

**ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO JORDAN**  
*Birds & History*

**05 – 14 April 2013**



**Leaders: Mitko Petrakiev and Mike Witherick**

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### A Personal Diary

#### **Friday, 05 April**

We left England on a bitterly cold early morning. Checking in for our British Airways flight to Amman was easy in the recently refurbished Terminal 1. Our flight left on time and arrived a little ahead of schedule. Soon we were meeting up with Mitko (the tour leader), Mohammed (our courier and guide) and Shakeeb (our driver).

The drive from the airport to the hotel took about 30 minutes. It being Friday, there was relatively little traffic on the roads. Perhaps we were surprised by the 'greenness' of the landscape and by the amount of new, good quality building. Having checked in at the hotel, we had 45 minutes to sort ourselves out and to acquire some local currency before driving to a restaurant for our evening meal. The meal was a substantial one and one that went down well – lots of interesting dishes. The mango juice may have been expensive, but it was a drink to remember – the juice was too thick to be drawn up a straw. It was interesting to observe how many of the tables in the restaurant were occupied by groups of women variously dressed from the traditional to the distinctly 'western'. The impression is that Jordanian women have a stronger place in society than in many other Middle Eastern states.

We arrived back at the hotel around 8 pm and everyone hurried to their rooms to catch up on lost sleep. The day had had a very early start!

#### **Saturday, 06 April**

We breakfasted at 7 am and left the hotel an hour later. We headed north out of Amman and made good speed along a modern motorway. A little short of Jerash, we turned off and spent much of the morning birdwatching in along the Zarqa River. Here we had our introduction to some of the more common and generally colourful birds, such as White-breasted Kingfisher, White-spectacled Bulbul, Woodchat Shrike, Blue Rock Thrush, Laughing Dove and Palestine Sunbird. At one stop, we had three different species of raptor in the air at the same time – Levant Sparrowhawk and Long-legged and Steppe Buzzards. A visit to the King Talal Reservoir gave us some fine views of this hilly part of Jordan, with its stretches of pines and at this time of the year looking remarkably green. Here our only success on the avian front was the sighting of our first Eurasian Hoopoes.

It was around 11.30 am when we reached the remains of the Roman city at Jerash. We spent some two hours exploring the site. All were impressed by the extent of the city and the degree to which so many fine buildings and impressive colonnades had been preserved. Good, too, to see so many local children among the visitors. This must surely rank as one of the finest survivals from the days of the Roman Empire. There was also some birding interest in the form of splendid Black-eared Wheatears, Crested Larks, Graceful Prinia and Lesser Kestrel.

Such was our absorption in the site that it was not until 2 pm that we were sitting down to a more than ample lunch at a swish Lebanese restaurant. Afterwards we headed westwards to one of Saladin's castles at Ajlun located on one of the highest hills in this part of Jordan. From it we enjoyed some wonderful views over a diversity of semi-arid landscapes. From there we dropped down into the Jordan rift valley. From a distance, the densely packed poly tunnels growing all manner of fruit and vegetables for the European market gave the impression of extensive flooding. We visited two dams, the first being very close to the Israeli border. Here we saw Cattle and Little Egrets, Grey Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron. Here too we opened our wader list with the likes of Spur-winged Lapwing and Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers. Jan spotted a splendid male Garganey and Mike a couple of Little Grebes.

It was just as the light was failing that we started our drive back out of the rift valley to Amman. We reached the hotel at 7.45 pm, and 45 minutes later were sitting down to a most acceptable buffet dinner. We did the checklist at the table and Mitko outlined the plans for tomorrow and our onward move to Azraq.

### **Sunday, 07 April**

We breakfasted at 7 am and by just after 8 am we had loaded up the bus. We took a southerly route out of the city and then turned east into the Eastern Desert. Our first exposure to the desert was at Al Kharaneh Castle just off the main road to Azrac. This castle is one of the best known desert castles and was built in the early Ummayyrad period. It is one of the earliest examples of Islamic architecture in the region. Sadly, the environs of the castle did not have much to offer in the avian line, save for a Black Kite and a Steppe Buzzard.

We then drove on until we were just short of the next castle at Qasr Amra. A sparse collection of bushes just off the road was surprisingly productive with sightings of Common Redstart, Northern Wheatear, Rufous-tailed Bushchat and Common Nightingale. But stealing the show here was a very viewable Wryneck – the first of several seen in the vicinity. Spurred on by our success, we walked to another area of scrub flanking the dried out bed of a wadi. Here we opened our warblers list with Common Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Lesser Whitethroat. We also watched two Tawny Pipits in very different plumages, whilst a White Stork could just about be made out in the hazy distance. Two species of shrike were also spotted – Woodchat and the eminently smart Masked Shrike.

