

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO TURKEY
Turkish Delight

29 April – 08 May 2013



Leaders: Richard Coomber and Mitko Petrakiev

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A Personal Diary

Monday, 29 April

It was still dark when the 2013 Ornitholidays' party to Turkey assembled at Heathrow's Terminal 3 for the Turkish Airlines flight to Istanbul and then on to Adana. By the time we left at 06:55 it looked as if we were leaving a fine spring day behind. Our flight was a little bumpy at times as we flew south-east across Europe.

Arrival at Istanbul was more or less on time and as we taxied to the gate Julia spotted a European Souselik, a small ground squirrel, running onto the tarmac. After the formalities we made our way across to the domestic terminal, where the Turkish birdlist was begun with Western Jackdaw and Hooded Crow as we waited for the connecting flight to Adana. After a flight of just over 90 minutes we arrived at a warm and sunny Adana, where Barn Swallows and Common Swifts hawked insects outside the airport as we met Mitko, our Bulgarian guide. Our group was completed when we were joined by sisters, Angela and Judith, who had arrived earlier – Angela from North Cyprus and Judith from North Carolina!

The drive to Tasucu was partly on motorway as we headed into the sunset. Some 160 kilometres later we reached our hotel by the sea, and after quickly checking in most of the party had a late dinner at a nearby taverna before retiring for a well-earned night's rest.

Tuesday, 30 April

Very hot and sunny. 27°C rising to 33°C.

The prospect of an 08:00 breakfast was much appreciated when offered last night, so this morning we were able to relax in the balmy morning air having breakfast on the terrace listening to the Common House Martins as they darted around the buildings whilst we gazed out to the Mediterranean – idyllic.

We left afterwards for a whole day exploring Göksu Delta, soon watching our first White-spectacled Bulbuls on an Oleander lined street as we passed out of suburbia. A bit further on and along the edge of a drainage canal we saw our first Graceful Prinia. Once we reached rougher ground we found Isabelline Wheatear along the road and were sorting through shrikes perched on top of bushes, small trees and wires – Red-backed, especially males, were commonest followed by Lesser Greys and finally a lone Woodchat were recorded. Around shallow sandy-shored pools Kentish Plover was common, some even having downy chicks and a Little Ringed Plover was seen.

The first major stop was to walk a track to an observation tower, which gave panoramic views over a large area of water, rushes and reeds, where a large number of Eurasian Coot were scattered over the surface of the lake, along with a lesser number of Ferruginous Ducks. Perhaps surprising was a scattering of Purple Herons fishing out in the open. Western Marsh Harriers were quartering the reedbeds and some, soaring higher, were probably migrants as were the two Common Buzzards that were also logged. The target bird was the grey-headed form of Purple Swamphen, a species we struggled to see initially, but as the morning warmed up they seemed to stay on the edges of the reedbeds for longer periods. From the reeds below the tower came the songs of Reed and Sedge Warblers and the calls of Bearded Reedling seen by Guy and Sue as they went botanising along one of the tracks leading from the base of the tower.

There was always something to look at, or try and see, such as Common Kingfisher, the flock of White-winged Terns or some of the few migrants passing through the area such as the Blackcaps and Spotted Flycatchers amongst the trees and bushes below our vantage point. The territorial calls of Black Francolin were almost constantly in the background and although Julia came close to seeing one near the base of the tower, it wasn't until we neared the minibuses on our way back that we actually saw a male perched up on a low bush. Nearby an Eastern Olivaceous Warbler was also seen.

As we pressed on the leading vehicle had a Rufous Bush Robin feeding along the track in front of them. The area was a mass of flowers included Bug Orchid *Orchis coriophora* and a white flowered broomrape that appeared to be parasitizing a species of *Genista*. A little further on a Eurasian Wryneck was seen as it tried to remain hidden in a low bush. It was quite tolerant, for those in my minibus saw it quite well after a bit of manoeuvring.

The pools and lagoons near the track were becoming more saline. Little Egrets were fishing and smart Spur-winged Lapwings were seen with increased frequency. On the larger lagoons fished Little and White-winged Terns fished and when we stopped by a more or less derelict observation tower and scoped a flock of resting White-winged Terns and a few Whiskered Terns were seen as well. There was no sign of the hoped for Marbled Duck, but the picnic was well-deserved and the old tower offered the only shade! During our meal another Common Kingfisher was seen and the scopes gave good views of our first Black-headed (Yellow) Wagtail, the common form here and a potential split if the authorities haven't done so already. Nearby a few migrant European White Storks were searching for food along the edge of a drainage canal and in the nearby fields. As the area became more saline the vegetation changed. Tawny Pipit and Greater Short-toed Larks as well as the first of two pairs of Stone Curlew were seen.

We were short of shorebirds until we found three Curlew Sandpipers, two in breeding plumage, on a sandspit along with a flock of richly coloured Little Stints. It was a nearby gull that caused some discussion, for we had been seeing Yellow-legged Gulls on and off throughout the day. This was different and was an Armenian Gull enabling Mitko to go through the salient features of an eastern bird that had at one time been merely just a race of Herring Gull. Shortly afterwards another gull joined it, a sub-adult Caspian Gull, another ex-Herring Gull species. Beyond them on the far side of the lagoon rested some 20-30 Greater Flamingos.

Time this afternoon was running away and Mitko wanted us to reach the mouth of the delta and the sea. On crossing one of the drainage canals Brue spotted a Little Bittern fishing at the water's-edge, whilst in the next field Black-eared Wheatear, both Common and Lesser Whitethroats and Spanish Sparrows were added to the ever growing list. The pools we passed seemed less saline in places and attracted a flock of Common Greenshanks as well as a Wood Sandpiper, to which Guy added a Green Sandpiper as we returned the same way later.

Water levels limited our route, so on reaching what appeared to be a small fishing community we left the minibuses and continued on foot, passing breeding Common Sand Martins on the way. A ring-tailed Montagu's Harrier was seen briefly, three Common Ringed Plovers stood on the edge of a sand pool and when we reached the sea there was a Eurasian Oystercatcher further along the shore. It was almost like being at home, except that the seal having been seen briefly earlier, and finally relocated by Angela, was a Mediterranean Monk Seal. Critically endangered with a global population of only around 600 animals! A large gull along the beach that caused some discussion was an immature Pallas's Gull.

