

Bird – Watching Tour

with

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

To

MOROCCO

MARCH 20th – 30th 2017



TRIP REPORT

LEADER;- BOB BUCKLER

PARTICIPANTS: FIONA McKINNON, PATRICK FREW, JOHN COTTON, CHRIS WOOLASS, RITA NICHOLLS, PEGGY GRANGER, MIKE & LORNA TAYLOR

SUMMARY: 8 intrepid 'wing-spanners' enjoyed 11 days of superb birding in this wonderful bird-watching destination. We listed over 190 species including most of the 'Moroccan Specialities' such as: Bald Ibis, African Crimson-winged Finch, Levillant's Woodpecker, Streaked Scrub Warbler, Moussier's Redstart, African Desert Warbler, Tristram's Warbler, Desert Sparrow, Pharaoh Eagle Owl.....plus many more. The weather was almost perfect, sunny most days, a little windy at times, not too hot.

DAY 1 – MONDAY MARCH 20TH 2017

ARRIVAL AT MARRAKECH – TRANSFER TO THE OURIKA VALLEY WITH BIRDING AT THE HIGH ATLAS RESORT OF OUKAIMEDAN

WEATHER: rain in London, 8C, but clear blue sky in Marrakech, broken sunshine later in the Atlas Mountains, temp in Morocco ranged from 20C down to 1C at sunset.

The group all assembled at London Gatwick Airport at the departure gate and despite taking off 35 minutes late we managed to arrive just 5 minutes later than scheduled, another Easyjet miracle! However, it was a lovely smooth flight and an excellent landing into beautiful weather, a clear blue sky with 20C temperature and no wind.

We began birding almost straight away with a Northern Wheatear and Common Kestrel noted on the airfield and a pair of House Buntings in the Terminal building. A very quick and simply security process and baggage collection saw all of us through the airport in a matter of 30 minutes. Our driver Ahmed was outside waiting for us with a brand new 14 seater bus.



We were on our way in no time heading for the Atlas Mountains and our hotel in the Ourika Valley. Thousands of flying ants were on the wing as we set off, this in turn brought out hundreds of birds which were feeding on them. Spotless Starling filled the sky, House Sparrows were having a feast

and even Blackbirds were enjoying themselves. We also noted Red-rumped and Barn Swallows, White Stork and Common Bulbul.

Once at our hotel in the Ourika Valley we quickly checked-in, got ourselves into birding gear and birding mode before setting off to the high Atlas at Oukaimedan. We made several stops as we climbed up the winding road to the Oukaimedan Ski Resort, the scenery was terrific with snow covered peaks towering above us.



Our first couple of stops produced Long-legged Buzzard, a possible Peregrine Falcon, Red-billed Chough, Rock Bunting and Black Wheatear. Next, we found a couple of pairs of Moussier's Redstart, Black Redstart, Blue Rock Thrush and more Black Wheatears. A small pine copse provided sightings of Common Firecrest, Coal Tit, Short-toed Treecreeper and Common Chaffinch.



A babbling brook was our next venue where a very obliging White-throated Dipper searched for food and half a dozen Black Wheatears flitted about. A swirling mass of 'choughs' held both Red-billed and Alpine species whilst Common Ravens were in fact, common.

At Oukaimedan we spent some time searching for Alpine Accentor with not much joy but we did find half a dozen Horned Larks, small flocks of Rock Sparrows, Common Chaffinches and a couple of Mistle Thrushes.

We saved the best until last as we drove to the top car park near the ski-lift, that was where we found the star bird, a flock of about 50 African Crimson-winged Finches. They were amazing and very obliging too. Fiona also got us all onto to a Little Owl before the cold finally drove us away. The temperature had dropped to near freezing as the sun dropped behind the mountains.



Crimson-winged Finches

We were back at the hotel at 6:30pm with plenty of time to get ready for our 7:30pm dinner which was, of course, a delicious Lamb Tajine.

DAY 2 – TUESDAY 21ST MARCH 2017

TRANSFER FROM OURIKA VALLEY TO BOUMALNE DADES VIA AIT OURIR, TIZI-N-TICHKA PASS AND QUARZAZATE

WEATHER: Beautiful clear sky to start, some cloud cover at Ait Ourir then fantastic sunshine all day. Top temp 25C, light wind.

We had a great day today with some exciting sightings as we travelled through some of the most scenic landscapes that Morocco has to offer.