We then drove to the other side of the wadi where there were some pistachio trees. By now the heat of the day was beginning to dampen down bird activity. The same suit of warblers was seen again, but perhaps most notable was the several sightings of both Masked Shrikes and Wrynecks. During the lunch break, most of the group visited the Qasr Amra castle with its fine frescos and mosaics. From there another 30 minutes of driving brought us into Azraq, an important route centre and famous for its once extensive wetland area, an oasis maintained largely by underground water supplies. We soon checked into our eco-lodge base for the next two nights. The lodge has an interesting history, starting life as a British hospital in the Second World War and then being converted into a hunting lodge for King Hussein. In 2007 it was transformed into the splendid lodge it is today, being run by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

After a two-hour spell of R and R, we assembled at 4 pm and drove to the nearby Wetland Reserve which is but a minute fragment of the great wetland that once prevailed here. During the course of an hour or so we added new birds to the tour list, such as Squacco Heron, Pallid Harrier, White-eared Bulbul, Spanish Sparrow and Eurasian Reed and Sedge Warblers. A Namaqua Dove was briefly seen, but not by all members of the party.

We then drove further out of town along the road leading to Saudi Arabia and eventually turned off to birdwatch close to the perimeter fence of the Shaumani Reserve. Mitko selected a stretch of desert that had a light sprinkling of sand overlying a stony base and a sparse covering of small bushes. It was here that we struck lucky, thanks once again to Jan, with sightings of some four or five Temminck's Larks and probably a similar number of Desert Wheatears. A Greater Hoopoe-Lark was seen performing its diagnostic aerial display. Well content with these sightings, we hurried back to the lodge, where after a quick shower we sat down to an excellent Chechen buffet dinner. We did the checklist in the lounge, whilst Mitko completed the details of tomorrow's programme with a local guide.

### **Monday, 08 April**

Most of us opted for a spell of pre-breakfast birding, leaving the hotel at 6 am. We returned to the area of desert lying just outside the fence of the Shaumani Reserve. It has to be said that, apart from House Sparrows and Crested Larks, birds were in fairly short supply. New sightings for the tour were Western Marsh Harrier and Desert Finch, whilst two Greater Hoopoe-Larks and a Temminck's Lark were also seen along with Pallid Harrier.

We arrived back at the lodge at 8.30 am for a most acceptable breakfast – dates and baklava were interesting newcomers to the buffet menu. An hour later, we were dividing the group between three vehicles, namely a minibus and two large pickup trucks for our safari into the desert. The first part of the excursion involved a drive around the perimeter fence of the Wetland Reserve and I am sure that everyone's memories of this part

of the drive were the superb views of Greater Hoopoe-Lark. Also memorable were the large numbers of Steppe Buzzards taking to the air having overnighted in the Azraq oasis.

We were to see still more Steppe Buzzards lifting off at the first major stop, but keeping them company there were a Short-toed Eagle and several Black Kites. Pallid Harriers were also well represented in the vicinity. This stop was at a fairly recently completed reservoir which offered us an avian abundance in stark contrast to the paucity of the desert. Two species of gull (Black-headed and Slender-billed) and two species of tern (Sandwich and Gull-billed) were included in our haul of birds, and a whole range of waders busily feeding at the water's muddy edge – Greater Sand, Caspian and Kentish Plovers, Ruff, Marsh and Common Sandpipers, and Little Stint. But for me, the greatest delight was to watch some Black-winged Pratincoles – yes, one of my favourite species! Of the passerines seen around the reservoir, perhaps the most interesting was the dark morph (*annae*) of the Desert Lark which is only found in North Jordan. A Red-throated Pipit showed well, so too two subspecies of Yellow Wagtail – Blue-headed and Black-headed. A small, beautifully marked pale snake was well seen and much photographed.

It being past midday, reluctantly we dragged ourselves away from the reservoir and moved on to our second major stop. The hour-long drive took us through a splendid stretch of basaltic desert with its distinctive ridges of black basaltic blocks. In a couple of places we could make out the remains of two ancient fortifications made out of this convenient supply of natural building blocks. During the drive, most of us took the opportunity to tackle our picnic lunches.

The second stop was at the edge of one of these enormous 'flows' of basalt blocks. A local guide had reported seeing the rare Basalt Wheatear in this location. Sadly, by now the wind had picked up to the point of being distinctly strong. Some of us scouted around in the hope of finding the species, but given the conditions no sensible bird would have put its head above the parapet. After an hour, and with sand in the air, we returned to the hotel around 3 pm and decided to call a two-hour break.