With that we headed back to the hotel, perhaps a little later than envisaged when we set-off this morning, but it had been a pretty full-on day's birding. Other species recorded during the day included Ruddy Shelduck, Slender-billed Gull, European Roller, White and Blue-headed Wagtails and Corn Bunting. The commonest butterflies were Painted Ladies and Clouded Yellow, with lesser numbers of Eastern Bath White and Dusky Meadow Brown. The habitat was also a great place for dragonflies and damselflies, most of which were identified from photographs on our return home and included Lesser and Vagrant Emperors, Slender Skimmer, Oriental Darter and the dainty damselfly, Blue-eye.

Back at the hotel, an hour after returning, found us enjoying sundowners on the terrace and afterwards we opted to have our buffet dinner out there too! Delightful. The checklist followed and then to bed.

Wednesday, 01 May

Warm and sunny, with more breeze than yesterday. 25°-33°C

We took an earlier breakfast this morning at 07:15, which enabled us to make a visit to Göksu before heading inland to the mountains. Familiar birds from yesterday included Western Marsh Harrier, White Stork, Squacco Heron and two male Little Bitterns, which alas were only seen in flight and going away. Our

target bird was Moustached Warbler, but the wind today forced them to keep their heads down, but soon after Brue glimpsed what might have been one, Angela saw one well enough to make a positive i.d. She was on good form having spotted the Pied Kingfisher on the outward leg that the rest of us were to see on the way back. Also seen, some new for the trip, were Glossy Ibis, European Hobby, Lesser Kestrel, Alpine Swift, Red-rumped Swallow and Great Reed Warbler. For some European Pond Terrapin was also an addition.

Our first attempt to head inland was thwarted by a road closure soon after leaving the last village, but Plan B took us back through suburbia, and after travelling further east, back inland and upwards along rural roads through a changing habitat with an increasing number of conifers, until by the time we reached Demircili pines were the dominant trees. Within an old cemetery we heard and saw with varying degrees of success Olive-tree Warbler and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Guy's joy knew no bounds when Sue discovered the day's first orchids, a helleborine *Cephalanthera kurdica*. Nearby a number of Nine-spotted Moths nectared on a magenta coloured *Cistus*. Another interesting plant of the area was the yellow flowered Ground Pine. The hill on the other side of the road gave us a Western Rock Nuthatch on the ruins of an ancient Roman tomb styled on a Greek temple. Up the rocky hill our first Cretzschmar's Bunting was seen and a pair of Masked Shrikes was carrying nesting material through the trees to a distant nest. The conifers held Coal and Great Tits, whilst in a shrubby area near the minibuses some were fortunate to see an Eastern Orphean Warbler, a species we were all able to see very well during the afternoon session and briefly, a Rüppell's Warbler. Amongst the trefoils and clovers were several butterflies including Blue-spot Hairstreak, Small Copper and Eastern Festoon. With that it was onwards and upwards.

A few kilometres further on and a quick stop gave brief views of Black-eared Wheatear and good, but distant ones of Short-toed Eagle. At the picnic site at Uzuncaburç dozens of nest boxes were suspended from the pines to attract breeding Krüper's Nuthatches. In that they succeeded for we were lucky enough to park the minibuses close to an occupied box and watch the pair bring food to their offspring allowing us great views in the process. There was a pair of Masked Shrikes on territory nearby and Nigel saw a male Golden Oriole flying through the trees. Also during the lunch break Serin, Common Blackbird and Common Chaffinch were seen, but a Woodlark remained just a heard. A very small Herman's Tortoise proved to the photographers that tortoises are not always slow movers. Butterfly-wise Painted Ladies and an Anatolian Green Underside Blue were noted.

Suitably refreshed and rested we continued driving up through the trees towards the old Greek and Roman ruins of Dioceasarea, passing more orchids along the roadside before the pines gave way to cultivated fields on the edge of the village. As we disembarked an Eastern Orphean Warbler was singing and seen well, unlike the Syrian Woodpecker that simply flew away. Butterflies noted by the road along the edge of a small vineyard included Common and Eastern Orange-tips and a Large Tortoiseshell and amongst the flowers one of the more striking species was a yellow-flowered Henbane. Before leaving we admired the well-preserved remains of a stone Roman theatre, whilst the tall columns beyond were part of a ruined Greek temple dedicated to Zeus.

As we returned through the pinewoods two new orchids were found – two colour variations of Anatolian Orchid *Cephalanthera kurdica* and a group of stately Violet Limodore *Limodorum abortivum*. Further down the hill we stopped in a steep valley beneath rocky cliffs, buttresses and wooded slopes, whilst just a few small houses and cultivated patches were on the flatter areas beside the currently dry stream. There were two male Blue Rockthrushes, looking splendid in the late afternoon sunshine, a Western Rock Nuthatch and again somewhat elusive Olive-tree and Rüppell's Warblers.

We returned to hotel a little earlier this evening and again did the checklist after the buffet dinner.

Thursday, 02 May

Sunny and warm, cloudy in the mountains. 27°-33°C near coast, 16° in mountains.

Today was one of the tour's longer drives and before we started birding we headed almost to Adana, although there were Red-rumped Swallows to watch when we stopped at a motorway service station. Once onto minor roads we headed towards Tuzla, stopping by a former fish farm en route where we eventually saw the hoped for White-throated Kingfisher, although not as well as we were to see it in the same area on our return. Holes

in the river bank were probably the kingfishers' nest holes, but perhaps not as interesting as the nest of the Penduline Tits found after a pair was seen flying across the river.

A pool by the road produced our first Ruff and the only Red-throated Pipits of the tour with a party of over ten in the vegetation along the muddy margins of the pool. A few kilometres further on we reached the beginning of saline lagoons as we neared the sea. On the sandy flats by a roadside pool a plover got Mitko really excited! Slightly too leggy for a Kentish Plover and not large enough billed for a Greater Sand Plover, this was clearly a Lesser Sand Plover in non-breeding plumage, a species not currently on the Turkish list, although last year's Ornitholidays' party saw another on the Göksu Delta, but that one was in breeding plumage. Unfortunately the bird was very wary and flew before Mitko could take any photographs or any notes could be made in the field. By way of compensation there were several pairs of Collared Pratincoles in the area, on occasions flying over the road.

Pressing on we crossed a lagoon via a causeway that led to a sandy ridge that protected the lagoon from the sea. Terns, including Common, Gull-billed and Little fished the lagoon and further away were some 800+ Greater Flamingos. We parked in the shade of some shrubby trees and while Mitko prepared the picnic we wandered around hoping for migrants. There were a few, with Blackcap being the commonest and Lesser Whitethroat, Great Reed and Willow Warblers, Thrush Nightingale, Common Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher being seen. The only butterfly of note was a Millet Skipper. After our meal we drove alongside the lagoon for a better view of the flamingos and also seeing a few shorebirds including Common Greenshank, and yet more Red-backed Shrikes.

