula speculigera*

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

**Moussier's Redstart** ◊ *Phoenicurus moussieri*

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

**European Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*

**Atlas Wheatear** ◊ (Seebohm's W) *Oenanthe seebohmi* Very common in and around the Atlas Mountains.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*

**Western Black-eared Wheatear** ◊ *Oenanthe hispanica*

**Red-rumped Wheatear** ◊ *Oenanthe moesta*

**Black Wheatear** ◊ *Oenanthe leucura*

**White-crowned Wheatear** ◊ (W-c Black W) *Oenanthe leucopyga*

**Maghreb Wheatear** ◊ *Oenanthe lugens* A bit of a climb but a nice singing male and a female near Boumalne Dades.

**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia*

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

**Desert Sparrow** ◊ *Passer simplex*

**Western Yellow Wagtail (form unknown)** *Motacilla flava*

**Western Yellow Wagtail (Spanish W)** *Motacilla [flava] iberiae*

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

**White Wagtail** ◊ (Moroccan W) *Motacilla [alba] subpersonata*

**Common Chaffinch** ◊ (African C) *Fringilla [coelebs] africana*

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**African Crimson-winged Finch** ♦ *Rhodopechys alienus* several flyby/s and a flock foraging.

**Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus*

**European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*

**Common Linnet** *Linaria cannabina*

**Red Crossbill (Common C)** *Loxia curvirostra*

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

**European Serin** *Serinus serinus*

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

**Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia*

**House Bunting** ♦ *Emberiza sahari*

## **MAMMALS**

**Barbary Macaque (B Ape)** *Macaca sylvanus* several individuals at tourist feeding places.

**Barbary Ground Squirrel (North African G S)** *Atlantoxerus getulus* one enroute from Boumalne to Agadir.