Sadly, by 5 pm the wind had generated a sand storm. Undaunted we decided to revisit the Wetland Reserve. On the way there, we spotted a small flock of European Bee-eaters trying to snatch a meal in very difficult weather conditions. We spent some time in the Reserve's hide, but overall our visit failed to record any new sightings. We returned to the hotel, in time for a shower before meeting up at 7.30 pm for another enjoyable buffet dinner. The checklist was later called in the lounge. Mitko outlined plans for tomorrow – weather permitting!

## **Tuesday, 09 April**

With commendable punctuality, the group was ready to leave the lodge on the stroke of 8 am. Mercifully, the dust storm had abated. Our first stop was a few kilometres away in the grounds of the Azraq Hotel. Here we spent only a little time as there were no signs of birds being driven to seek sanctuary here by yesterday's strong winds. Our best sighting was of a pair of Collared Flycatchers. A Levant Sparrowhawk was seen to fly into a tree, but was nearly completely hidden by the foliage; a Lesser Kestrel posed well on a post.

From Azraq we drove some distance in the direction of the Iraqi border and into another stretch of basalt desert. We stopped by three small pools which between them only held a Little Ringed Plover and a Common Sandpiper. Turning around, we made a brief stop at the lodge to collect a pair of forgotten shoes and then headed westwards to the second city of Jordan – Az Zarqa. No Ornitholidays' itinerary is complete unless it includes a visit to a sewage works. The one visited was a splendid modern one, still in the process of construction. In the event, we only added three new species – Common Ringed Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and Common Greenshank – but were impressed by the good numbers of Black-winged Stilt, Ruff, Little Stint and Grey Herons. We ate our picnic lunches in the bus, but outside the sewage plant! Avian entertainment was provided during the brief meal by a Masked Shrike and a number of Red-rumped Swallows feeding on the flies hovering above a flock of goats.

Our first stop of the afternoon was on the top of Mount Nobe, the location where Moses is said to have scanned the Promised Land down along the River Jordan. The site was in the process of undergoing a major facelift, and all of us were impressed by the quality of the already completed work and the small, informative museum. European Greenfinches were seen for the first time – but we were all taken aback by the bright green of the males – so much greener than ours.

We walked a short section of the road that winds its way down to the bottom of the rift valley cradling the Dead Sea. This produced our first views of the very attractive Mourning Wheatear and Blackstart. At one point, we were able to make the very informative comparison of Desert and Bar-tailed Larks. We arrived at our huge hotel on the shores of the Dead Sea around 5 pm. Located at 400 metres below sea level, this must rank as one of the lowest hotels in the world.

Eventually, we found our spacious rooms and then enjoyed a spell of relaxing. We regrouped at 7 pm and did fair justice to an excellent buffet dinner. Although beer and wine were available, the prices were such as to induce a spell of teetotalism! We did the checklist in a quiet corner of the foyer and then set about relocating our rooms.

### **Wednesday, 10 April**

Most of the group went out of the hotel grounds for some bird watching with Mitko and the best sighting was of two Stone Curlews. The breakfast buffet offered all manner of choices. More than replete, we loaded our baggage aboard the bus and left the hotel at 8 am. Our first stops were close to the Dead Sea Lookout. Getting there involved climbing an excellent road that literally wound its way up the side of the rift valley. Two bridges provided us with excellent opportunities for scanning the wadis running underneath them. Soon we were all seeing well one of our target species – Sand Partridge. Rock Martins were new for the trip and impressed us with their agility in flight. A Bonelli's Eagle and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk were also seen, as well as several eminently smart White-crowned Wheatears.

Our next stop was back down close to the shore of the Dead Sea at the Mujib reserve. From a raised walkway we were able to look up the deep rocky ravine cut in the side of the rift valley. We had hoped to find Striolated Bunting, but were not in luck. However, the lightly wooded area of the other side of the road provided us with good views of a pair of Green Bee-eaters. As we were leaving, we saw some Pallid Swifts keeping company with two Little Swifts.

We then climbed up the side of the rift valley, but by a different route. The spectacularly contorted rocks were testimony to the great tectonic forces that have been at work here in relatively recent geological history. The road led us up to Al Karak. We took the next hour to look around the splendid castle and another informative museum. During the walkabout we came across our first Rock Sparrows. By the time we re-joined the vehicle, our boxed lunches were ready and waiting.

From Karak we drove eastwards a little and joined the famous Kings Highway which took us through still more spectacular scenery. We made a stop at a disused quarry where we glimpsed a Scrub Warbler and heard Pale Rockfinch. Another hour's driving brought us to another lookout, this one with a view down the impressive Wadi Dana – my goodness, was the wind keenly biting! We did not linger too long.