With that it was time to leave and start our drive away from the warmth and into the Taurus Mountains to the north of Adana. For the most part the road was good, but once we left the motorway and headed upwards heavy trucks taking the same route didn't make life any easier. Somewhere on the journey Sue saw the only Red-footed Falcon of the trip. Nearing our destination of Camargi we entered a long section of roadworks which slowed the pace a bit, so we were glad when we arrived at our hotel, being surprised that it was not quite as cold as we'd anticipated.

During dinner the local European Scops Owl started calling, but as we had an early start tomorrow we decided to postpone the owling session and hoped it would still be around tomorrow evening.

Friday, 03 May

A beautiful mountain morning, becoming overcast around lunchtime and rain during the afternoon. 7°-22C

The prospect of having to leave for the mountains at 03:30 was rather daunting, but the good news last night before we headed for bed was that we wouldn't have to leave until 04:30! Good news or big deal! Either way it was early and both Olive and Julia decided to opt out of the morning excursion up into the mountains bouncing along a rough track on a tractor-hauled trailer. It was neither too bumpy, too cold and nor were we too squashed on the cushioned seats. We were going up to about 2,300 metres with our host Hassan, along with a smaller tractor and trailer with some other birders, for this was a rather special excursion and one of the tour's highlights. The gravel on one section of the track was particularly loose and Hassan asked for some of us to walk the next half kilometre or so. Only Brue was wise enough to stay on board, for the rest of us chose to walk off the coffee and chocolate biscuits provided before we left the hotel.

Once up on a flattish area, between grey jagged mountains on one side and a steep sided valley on the other, we joined two or three other small birding parties as dawn broke and from the slopes above us and across the valley came with curlew-like whistles of male Caspian Snowcocks, our main target for the morning. Seeing them was a different matter, but over the following two hours or so and thanks to our scopes we did see the large, plump, gamebirds perched up on rocks calling, or walking with their mates across the rocks and scree slopes. Grey on grey isn't easy, but that's what camouflage is all about! There were other birds up on the slopes below the mountains as well as the distant snowcock. Both Alpine and Red-billed Choughs were seen together wheeling overhead or feeding, whilst White-winged Snowfinches flittered, Snow Bunting-like, around us. Radde's Accentor was seen early on, but became elusive thereafter as its place was taken by the more familiar, to some of the party at least, Alpine Accentor. A male Rufous-tailed Rockthrush was song-fighting and singing from various song posts across the area. Crag Martins glided overhead and across the slopes as one might expect at that altitude, but seeing Common House Martins flying up to nests on the cliffs

above us in places was a new experience for some. We saw several Horned (Shore) Larks on territory - what a far cry from those on a chilly Norfolk beach!

I believe it was Guy who called the "Fox!" as a greyish version of Red Fox ran across the grassy slopes below us. Soon after a small party of Bezoar Ibex were spotted further away on the lower slopes across the valley. Disappointing perhaps as there was no male, but soon afterwards a line of the goats appeared on the skyline across the valley, and like an Apache war party some of the males carried superb headgear! The only other mammal we saw up there were Asia Minor or Anatolian Souslik, whose diggings were everywhere there was sufficient soil for their burrows. We had great views of these small ground-squirrels, who were constantly on the look-out for trouble, either from a marauding fox, or perhaps a Golden Eagle.

Wild flowers were bursting into bloom now that the winter snows had melted from the slopes that we were exploring. Almost sky blue were squills and *Muscari*, there were white clumps of *Ornithogalum*, yellow clumps of *Gagea glacialis*, whilst the chequered yellow heads of *Fritillaries' aurea* nodded on the breeze.

Around 09:30 we began walking down the track ahead of the tractor that eventually took us back to the hotel from a camp site. During the walk some of the party were lucky enough to see Rock Bunting and Asiatic Crimson-winged Finch, a species considered by some authorities to be a separate species from its North African cousin. There were also Northern as well as Finsch's Wheatears, the latter being one of the pied species. As we headed down so the flora become more diverse including a minute pansy that I think might be *Viola kitaibeliana*, which I had only seen previously on Bryher, Isles of Scilly and that was back in 1968! As the morning warmed up, so butterflies began to appear. Up in the mountains Queen of Spain Fritillary and Green Hairstreak were perhaps more at home than the migrating Painted Ladies and Red Admiral.

We returned to the hotel, passing shepherds with their fierce Anatolian Sheepdogs taking their flocks to graze on the fresh grass of the upland pastures. We wondered why the dogs had long spikes attached to their collars? The reason, we were told by Hassan, was to protect them from wolves present in the mountains above the village. Back at the hotel we had brunch.

After a short siesta we returned to the fray, exploring the fields and rocky slopes north of the village, where one rough field in particular attracted our attention. New birds included Common Linnet, but it was the stunning Red-fronted Serin that stole the show, giving us excellent views. Also in the area was a Woodchat Shrike, Isabelline Wheatear and Lesser Whitethroat, whilst above us Red-billed Choughs and Crag Martins wheeled around the crags. A dot perched on the skyline of the highest peak was the only Golden Eagle of the trip, but was Brue convinced?

While Mitko paid national park fees to a couple of opportunistic park rangers the rest of us had good views of the first White-throated Robin of the trip. We were not so lucky in our search for a Wallcreeper at the entrance to a narrow gorge, where it had been seen last year, for by then the spots of rain had become more serious and we hurried back to the shelter of the minibuses.

Before returning to base, and with the rain easing, Mitko took us up a track, muddy with the rain, but it produced little and eventually the way was blocked by thick mud and deep puddles. However, on our return we had excellent views of a male Rock Bunting on an outcrop close to the road and further on a Western Marsh Harrier resting in a field was a migrant grounded by the inclement weather.

We returned to the hotel to warm up and for dinner, but where was the Scops Owl tonight?

Saturday, 04 May

Fine and sunny, although the afternoon build-up of heavy clouds passed us by. 16°-30°C

After breakfast on the terrace, during which we saw Tree Sparrow and heard a Nightingale, we loaded the minibuses and headed away from Carmargi. Just outside the village we stopped to check an area of uncultivated steppe country for larks, but we could only find Isabelline Wheatears and Common Linnets on the litter strewn landscape. Heading on further down towards the motorway we stopped to look for raptors at a couple of sites, seeing distant Peregrine, choughs and swifts at the first stop where, while Julia and Olive were catching up with Bezoar Ibex on the mountainous skyline, a Lammergeier passed high overhead.