We ate breakfast at 6am and we had the bus loaded up before 7am and we were on our way under a clear blue sky. Our first stop was only 15 minutes along the Ourika Valley. A regular stop of mine and my favourite place to look for Levaillant's Woodpecker. We noted Cattle Egret, Grey Wagtail, Red-rumped Swallow and Common Bulbul as we travelled.

As soon as we got off the bus we were greeted by a chorus of bird song, a Common Nightingale sang in full view right next to the bus and whilst we were watching it a small flock of 5 Hawfinches came into the same bush with a Blackbird.

A flock of Little Swifts swarmed above us with Red-rumped & Barn Swallows, House Martins and a couple of Crag Martins. We were only 2 minutes off the bus when a Levaillant's Woodpecker flew across the road and out of sight into some apple orchards, so that's where we went next.

We could hear Blackcap, Greenfinch, Serin, Cetti's Warbler and the noisy Common Bulbul but there was no sign of the woodpecker. Fiona spotted a Common Cuckoo on a wire about a mile away and we added African Chaffinch, African Blue Tit, European Robin, Wren and Greenfinch.



Little Ringed Plover - taken by Mike Taylor

The woodpecker called again but we still failed to find it as we made our way along a stream down to the River Ourika. At the river we found very little, just a pair of Little Ringed Plovers and we heard a Grey Wagtail but didn't see it. On the way back we had good views of Cetti's Warbler and the stragglers watched a Common Chiffchaff. We were almost back to the road when the woodpecker reappeared, this time we were able to scope it, smashing and big relief for me as everyone saw it well.

Passing further down the valley we turned off for Ait Ourir and after 30 minutes we stopped at the roadside for another birding spell. From where we stood we had a terrific panoramic view across scrub land, pastures, woodland, hedges and ditches.

As we emerged from the bus a Great-spotted Cuckoo flew in front of us and landed to our right, we tracked it down and enjoyed prolonged views of it, later we discovered two more of them. Barbary Partridges were everywhere as were Maghreb (formerly Eurasian) Magpies, you could clearly see the blue facial markings on them. We had great close views of Thekla Lark, as well as Sardinian Warbler, Woodchat Shrike, Serin and a Common Cuckoo called in the distance.



Great Spotted Cuckoo

We then put in some miles as we entered the Tichka Pass through the Atlas Mountains, the scenery was just stunning, recent rains had brought out many wild flowers and had turned the valleys into a lush, colourful sea of flowers. We made a quick stop to watch a small 'flock' of six Booted Eagles but generally the number of raptors was disappointing today.

Once through the pass we dropped down into warmer climes, a lunch stop produced very little and a walk through a pine plantation was just as bad, Great Tit was our only new species. As the landscape changed so did the vegetation and the temperature. It was 25C as we made our next stop. We were faced by a dry, arid flat, landscape with poor vegetation, the only greenery was seen along the rivers and streams.

A small cultivated area had hedgerows of Almond trees with olive and apple bushes in tiny paddocks, a couple of fields of alfalfa held a good variety of species. We found Northern Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, Meadow Pipit, Common Redstart and a couple of very showy Western Olivaceous Warblers. Our best bird was a male Seebohm's Wheatear, this north African subspecies of Northern Wheatear is a cracker.



Seebohm's Wheatear

Our last stop was at the Quarzazate Reservoir, it was now late afternoon and daylight was beginning to fade as we arrived. We drove along a dirt track to get there finding another Seebohm's Wheatear, Black-eared Wheatear and Desert Lark along the way.

From our vantage point about 50 meters above the lake we scoped the water and muddy margins where a number of birds were feeding. After 4 years of low levels the reservoir held a little more water this year but the food source for the birds had not recovered so not many wader or duck species were present. The usual Ruddy Duck, Grey Heron, Little Ringed Plover, Great Cormorant, Mallard and lots of Yellow Wagtails were present. We also logged Osprey, Collared Pratincole, Pied Avocet and Little Grebe before we scrambled back onto the bus for the last time today.

A further 90km was covered before we arrived at our hotel on the outskirts of Boumalne Dades, we sat to eat at 7:30pm it was another delicious tajine.

DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 22ND MARCH 2017

BOUMALNE DADES - TAGDILT TRACK – DADES GORGE

WEATHER: wall to wall sunshine all day, a light cooling breeze, top temp 28C

We had a smashing day, the weather was just perfect, bright sunshine, with a lovely cooling breeze which prevented the ground temperature getting too hot.