Our final stop of the day was in an area sparsely covered mainly by pines. This area is one of the few places in Jordan where the Syrian Serin occurs, Some members had sightings of birds in flight that were most likely the species we sought. It was 6.30 pm when we finally reached the village of Dana – our base for one night. This once deserted hilltop village is now in the process of being resuscitated, the process having been initiated by the opening of no less than three hotels. After dinner we completed the checklist and ran through the plans for our visit to Petra tomorrow and then some of us went off in search of Eurasian Scops Owls. Several were vocal, but none could be tempted to make an appearance.

### **Thursday, 11 April**

Some of us turned out at 6 am and revisited the Barra Forest in our continuing search for Syrian Serin. We were lucky to enjoy some good views of two or three individuals of the species. European Greenfinches were vocal; further away a Common Cuckoo called persistently. After about an hour, we returned to the hotel, had breakfast, completed the packing and had our bags stowed on board the bus. We drove a little way out of the village and stopped to admire some late-flowering Back Iris. At the same spot, Mitko drew our attention to a Cretzschmar's Bunting.

The drive from there to Petra took just over an hour and we called in at our hotel for tonight to see whether we might do an early check-in. This was not possible, but they did say that we might leave all our baggage.

It was just over 10 am when we left the hotel and made the short walk to the entrance of Petra. It took the best part of two hours to make our way slowly down the ravine that leads to Petra, through the Nabataean section of the city and then to the part built by the Romans. We stopped frequently as Mohammed drew our attention to features of interest. We were impressed by the local geology. Whilst the predominant rock colour was rose-red, closer inspection showed a detail involving many other colours and that these fine sands had been laid down both by water and by wind. The sculptured buildings that impressed most were the Treasury, the Theatre and the Tombs of Kings. We reached the far end of Petra around 12.30 pm and then relaxed for an hour over a most acceptable buffet lunch. On the way down, a Steppe Eagle drifted across the ravine.

Afterwards, the group split up to pursue further their particular curiosities about Petra. Some of us climbed the 900 steps leading up to the Monastery and then went still higher to two lookouts with their superb views both back over Petra and westwards across the rift valley. The bird we sought here – Sinai Rosefinch – was duly found and much admired. Others in the group either concentrated on the Museum, or climbed up to the High Place of Sacrifice or looked more closely at some of the tombs.

By 4 pm, most of us were distinctly leg weary and started the long walk back up to modern Petra and our hotel. We met up at 7.30pm for a buffet evening meal, followed by the checklist and a briefing about tomorrow.

### **Friday, 12 April**

We left Petra at 8 am and on the way to Wadi Rum made four stops – the first for a fine view over the Petra area, the second for a Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (spotted by Charles), the third for a coffee and the last for sightings of Isabelline Wheatear and Ortolan Bunting. It was 10.30 am when we climbed aboard the two 4WD vehicles that were to transport us for the next six hours. During that time, four memories stick in the mind. First, and above all, there was the magnificence of the Wadi Rum desert scenery - greater ridges of rock rising steeply and towering some 500 metres above the separating plains of sand. The ridges were all manner of colours from black through red to sandy buff; the rocks in some instances were smooth, in others deeply pockmarked and incised by deep ravines. The second memory was of an area of sandy plain with a sparse covering of small bushes, and on which loitered some 20 Steppe Buzzards and possibly an equal number of Brown-necked Ravens. The former seemed to be waiting for a thermal or favourable wind that would help them on the next stage of their migratory journey. The third memory is of a transit through a short length of ravine. We had been assured that the going would be easy to moderate. In the event, the local guides proved to be guilty of understatement, in that the descent at the far end proved to be physically challenging. The fourth memory was altogether a happier one, namely watching our two drivers light a fire in the shade of an overhanging rock and then barbeque chicken joints for a rather later lunch. Salad, hummus, yoghurt and a cold drink were also part of the meal consumed as we sat on rugs rolled out on the desert sand. Birds seen during the morning, and not previously mentioned included Desert Lark, Sinai Rosefinch, Trumpeter Finch and Tristram's Starling.

Having returned to the mushrooming settlement of Rum, we boarded our bus and not far out we made a stop where we had hoped to find Hooded Wheatear. In that respect we failed, but we did record our first two mammals – Asia Minor Ground Squirrel and Euphrates Jerboa (spotted by Mike). A little further on, as the road ran parallel to the narrow gauge railway line that used to run between Aqaba and Rum, we happened to witness a re-enactment of the famous incident in 1917 when T E Lawrence and a band of supporters ambushed a train carrying Turkish troops. There was certainly an air of realism from the steam locomotive heading the train to gunshots.