Before our next scheduled stop Angela spotted a Grey Wagtail along a small stream; later she also saw the tour's first Common Swallowtail. A steady passage of Painted Ladies was taking place as we drove along this morning. The next raptor stop produced both dark and light phase Booted Eagles, European Honey and Common Buzzards, but once again the views were generally distant.

Today was probably the longest drive of the tour, so it was a pleasant break when we reached Kirmitli and enjoyed our picnic lunch in the shade of one of the shelters, having stopped near the entrance to enjoy our first European Bee-eaters of the tour. The site was not quite as anticipated as the water levels were low and two of the main paths were closed. Nevertheless we saw two White-breasted Kingfishers, two Black-crowned Night-herons as well as Squacco Heron, Little Bittern and Little Grebe. Several dragonflies were seen including the Turkish race of Banded Demoiselle, Ivory Featherleg and Red-veined Darter. Flying around the grassy areas were Eastern Dappled Whites and Clouded Yellow, whilst the migrant micro moth, Rush Veneer was disturbed in the short grass.

Pressing on into the afternoon our route continued into Eastern Anatolia and to reach Gaziantep we passed through two ranges of mountains or perhaps they were just hills, we wouldn't really know as the road passed through two tunnels, the longest being over 2.8 kilometres long! Some 20 kilometres short of our destination we stopped for the best part of an hour to explore a quiet valley, farmed traditionally by the local peasants. As we disembarked a small passage of European Honey Buzzards was taking place as European Hobby hawked overhead, along with a party of Common and Pallid Swifts. A Short-toed Eagle was also circling up there, but when we saw a Long-legged Buzzard, it was just sitting on its nest. A matter of a few feet below was a Rock Nuthatch's nest and as Mitko could hear Eastern rather than Western when the bird visited the area could we assume it was one and the same? Perhaps not as both are known to be in the valley. Also noted during our walk were Spotted Flycatcher, Lesser Whitethroat, White-throated Robin, Black-headed Buntings and our first Sombre Tits and Ortolan Bunting. The only butterfly was a Little Tiger Blue.

Once again the clock beat us and it was time to leave our peaceful surroundings for the hustle of the busy city of Gaziantep. Mitko warned me of the locals' driving tactics. The only way was for our two vehicles to stick together like glue, hold one's line whenever anyone tried to push in and of course use the horn (with gusto) – in other words drive like a local! We made it, having driven 427 kilometres today, and as luck would have it we could park immediately outside the front door of the hotel, where thankfully we could leave the minibuses overnight. Later we walked to dinner at a nearby restaurant that provided an excellent meal of local dishes chosen by Mitko. The checklist was postponed until tomorrow at the request of the party, for we were tired little boys and girls!

Sunday, 05 May

Hot and sunny again. 20°-33°C

After breakfast at the hotel we braved the city traffic once more, although being a Sunday morning it wasn't too bad. Lunch supplies were purchased and as we left the city a stop to refuel the minibuses also included a complimentary visit to the car wash!

The focus of this morning's birding was the village of Isikli a little over 20 kilometres away. As we parked in the narrow main street Pallid Swifts screamed over the houses. A side road led us up to a rough track, used by the local shepherds, that skirted the edge of the village where White-throated Robins sang and we saw our first Upcher's Warbler. The rough, rocky ground was full of colour from the array of wild flowers flourishing there. From the cliffs above came the calls of Eastern Rock Nuthatch, whose nest was found beneath a rocky overhang, although the views of the bird itself were rather distant. A migrating European Honey Buzzard passed over, whereas the Long-legged Buzzard seen later in the morning was a local bird.

As we passed through a narrower section of the track Cinereous Buntings sang, turning out to be one of the commonest birds we were to see in the area. When the landscape flattened out we started to see wheatears, most importantly a female Kurdish, whose dark plumage and rusty rump distinguished her from the other females of the area. Black-eared and Finsch's Wheatear were also seen in the area. It was a wonderful area for butterflies and amongst those species noted were Scarce Swallowtail, Eastern Festoon, Knapweed, Lesser Spotted and Queen of Spain Fritillaries, Oriental Marbled and Orbed Red-underwing Skippers and Lesser Fiery Copper.

Although the going was not as steep as earlier Olive and Brue decided to return to the village in the valley below at a more leisurely pace, thus missing the other target bird of the walk found much further on – Bimaculated Lark. Also seen during the walk were Black-eared Wheatear, Upcher's Warblers, Common and Pale Rock Sparrows.

Once we were all together again and had reduced the village shop's stock of ice creams somewhat, we returned towards the main road, finding a suitable spot for lunch beside some small fields that were a mass of flowers providing nectar for a number of butterflies including our first Persian Skipper and Zephyr Blue.

Leaving the delightful Isikli area we headed back through Gaziantep and eastwards on towards Nizip, where we turned off towards a reservoir closer to the Syrian border. The birding was good, for driving through the orchards after leaving the main road we soon came across Yellow-throated Sparrows, a species on the extreme western edge of its range. Nearer the lake we encountered Calandra Lark, a species that was to become a feature of the cereal fields over the next couple of days. Nearby a Whinchat and a Dead Sea Sparrow were seen.

Once at the reservoir birding changed to wetland species with White-winged Terns beating up and down the still waters and Black-winged Stilts and Wood Sandpipers feeding daintily in the shallows. The best bird was a disappointment, for so few of the party saw a Great Snipe take off in front of us and fly away, but not before some saw its barred underparts, well-marked upper wing pattern and white outer tail feathers. It landed close to the water some 3-400 metres away, but unfortunately some locals wandered through the area just before us. The bird flew immediately giving another fly-past as it headed along the lake before disappearing over a distant cornfield.

It was soon time to finish birding for the day, but as we drove away from the lake there were good views of the tour's only Garden Warbler and our first of Desert Finch. We headed towards our final hotel in the riverside town of Birecik, which lies on the eastern bank of the broad Euphrates as it flows towards Syria and on to Iraq.

As we unloaded the minibuses outside the hotel Pygmy Cormorants were flying over the river to roost further downstream. Dinner this evening was in the adjacent restaurant.

Monday 06 May

Very hot and sunny. 27°-34°C

Those facing the windows during breakfast in the restaurant saw our first Northern Bald Ibis fly-by and also Armenian Gulls, for on the gravel banks of the river across the road rested 100 or more immature and sub-adults of this localised species, a breeder only in Turkey, Georgia, Armenia and western Iran. The rest of us didn't have to wait long for our first good views of the ibis, for soon after we left the hotel and crossed to the western side of the Euphrates we took a dirt track where over 40 ibis fed in the field beside the track. Great views and with them were a few Western Jackdaws and about 10 Rooks, the latter being migrants and a write-in on the checklist that evening.