We eventually reached our hotel in Aqabar around 7 pm and met up an hour later for a buffet supper. Peter, Jan and I tried the St George, a wine produced in Jordan and involving a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. Having not tasted a drop of wine for over a week, this 2008 vintage proved to be more than acceptable. We did the checklist in the restaurant and then retired in anticipation of an early start tomorrow.

### **Saturday, 13 April**

Nearly everyone opted for a spell of pre-breakfast birding down at the seafront. Apart from some Common Terns feeding around one of the supertankers anchored offshore, the interest focused on an area of small

cultivations just inland in a sort of park. Other new species for the tour were Thrush Nightingale and Rose-ringed Parakeet. Notable repeat sightings included Wryneck, Red-throated Pipit and Yellow Wagtail.

After breakfast, we drove the short distance to the Aqaba Bird Observatory located literally on the Israeli border. We opened our birding there with sightings of Arabian Babbler and an eminently elegant Sooty Falcon – an early record for the latter species. We spent some time checking through the gulls at the sewage ponds and added Great Black-headed (Pallas's) and Baltic. New waders for the tour were Temminck's Stint and Spotted Redshank. Two large flocks of White Stork were seen spiralling up and then heading north; Purple Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron and Eurasian Spoonbill were also seen for the first time. Mallard and Egyptian Geese were seen around the margins of the sewage ponds, and Eurasian Coot was also spotted for the first time. The skies were constantly filled with Steppe Buzzards, whilst Osprey and Barbary Falcon were further additions to the raptor list. A Pied Kingfisher was seen perched on a telegraph wire keeping company with Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters; European Bee-eaters were also seen. Sightings of Sand and Common House Martins were reminders of home.

Eventually, we returned to the visitor centre around 12.30 pm very much in need of a rest and some sustenance. We drove back into town and enjoyed a splendid fish lunch – the grilled Denes were delicious. Afterwards we drove to the South Beaches in the hope of finding some White-eyed Gulls. We were out of luck, but Mitko plied us with a miscellany of baklavas to sweeten the disappointment. We returned to Aqaba via the so-called Back Road and made a couple of stops where there were some acacia bushes. The number of Blackcaps frequenting these bushes was quite amazing. Several in the group were convinced that they had seen an Arabian Warbler at the first stop. We arrived back at the hotel at 5.30 pm which gave us two hours of R and R (and possibly packing) before meeting up for our last buffet evening meal together. Afterwards we did the checklist in a nearby meeting room.

### **Sunday, 14 April**

We were checked out from the hotel and loaded aboard the bus by 8 am. Our route back to Amman's splendidly new airport took us up the Wadi Araba (the rift valley), the road closely following the Israeli border. We passed through a variety of desert landscapes – some rock, some sand – punctuated occasionally by green irrigated areas. Early on, we added two more species to the tour list – Montagu's Harrier and Egyptian Vulture (a lone bird seemingly to have lost its way in the desert). But the most memorable sighting was of a large flock of White Storks descending onto an area of sparse vegetation. Having stopped the bus, we soon realised that they had joined some 50 already grounded Black Kites. Also in the vicinity, but busily hunting for insects, were about the same number of Lesser Kestrel (mainly females). A little further on, at a comfort-cum-coffee stop, we came across our first Wood Warbler. Another stop produced a pair of Southern Grey Shrike, the male seeking to serenade the female with a far from musical song. We stopped for lunch where the road crossed the mouth of a deep wadi by the shores of the Dead Sea.

It was around 3 pm when we reached Amman Airport and soon we were saying goodbye to Mitko, Mohammed and Shakeeb. Our flight to Heathrow was delayed by 30 minutes due to the late arrival of a party of Mecca pilgrims. The group disbanded in the Baggage Claim.

### **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to Mitko, Mohammed (our courier and guide) and Shakeeb (our driver). Thanks also to all of you for coming on this new tour. I do so hope that you enjoyed this taste of the birds and history of Jordan.

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June 2013

## Itinerary and Weather

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Friday, 05 April    | London Heathrow > Amman  |
| Saturday, 06 April  | > Zarqa River > King Talal reservoir > Jerash > Ajlun > Jordan Valley<br>Fine 28°C   |
| Sunday, 07 April    | > Al Kharaneh & Qasr Amra castles > Azraq (Wetland & Shaumani reserves)<br>Hot 33°C  |
| Monday, 08 April    | Shaumani reserve<br>Desert safari via Awamari reservoir & Qasr Hammamat Wetland reserve<br>Hot with developing dust-storm 32°C |
| Tuesday, 09 April   | > Araq Hotel > basalt desert > Az Zarqa > Mt Nebo > Dead Sea<br>Cloudy & cooler 24°C   |
| Wednesday, 10 April | > Dead Sea Lookout & bridges > Mujib Reserve > Al Kerak > Dana (via Kings Highway)<br>Fine but windy 24°C                      |
| Thursday, 11 April  | Barra Forest, Petra<br>Fine, but cold wind 18°C  |
| Friday, 12 April    | > Wadi Rum > Aqabar<br>Fine, but windy at times 26°C   |
| Saturday, 13 April  | am: Aqaba seafront, Aqaba Bird Observatory<br>pm: South Beaches > Back Road<br>Fine, but windy at times 30°C                   |
| Sunday, 14 April    | Aqaba > Dead Sea > Amman Airport > London Heathrow   |

## CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

| Number of days recorded                            | Abundance scale (max on one day) |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days | 1 = < 5                          |
|  | 2 = 5 – 9                        |
|  | 3 = 10 – 100                     |
|  | 4 = 100 - 1000                   |
|  | 5 = >1000                        |

The sequence and nomenclature of this list mainly follows *Birds of the Middle East* by Porter & Aspinall 2011.

| Species                   | No of days recorded | Abundance Scale | Scientific name                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---|
| Chukar Partridge          | 1 1h                | 1               | <i>Alectoris chukar</i>                 |
| Sand Partridge            | 1                   | 1               | <i>Ammoperdix heyi</i>                  |
| Egyptian Goose            | 1                   | 2               | <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>            |
| Mallard                   | 1                   | 2               | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>               |
| Garganey                  | 1                   | 1               | <i>Anas querquedula</i>                 |
| Little Grebe              | 2                   | 1               | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>           |
| Western White Stork       | 3                   | 4               | <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>                  |
| Eurasian Spoonbill        | 1                   | 1               | <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>              |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | 2                   | 1               | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>            |
| Squacco Heron             | 3                   | 1               | <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>                |
| Western Cattle Egret      | 2                   | 2               | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>                    |
| Grey Heron                | 4                   | 3               | <i>Ardea cinerea</i>                    |
| Purple Heron              | 1                   | 1               | <i>Ardea purpurea</i>                   |
| Little Egret              | 3                   | 2               | <i>Egretta garzetta</i>                 |
| Osprey                    | 1                   | 1               | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>                |
| European Honey Buzzard    | 1                   | 1               | <i>Pernis apivorus</i>                  |
| Black Kite                | 5                   | 3               | <i>Milvus migrans</i>                   |
| Egyptian Vulture          | 1                   | 1               | <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>            |
| Short-toed Snake Eagle    | 6                   | 1               | <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>               |
| Western Marsh Harrier     | 2                   | 1               | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>               |
| Pallid Harrier            | 3                   | 2               | <i>Circus macrourus</i>                 |
| Montagu's Harrier         | 1                   | 1               | <i>Circus pygargus</i>                  |
| Levant Sparrowhawk        | 4                   | 1               | <i>Accipiter brevipes</i>               |
| Eurasian Sparrowhawk      | 1                   | 1               | <i>Accipiter nisus</i>                  |
| Steppe Buzzard            | 8                   | 4               | <i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>             |
| Long-legged Buzzard       | 1                   | 1               | <i>Buteo rufinus</i>                    |
| Steppe Eagle              | 1                   | 1               | <i>Aquila nipalensis</i>                |
| Bonelli's Eagle           | 1                   | 1               | <i>Aquila fasciatus</i>                 |
| Lesser Kestrel            | 6                   | 3               | <i>Falco naumanni</i>                   |
| Common Kestrel            | 4                   | 1               | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>                |
| Sooty Falcon              | 1                   | 1               | <i>Falco concolor</i>                   |
| Peregrine Falcon          | 1                   | 1               | <i>Falco peregrinus</i>                 |
| Barbary Falcon            | 1                   | 1               | <i>Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides</i> |
| Common Moorhen            | 3                   | 1               | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>              |
| Eurasian Coot             | 1                   | 1               | <i>Fulica atra</i>                      |
| Eurasian Stone Curlew     | 1                   | 1               | <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>              |
| Black-winged Stilt        | 4                   | 3               | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>            |
| Spur-winged Lapwing       | 5                   | 3               | <i>Vanellus spinosus</i>                |
| Common Ringed Plover      | 2                   | 1               | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>             |
| Little Ringed Plover      | 2                   | 2               | <i>Charadrius dubius</i>                |
| Kentish Plover            | 2                   | 1               | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>          |
| Greater Sand Plover       | 1                   | 1               | <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>         |
| Caspian Plover            | 1                   | 1               | <i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>             |
| Common Snipe              | 2                   | 1               | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>              |
| Bar-tailed Godwit         | 1                   | 1               | <i>Limosa lapponica</i>                 |
| Spotted Redshank          | 1                   | 1               | <i>Tringa erythropus</i>                |
| Common Redshank           | 1                   | 1               | <i>Tringa totanus</i>                   |
| Marsh Sandpiper           | 2                   | 1               | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>               |