Our track led amongst pools, formed after the extraction of gravel, and now a haven for birds as *Phragmites* and other wetland plant species have colonised the area. A rather special bird has colonised the area as well. Bearing in mind the conflicts and political unrest in adjacent countries in recent years, these reedbeds must be one of the safest places in the world for birders now to see Iraq Babbler. Once only known from Iraq and Iran, it was recorded from Syria for the first time in 2001 and during the next five years it had spread north into this part of Turkey. Mitko soon picked up a family party on call leading us to see three or four birds foraging around a clump of reeds at ground level before they flew into nearby trees en route to a much larger reed bed beyond.

Another target bird was Ménétries' Warbler. One was seen soon after we left the vehicles, but later we all enjoyed good views of one near a cottage as we watched a very confiding Rufous Bush Robin nest building in a stack of pruned branches from an adjacent orchard. Other birds seen in the area included Little Bittern, Slender-billed Gull (eight flew over), European Bee-eater and Great Reed Warbler.

We re-crossed the river and passed through the southern part of the town to a point where a track led up onto the embankment that prevents the lower areas from flooding. Gravel extraction had taken place on a lesser scale, but in some ways the birding was more diverse, with wildfowl being represented by Mallard, Ferruginous Duck and Red-crested Pochard. There were various herons, including Purple Heron and Little Bittern, and a few shorebirds including Wood Sandpiper, Ruff and Little Stints. Further on, leaving the pools behind, we overlooked the river's-edge, where reeds and small shrubby willows grew on strips of gravel and mud. Mitko found Moustached Warbler in one such place, but my party failed to relocate it when we arrived at the spot. We had one or two other warblers, but not that one, but our spirits were lifted when Raymond called a Spotted Crake as it ran for cover. If anyone missed it then, we were ready when it reappeared for a second or two a few feet further on before disappearing finally into denser cover. The last of the morning's goodies was a party of three Temminck's Stints feeding on a patch of mud discovered by Mitko's party. Thankfully we all saw them, but on our way back to town afterwards we failed to relocate the Spotted Crake alas.

There were two places on the agenda for the afternoon. The first was a brief visit to see the protected Northern Bald Ibis breeding site and the huge aviary where the birds are held and cared for during the winter months, thus protecting this vulnerable population from the dangers of migration to north-eastern Africa, their traditional wintering area.

We then drove on to Halfeti, passing through areas of grassland and cereals, where we scanned for Cream-coloured Coursers and sandgrouse, but without success. From one vantage point we found Calandra Lark and on the stony slopes below us was a pair of Finsch's Wheatears. Pressing on we finally stopped in hilly country overlooking a reservoir. More fruitless scanning, but from the cliffs above us came the calls of Eastern Rock Nuthatch, whose nest was soon discovered with the scope, which also provided us with good views of the bird as well. There were also a couple of new butterflies – Levantine Marbled White and Levantine Skipper as well as some extraordinary long legged grasshoppers or crickets.

As we returned to Birecik we stopped to watch a Black-winged Kite hovering over a roadside field, an interesting record for according to the field guide it is way out of range, but Mitko wasn't surprised as he has seen it in the area previously. On entering the town we pulled over to scan the towering cream-coloured cliffs above us. Alpine Swifts wheeled overhead and with them, the smaller, square-tailed, Little Swifts, whose untidy nests clung beneath overhangs. There was still one bird to see – Pallid Scops Owl! As we arrived at the park a gentleman came up to Mitko offering to show us the bird, which had been discovered perched in one of the trees above the café's tables! We had great views although the light was beginning to fade by then.

With that it was back to the hotel and later dinner in the restaurant next door, which was much quieter than last night, so that we were able to bring the checklist up to date.

Tuesday 07 May

Perhaps not quite as hot, terribly hazy for much of the time with dust in air from Syrian deserts. Thundery rain for a while during latter half of the afternoon 20°-30°C.

We woke to find visibility limited by a blanket of grey haze, which Mitko attributed to desert dust blown north from the deserts of Syria a few miles to the south. Driving east towards our destination of Kiralik relatively few birds were seen from the highway, but they did include several European Rollers and a Little Owl.

When we did turn off it was along a narrow road leading into a valley, whose slopes were more often than not rocky and stony and where the vegetation was more or less limited to grasses and thistles. Our target bird was See-see Partridge, although trying to find the wary game birds was a challenge, especially as the dusty haze hampered things somewhat. The first pair played hide and seek amongst the rocks, but subsequent birds were more obliging, so that eventually we all had good views. There were numerous sightings of Finsch's Wheatears, brief ones of Upcher's Warbler and one or two Little Owls as well. Migrants were also using our small valley with a flock of a dozen or so White Storks moving off from where they had probably roosted overnight. Perhaps the female Western Marsh Harrier that went through had travelled further today. A Long-legged Buzzard showed well as it flew along the valley.

The non-avian highlight was the glimpse of a female Goitered Gazelle disappearing over the skyline. Before leaving the area completely we passed a large enclosure that formed the basis of a gazelle reintroduction programme taking place in the area. Nearby a Common Redstart was seen as well as a number of Isabelline Wheatears before we left the area and headed towards Ilhan Koyu, a village about 40 kms away to the north.

By the time we arrived we were ready for our picnic lunch, except that there were distractions, multi-coloured distractions for we were parked on a rough track only some 100 metres or so from a low hill tucked away behind a cottage, where there was a mixed breeding colony of European and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, truly a delight to see. There were birds constantly in the air above us filling the air with their calls, those of European being less harsh than their larger cousins. Above the noise of the bee-eaters the liquid 'wet my lips' call of a Common Quail could be heard. Two other classic colourful birds were also in the immediate area – European Roller and Eurasian Hoopoe! A Little Owl seen very well on several occasions was one of the pale desert-race birds.

During lunch storm clouds rapidly built up and as we heard the rumble of thunder we perhaps regretted not trying to get photos while the sun shone, for before long the sky was overcast and the intensity of the bee-eaters' colours was lost.

The return to the hotel was on a more direct route, during which we passed through the first 'proper' rain of the tour, before reaching the hotel just after 17:00. By that time the rain had ceased and the sunshine returned. As we were due to fly home tomorrow, the early return was much appreciated. Just before dinner it was noted that the level of the Euphrates had risen to cover the gravel banks where the gulls roosted. Apparently sluice gates further upstream had been opened.

Dinner and the checklist followed the usual format before we headed for bed.