|                                    |      |   |   |
|------------------------------------|------|---|---|
| Common Greenshank                  | 3    | 2 | <i>Tringa nebularia</i>                 |
| Green Sandpiper                    | 3    | 2 | <i>Tringa ochropus</i>                  |
| Wood Sandpiper                     | 3    | 2 | <i>Tringa glareola</i>                  |
| Common Sandpiper                   | 4    | 2 | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>               |
| Little Stint                       | 3    | 3 | <i>Calidris minuta</i>                  |
| Temminck's Stint                   | 1    | 1 | <i>Calidris temminckii</i>              |
| Ruff                               | 3    | 3 | <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>               |
| Black-winged Pratincole            | 1    | 2 | <i>Glareola nordmanni</i>               |
| Common Black-headed Gull           | 2    | 3 | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>       |
| Slender-billed Gull                | 2    | 1 | <i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>            |
| Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull | 1    | 1 | <i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>                |
| Baltic Gull                        | 1    | 2 | <i>Larus fuscus fuscus</i>              |
| Gull-billed Tern                   | 2    | 2 | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>            |
| Sandwich Tern                      | 1    | 1 | <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>              |
| Common Tern                        | 1    | 2 | <i>Sterna hirundo</i>                   |
| Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)           | 9    | 3 | <i>Columba livia</i>                    |
| Eurasian Collared Dove             | 9    | 3 | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>            |
| Laughing Dove                      | 9    | 3 | <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>        |
| Namaqua Dove                       | 2    | 1 | <i>Oena capensis</i>                    |
| Rose-ringed Parakeet               | 1    | 1 | <i>Psittacula krameri</i>               |
| Common Cuckoo                      | - 2h | 1 | <i>Cuculus canorus</i>                  |
| Eurasian Scops Owl                 | - 1h | 1 | <i>Otus scops</i>                       |
| Common Swift                       | 2    | 3 | <i>Apus apus</i>                        |
| Pallid Swift                       | 4    | 2 | <i>Apus pallidus</i>                    |
| Little Swift                       | 1    | 1 | <i>Apus affinis</i>                     |
| Eurasian Hoopoe                    | 5    | 2 | <i>Upupa epops</i>                      |
| White-throated Kingfisher          | 2    | 1 | <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>               |
| Pied Kingfisher                    | 1    | 1 | <i>Ceryle rudis</i>                     |
| Blue-cheeked Bee-eater             | 1    | 2 | <i>Merops persicus</i>                  |
| Green Bee-eater                    | 1    | 1 | <i>Merops orientalis</i>                |
| European Bee-eater                 | 3    | 2 | <i>Merops apiaster</i>                  |
| Wryneck                            | 3    | 2 | <i>Jynx torquilla</i>                   |
| Woodchat Shrike                    | 2    | 1 | <i>Lanius senator</i>                   |
| Masked Shrike                      | 3    | 2 | <i>Lanius nubicus</i>                   |
| Southern Grey Shrike               | 2    | 1 | <i>Lanius meridionalis</i>              |
| Arabian Babbler                    | 1    | 1 | <i>Turdoides squamiceps</i>             |
| Eurasian Jay                       | 1    | 3 | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>              |
| House Crow                         | 3    | 2 | <i>Corvus splendens</i>                 |
| Hooded Crow                        | 2    | 3 | <i>Corvus cornix</i>                    |
| Brown-necked Raven                 | 2    | 3 | <i>Corvus ruficollis</i>                |
| Fan-tailed Raven                   | 3    | 2 | <i>Corvus rhipidurus</i>                |
| White-spectacled Bulbul            | 5    | 3 | <i>Pycnonotus xanthopygos</i>           |
| White-eared Bulbul                 | 2    | 1 | <i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>              |
| Great Tit                          | 3    | 1 | <i>Parus major</i>                      |
| Blue Tit                           | - 1h | 1 | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>              |
| Greater Hoopoe-Lark                | 2    | 2 | <i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>                |
| Crested Lark                       | 8    | 3 | <i>Galerida cristata</i>                |
| Eurasian Skylark                   | 1    | 1 | <i>Alauda arvensis</i>                  |
| Greater Short-toed Lark            | 1    | 1 | <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>        |
| Desert Lark                        | 6    | 2 | <i>Ammomanes deserti</i>                |
| Bar-tailed Lark                    | 2    | 1 | <i>Ammomanes cincturus</i>              |
| Temminck's Lark                    | 2    | 2 | <i>Eremophila bilopha</i>               |
| Sand Martin                        | 2    | 1 | <i>Riparia riparia</i>                  |
| Eurasian Crag Martin               | 2    | 3 | <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>           |
| Pale Crag Martin                   | 2    | 3 | <i>Ptyonoprogne (fuligula) obsoleta</i> |
| Common House Martin                | 1    | 1 | <i>Delichon urbica</i>                  |
| Red-rumped Swallow                 | 3    | 2 | <i>Cecropis daurica</i>                 |
| Barn Swallow                       | 9    | 3 | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>                  |
| Scrub Warbler                      | 2    | 1 | <i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>              |
| Graceful Prinia                    | 2    | 1 | <i>Prinia gracilis</i>                  |
| Cetti's Warbler                    | 1    | 1 | <i>Cettia cetti</i>                     |
| Great Reed Warbler                 | - 1h | 1 | <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>        |
| Eurasian Reed Warbler              | 2 1h | 1 | <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>          |

|                              |   |    |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|----|---|---|
| Sedge Warbler                | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>       |
| Eastern Olivaceous Warbler   | 3 | 2h | 1 | <i>Iduna pallida</i>                    |
| Wood Warbler                 | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>          |
| Willow Warbler               | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>           |
| Common Chiffchaff            | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>           |
| Eurasian Blackcap            | 5 |    | 3 | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>               |
| Arabian Warbler              | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Sylvia leucomelaena</i>              |
| Sardinian Warbler            | - | 1h | 1 | <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>             |
| Tristram's Starling          | 5 | 1h | 2 | <i>Onychognathus tristramii</i>         |
| Eurasian Blackbird           | 4 | 1h | 1 | <i>Turdus merula</i>                    |
| Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin    | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>          |
| Thrush Nightingale           | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>                |
| Common Nightingale           | 2 |    | 2 | <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>            |
| Black Redstart               | 3 |    | 1 | <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>             |
| Common Redstart              | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>          |
| European Stonechat           | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>                |
| Blackstart                   | 5 |    | 2 | <i>Cercomela melanura</i>               |
| Isabelline Wheatear          | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>              |
| Northern Wheatear            | 3 |    | 2 | <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>                |
| Eastern Black-eared Wheatear | 4 |    | 2 | <i>Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca</i> |
| Desert Wheatear              | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Oenanthe deserti</i>                 |
| Eastern Mourning Wheatear    | 3 |    | 1 | <i>Oenanthe lugens</i>                  |
| White-crowned Wheatear       | 3 |    | 1 | <i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>               |
| Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush    | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>              |
| Blue Rock Thrush             | 4 |    | 1 | <i>Monticola solitarius</i>             |
| Collared Flycatcher          | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>              |
| Semi-collared Flycatcher     | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Ficedula semitorquata</i>            |
| Palestine Sunbird            | 5 |    | 1 | <i>Cinnyris osea</i>                    |
| House Sparrow                | 9 |    | 3 | <i>Passer domesticus</i>                |
| Spanish Sparrow              | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>            |
| Pale Rockfinch               | - | 1h | 1 | <i>Carpospiza brachydactyla</i>         |
| Rock Sparrow                 | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Petronia petronia</i>                |
| Yellow Wagtail               | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Motacilla flava</i>                  |
| Black-headed Wagtail         | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Motacilla (flava) feldegg</i>        |
| Tawny Pipit                  | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Anthus campestris</i>                |
| Common Linnet                | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>              |
| European Goldfinch           | 3 |    | 2 | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>              |
| European Greenfinch          | 2 |    | 1 | <i>Carduelis chloris</i>                |
| Syrian Serin                 | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Serinus syriacus</i>                 |
| Trumpeter Finch              | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>            |
| Desert Finch                 | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Rhodospiza obsoleta</i>              |
| Sinai Rosefinch              | 2 |    | 2 | <i>Carpodacus synoicus</i>              |
| Ortolan Bunting              | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>               |
| Cretzschmar's Bunting        | 1 |    | 1 | <i>Emberiza caesia</i>                  |

#### MAMMALS

Asia Minor Ground Squirrel  
Euphrates Jerboa

*Spermophilus xanthopyrnus*  
*Alactaga euphratica*

This list represents those birds and other animals as seen by party members of this tour.