Wednesday 08 May

Hot, sunny and clear again. 32°C

We were loaded and on the road just after 07:00, having noted that the level of the Euphrates had fallen again and the Armenian Gulls had returned.

Thankfully much of the drive back to the airport at Adana, for our return flight home, was on motorway and for the most part the traffic was relatively light. A stop at a service area enabled us to enjoy our breakfast in the sunshine at picnic tables.

The rest of the journey went well, but few birds were seen, those noted included Common Buzzard, Black Francolin (using a roadside fence post as a song perch) and of course Crested Lark. On reaching Adana we were thrown into the maelstrom of traffic, which made us a couple of minutes late arriving at the airport, where Angela and Judith were catching a flight to North Cyprus an hour or so before ours to Istanbul. It meant that we had a while to wait before the check-in counter opened for our own flight.

Our departure was more or less on time for the smooth flight north-west to Istanbul, where having cleared the formalities the last Turkish liras were spent on coffee and so on. We had quite a wait for the departure gate to be allocated and then a short bus ride out to the waiting aircraft, which left some 20 minutes later than scheduled. On arrival at Heathrow we were soon through the formalities and at the baggage carousel we bade our farewells to one another as the luggage arrived. With no delays it wasn't long before we were beginning the final legs of our homeward journeys.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I should like to thank Mitko for his driving and knowledge of Turkey, birding and otherwise, that all helped make this trip so fascinating. Okay, so the distances were long on some days, but they enabled us to reach those rare birds that only have a toehold in the Western Palearctic. That, by the same token, put us beyond the reach of the normal tourist areas, however it is amazing where one can find Magnum ice-creams nowadays! And so a big 'Thank You' to the party for coming, for your help and enthusiasm during the tour. We had some excellent spotters in the party, and if I've forgotten to mention your 'greatest sighting' in the

report I apologise. Thanks to Guy and Sue for their botanical input. Nigel is currently putting together plans for 2014, the 49th year of Ornitholidays, so I hope it won't be too long before we meet up to enjoy another exciting and interesting destination together. Many thanks to Simon Brown for allowing me to use his photographs in this report.

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July 2013



Demirkazik (RC)

ITINERARY AND WEATHER

- 29 April Early morning departure from London Heathrow to Istanbul, with a connecting flight to Adana before driving to Tasucu for dinner and overnight.
- 30 April Whole day exploration of Göksu Delta area.
Very hot and sunny. 27°C rising to 33°C.
- 01 May Brief visit to Göksu area before heading inland to Demircili, Uzuncaburç and Diocesaarea.
Warm and sunny, with more breeze than yesterday. 25°-33°C
- 02 May Transfer to Camargi birding en route via coast near Tuzla.
Sunny and warm, cloudy in the mountains. 27°-33°C near coast, 16° in mountains.
- 03 May Early start by tractor and trailer for Demirzaki and snowcock area. Back to hotel late morning.
Local birding during afternoon.
A beautiful morning, becoming overcast at lunchtime and rain during the afternoon. 7°-22C
- 04 May Transfer to Gaziantep for dinner and overnight, birding en route.
Generally fine and sunny. 16°-30°C
- 05 May Morning birding around Isikli, before transfer to Birecik birding en route.
Hot and sunny again. 20°-33°C
- 06 May Morning birding along Euphrates in Birecik area. Lunch at hotel followed by visit to Ibis Centre and Halfeti area.
Very hot and sunny. 27°-34°C
- 07 May Birding around Kiralik in morning, lunch and visit to bee-eater colony at Ilhan Koyu in afternoon. Very hazy for much of the time with dust in air from Syrian deserts.
Thundery rain for a while during latter half of the afternoon 20°-30°C
- 08 May Morning transfer to Adana for flight to Istanbul and connection to London, arriving in the evening.
Not as hazy today.



Diocaesarea (RC)

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale (max. seen on one day)
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	T = Tasucu, Tuzla – both coastal and inland C = Camargi area and Demirzaki (mountains) B = = Gaziantep and Birecik areas > = on journey	1 = 1 – 4 2 = 5 - 9 3 = 10 - 99 4 = 100 – 999 5 = 1,000+

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Ruddy Shelduck	2	T	1	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Mallard	2	T	B 1	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Red-crested Pochard	1		B 3	<i>Netta rufina</i>
Ferruginous Duck	3	T	B 3	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>
Caspian Snowcock	1	C	2	<i>Tetraogallus caspius</i>
Black Francolin	2	T	1	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>
Chukar	1		B> 1	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>
See-see Partridge	1		B 2	<i>Ammoperdix griseogularis</i>
Common Quail	- 1h		B h	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
Little Grebe	3	T	B 2	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	2	T	B 1	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Great Cormorant	1	T	3	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Pygmy Cormorant	3		B 3	<i>Phalacrocorax pygmeus</i>
Little Bittern	6	T	B 1	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	6	T	B 2	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Western Cattle Egret	4	T	B 3	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Squacco Heron	6	T	B 2	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Little Egret	6	T	B 3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Great Egret	1	T	1	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>
Grey Heron	3	T	B 2	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	6	T	B 3	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
White Stork	5	T	B 3	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Glossy Ibis	3	T	B 3	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Northern Bald Ibis	2		B 3	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>
Greater Flamingo	2	T	4	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>
Golden Eagle	1	C	1	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
Booted Eagle	2	C>	1	<i>Aquila pennata</i>
Short-toed Eagle	3	T	B 1	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Western Marsh Harrier	5	T C	B 3	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Montagu's Harrier	1	T	1	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
Long-legged Buzzard	4		B 1	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
Common Buzzard	3	T C>	1	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
European Honey Buzzard	3	C>	B 2	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	1	C>	1	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Levant Sparrowhawk	1		B 1	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>
Black-winged Kite	1		B 1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Common Kestrel	7	T C>	B 1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Lesser Kestrel	2	T	B 1	<i>Falco naumanni</i>
Red-footed Falcon	1	>C	1	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>
Eurasian Hobby	2	T	B 1	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1	C>	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Water Rail	- 1h	T	h	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
Spotted Crake	1		B 1	<i>Porzana porzana</i>
Common Moorhen	5	T	B 3	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Eurasian Coot	4	T	B 4	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Purple Swamphen	1	T	2	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
Eurasian Oystercatcher	1	T	1	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>

Black-winged Stilt	3	T	B	3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	
Stone Curlew	1	T		1	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	
Collared Pratincole	1	T		1	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	
Little Ringed Plover	2	T	B	1	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	
Common Ringed Plover	1	T		1	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	
Kentish Plover	2	T		3	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	
Lesser Sand Plover	1	T		1	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	
Spur-winged Lapwing	4	T	B	3	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	1	T		1	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
Temminck's Stint	1		B	1	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	
Little Stint	3	T	B	3	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	
Common Sandpiper	4	T	B	2	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	
Wood Sandpiper	5	T	B	3	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	
Green Sandpiper	1	T		1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	
Common Greenshank	2	T		2	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	
Great Snipe	1		B	1	<i>Gallinago media</i>	
Common Snipe	1	T		1	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	
Ruff	2	T	B	1	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	
Slender-billed Gull	2	T	B	2	<i>Larus genei</i>	
Yellow-legged Gull	3	T		3	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	
Armenian Gull	5	T	B	4	<i>Larus armenicus</i>	
Caspian Gull	1	T		1	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	
Pallas's Gull	1	T		1	<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i>	
Audouin's Gull	1	T		1	<i>Larus audouinii</i>	
Little Tern	2	T		3	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	
Common Tern	4	T	B	2	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	
Gull-billed Tern	1	T		1	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	
White-winged Tern	5	T	B	3	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	
Whiskered Tern	2	T		1	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	
Rock Dove (included feral)	9	T	C	B	3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	2		B	3	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	
Eurasian Collared Dove	9	T	B	3	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	
European Turtle Dove	6	T	B	3	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	
Laughing Dove	8	T	B	3	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	
Little Owl	1		B	1	<i>Athena noctua</i>	
Eurasian Scops Owl	1h		C	h	<i>Otus scops</i>	
Pallid Scops Owl	1		B	1	<i>Otus brucei</i>	
Common Swift	7	T	B	3	<i>Apus apus</i>	
Pallid Swift	4		C	B	3	<i>Apus pallidus</i>
Alpine Swift	5	T	C	B	3	<i>Apus melba</i>
Little Swift	3		B	3	<i>Apus affinis</i>	
Eurasian Hoopoe	8	T	B	3	<i>Upupa epops</i>	
Common Kingfisher	1	T		1	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	
White-throated Kingfisher	2	T	B	1	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	
Pied Kingfisher	3	T	B	1	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	
European Bee-eater	4		B	3	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	1		B	3	<i>Merops persicus</i>	
European Roller	3		B	2	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	
Syrian Woodpecker	3	T	B	1	<i>Dendrocopos syriacus</i>	
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1	T		1	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	
Eurasian Wryneck	1	T		1	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	
Crested Lark	8	T	B	3	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	
Woodlark	2	1h	T	C	1	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Greater Short-toed Lark	2	T	B	1	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	
Lesser Short-toed Lark	1		B	1	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	
Desert Lark	1		B	1	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>	
Calandra Lark	3		B	3	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	
Bimaculated Lark	1		B	1	<i>Melanocorypha bimaculata</i>	
Horned (Shore) Lark	1		C	2	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	
Common Sand Martin	6	T	B	4	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	
Eurasian Crag Martin	2		C	B	3	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>
Barn Swallow	9	T	C	B	3	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>

Red-rumped Swallow	5		T		B	3	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
Common House Martin	8		T	C	B	3	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
Tawny Pipit	2		T		B	1	<i>Anthus campestris</i>
Tree Pipit	1				B	1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Red-throated Pipit	1		T			3	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
White Wagtail	6		T	C	B	1	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Yellow Wagtail (all races)	3		T			2	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
of which Black-headed ssp	3		T			2	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>
Grey Wagtail	1			C>		1	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Alpine Accentor	1			C		2	<i>Prunella collaris</i>
Radde's Accentor	1			C		1	<i>Prunella ocularis</i>
Common Nightingale	1	1h	T	C	B	1	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
Thrush Nightingale	1		T			1	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>
Rufous Bush Robin	3		T		B	3	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>
White-throated Robin	3			C	B	1	<i>Irania gutturalis</i>
Common Redstart	2		T		B	1	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Black Redstart	1			C		1	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Northern Wheatear	3		T	C		3	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Isabelline Wheatear	4		T	C	B	3	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
Black-eared Wheatear	5		T		B	2	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>
Finsch's Wheatear	4			C	B	3	<i>Oenanthe finschii</i>
Kurdish Wheatear	1				B	1	<i>Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna</i>
Whinchat	2				B	1	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
Siberian Stonechat	1			C		1	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>
Mistle Thrush	1			C>		1	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Common Blackbird	3		T	C		1	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Blue Rock Thrush	5		T	C	B	2	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush	2			C		1	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>
Graceful Prinia	3	1h	T		B	2	<i>Prinia gracilis</i>
Garden Warbler	1				B	1	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Blackcap	2		T			2	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Common Whitethroat	2		T		B	1	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	6		T	C	B	2	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
Eastern Orphean Warbler	2		T		B	2	<i>Sylvia crassirostris</i>
Ménétries' Warbler	1				B	2	<i>Sylvia mystacea</i>
Rüppell's Warbler	1		T			1	<i>Sylvia rueppelli</i>
Cetti's Warbler	-	1h			B	h	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
Sedge Warbler	1	1h	T		B	1	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
Moustached Warbler	2		T		B	1	<i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>
European Reed Warbler	5		T		B	2	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Marsh Warbler	1		T			1	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
Great Reed Warbler	4		T		B	1	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
Olive-tree Warbler	1		T			1	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>
Upcher's Warbler	2				B	1	<i>Hippolais languida</i>
Olivaceous Warbler	4		T		B	1	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>
Willow Warbler	5		T		B	1	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Common Chiffchaff	1		T			1	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	7		T		B	2	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Great Tit	4		T		B	1	<i>Parus major</i>
Coal Tit	1		T			1	<i>Pariparus ater</i>
European Blue Tit	1		T			1	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Sombre Tit	2				B	1	<i>Poecile lugubris</i>
Bearded Reedling	1		T			1	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
Eurasian Penduline Tit	1		T			1	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>
Krüper's Nuthatch	1		T			1	<i>Sitta krueperi</i>
Western Rock Nuthatch	2		T	C		1	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>
Eastern Rock Nuthatch	3				B	1	<i>Sitta tephronota</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	4		T		B	3	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Red-backed Shrike	9		T	C	B	3	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Woodchat Shrike	5		T	C	B	2	<i>Lanius senator</i>
Masked Shrike	2		T			2	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>
White-spectacled Bulbul	7		T		B	2	<i>Pycnonotus xanthopygos</i>

Iraq Babbler	1			B	1	<i>Turdoides altirostris</i>	
Common Magpie	6		T	C	B	1	<i>Pica pica</i>
Eurasian Jay	4		T	C	B	2	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Western Jackdaw	3		Istanbul		B	1	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Red-billed Chough	1			C		3	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Alpine Chough	1			C		2	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>
Rook	1				B	3	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Hooded Crow	9		T	C	B	3	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Common Raven	4		T	C		1	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Common Starling	5			C	B	2	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Golden Oriole	1	2h	T		B	1	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
House Sparrow	9		T	C	B	3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Spanish Sparrow	5		T	C	B	2	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	1			C		1	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Dead Sea Sparrow	2				B	3	<i>Passer moabiticus</i>
Common Rock Sparrow	2			C	B	2	<i>Petronia petronia</i>
Pale Rock Sparrow	3				B	2	<i>Carpospiza brachydactyla</i>
Yellow-throated Sparrow	1				B	3	<i>Gymnoris xanthocollis</i>
White-winged Snowfinch	1			C		3	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>
Common Chaffinch	2	1h	T	C		1	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Common Linnet	3			C	B	2	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
European Goldfinch	8		T	C	B	3	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
European Greenfinch	2		T		B	1	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
European Serin	1	1h	T		B	2	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
Red-fronted Serin	1			C		3	<i>Serinus pusillus</i>
Crimson-winged Finch	1			C		1	<i>Rhodopechys sanguineus</i>
Desert Finch	2				B	1	<i>Rhodospiza obsoleta</i>
Ortolan Bunting	1				B	1	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
Cretzschmar's Bunting	3		T		B	1	<i>Emberiza caesia</i>
Cinereous Bunting	2				B	3	<i>Emberiza cineracea</i>
Black-headed Bunting	6		T		B	3	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>
Corn Bunting	7		T		B	3	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>
Rock Bunting	1			C		1	<i>Emberiza cia</i>

MAMMALS

Persian Squirrel	1		T			1	<i>Sciurus anomalus</i>
European Souslik	1		Istanbul			1	<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>
Asia Minor Souslik	1			C		3	<i>Spermophilus xanthoprimum</i>
Red Fox	1			C		1	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Goitered Gazelle	1				B	1	<i>Gazella subgutturosa</i>
Bezoar Ibex (Wild Goat)	2			C		1	<i>Capra aegagrus</i>
Mediterranean Monk Seal	1		T			1	<i>Monachus monachus</i>



Asia Minor Souslik (RC)



Herman's Tortoise (RC)

REPTILES

Herman's Tortoise
European Pond Terrapin

Testudo hermanni
Emys orbicularis

Starred Agama

Laudakia stellio

BUTTERFLIES

Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Eastern Festoon
Eastern Steppe Festoon
Large White
Small White
Mountain Small White
Eastern Bath White
Eastern Dappled White
Orange Tip
Eastern Orange Tip
Clouded Yellow
Cleopatra
Blue-spot Hairstreak
Green Hairstreak
Small Copper
Lesser Fiery Copper

Papilio machaon
Iphiclides podalirius
Zerynthia cerisyi
Zerynthia deyrollei
Pieris brassicae
Artogeia rapae
Artogeia ergane
Pontia edusa
Euchloe ausonia
Anthocharis cardamines
Anthocharis damone
Colias crocea
Gonepteryx cleopatra
Strymonidia spini
Callophrys rubi
Lycaena phlaeas
Lycaena thersamon

Little Tiger Blue
Anatolian Green-underside Blue
Grass Jewel
Zephyr Blue
Common Blue
Large Tortoiseshell
Red Admiral
Painted Lady
Queen of Spain Fritillary
Lesser Spotted Fritillary
Levantine Marbled White
Dusky Meadow Brown
Orbed Red-underwing Skipper
Persian Skipper
Oriental Marbled Skipper
Levantine Skipper
Millet Skipper

Tarucus balkanicus
Glaucopsyche astraea
Chilades trochylus
Plebejus pylaon sephirus
Polyommatus icarus
Nymphalis polychloros
Vanessa atalanta
Vanessa cardui
Issoria lathonia
Melitaea trivia
Melanargia tita
Hyponephele lycaon
Spialia orbifer
Spialia phlomidis
Carcharodus orientalis
Thymelicus hyrax
Pelopides thrax

MOTHS

Rush Veneer
Nine-spotted

Nomophila noctuella
Amata phegea

Silver Y
Golden Y

Autographa gamma
Autographa jota

DRAGONFLIES

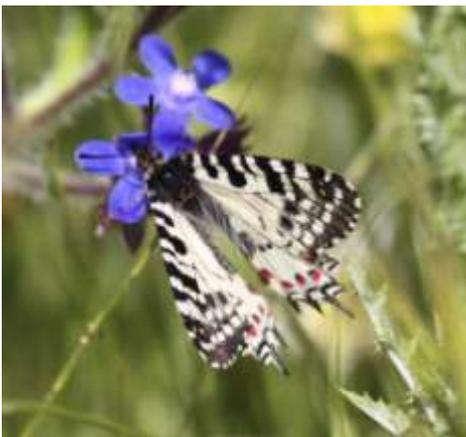
Banded Demoiselle
Common Bluetail
Blue-eye
Ivory Featherleg

Calopteryx splendens
Ischnura elegans
Erythromma lindenii
Platycnemis dealbata

Lesser Emperor
Slender Skimmer
Red-veined Darter
Oriental Scarlet

Anax parthenope
Orthetrum sabina
Sympetrum fonscolombii
Crocothemis servilia

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



Eastern Steppe Festoon (SB)



***Fritillaria aurea* (RC)**



Anatolian Orchid (RC)



Bald Ibis (SB)



Cinereous Bunting (SB)



Krüper's Nuthatch (SB)



Eastern Orphean Warbler (SB)



Dead Sea Sparrow (SB)



Little Owl (SB)



Long-legged Buzzard (SB)



Rufous Scrub-Robin (RC)



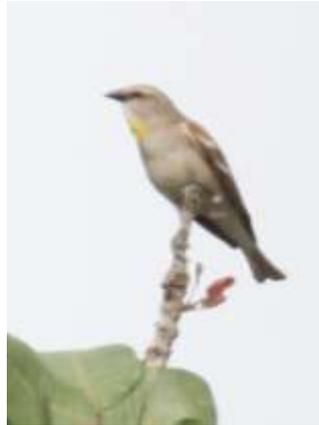
Pallid Scops Owl (SB)



See-see Partridge (RC)



White-winged Snowfinch (RC)



Yellow-throated Sparrow (SB)



Pied Kingfisher (SB)



Masked Shrike (RC)



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (RC)



Temminck's Stint (RC)

Front cover: Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (SB)

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