An early breakfast of crêpes, eggs, bread, cheese, jam, olives, cake and lovely coffee saw us out of the hotel before 7am, there was a chill in the air to start with. We set out on foot and walked across the 'Regs' (stony plains) just outside the hotel, soon we were watching wheatears; both Northern and the Black-eared varieties to start with then we added Thekla Lark and Red-rumped Wheatear.



Our hotel at Boumalne Dades

We made our way to a small area that is obviously used as a 'rubble-tipping' site, the mounds of rubbish attracted quite a few birds. We found a small flock of Greater Short-toed Larks, a pair of Temminck's Larks, a single Trumpeter Finch and another pair of Red-rumped Wheatears.



Greater Short-toed Lark

We jumped onto the bus and travelled the short distance to the Tagdilt track where we spent the next 2-3 hours visiting another rubbish tip, how nice. We found lots more Short-toed Larks, also our first Desert Wheatear and a pair of Bar-tailed Larks.



on the Tagdilt Track

A distant raptor caught our eye, it was identified as a Marsh Harrier, but behind it we saw a 'kettle' of birds of prey, some 50 Black Kites were rising on the thermals in preparation to continue their migration northward.

Moving much closer to the rubbish site we saw Eurasian Hoopoe, White Wagtail, House Bunting and plenty of Red-rumped Wheatears. Then our star bird appeared, found by Rita, a female Thick-billed Lark, what a stonker and what a massive 'hawfinch-type' bill. The bird was calling as it rummaged in the rubbish and soon after a male bird flew in.



Thick-billed Lark

Our driver Ahmed had followed us in the bus and was close by for us to climb aboard, we drove off the track onto the main road and then onto a tarmac lane found a few kilometers east, we were heading in the same direction as before, towards Tagdilt. We made a couple of stops, the first was at a location usually frequented by Sandgrouse, but alas none were there today, we saw several Fat Sand Rats, a pair of Temminck's Larks and a pair of Red-rumped Wheatears. We also stopped to look at raptors found by eagle-eyed Fiona. First a Lanner Falcon flew over before stooping out of sight, then she found a Long-legged Buzzard perched on the ground!



further along the track to Tagdilt

Further along the road a little 'oasis' is fed by a trickling stream, it consisted of small orchards, clumps of almond trees, olive groves and little paddocks of alfalfa. The trees and shrubs held a number of bird species. Bonelli's and Olivaceous Warblers, Common Redstart, Woodchat Shrike, Meadow Pipit, Northern Wheatear and a Common Quail walked right out in front of us, what a bonus. As we left we saw House Bunting, Black Redstart and another Eurasian Hoopoe.

For the remainder of the morning we drove back onto the Tagdilt dirt track and searched for Cream-coloured Coursers, we found over 20 of them and had excellent views. Another walk near

some ruins, searching for Maghreb Wheatear, produced a surprising find in the shape of a Rock Bunting, we also saw White-crowned, Desert and Red-rumped Wheatears but not the Maghreb.



Rock Bunting

We next drove into town to buy lunch supplies, from there we drove into the Dades Valley following the river some 30km up into the famous Dades Gorge. We ate our picnic as we travelled but we still stopped at our usual 'picnic-site' which was a viewing area overlooking some fantastic geological rock formations. We saw Eurasian Hoopoe, Long-legged Buzzard, Crag Martin and a very distant Short-toed Eagle.



the unusual rock formations in the valley du Dades

At the top of the gorge we spent a lot of time searching for Tristram's Warbler, we walked a couple of kilometers before we eventually found a pair, they did reward us with a great show. After that we sat on the terrace of a restaurant at the head of the gorge, enjoying a cold drink and the

scenery, it was a welcomed break, Fiona found a Eurasian Sparrowhawk perched in the shade on the far cliff-face, a smashing bird.



a very poor record shot of the Tristram's Warbler



Female Blue Rock Thrush

On the way back down the valley we stopped near the river-side to look for migrant species in the riverside orchards, we had a great time finding, Willow Warblers, both species of Chiffchaff, Iberian & Common, also Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Common Redstart, Western Olivaceous Warbler and White Storks.



on the terrace at the head of the gorge



the view from the terrace

Our last stop was a little way from the hotel on the stony-plains, Ahmed dropped us off and we walked back to the hotel. The afternoon sunlight was fading and after a flurry of activity at the start of the walk we saw very little. A Tawny Pipit, White Wagtail, Seebohm's Wheatear, Trumpeter Finch and Desert Wheatear made up our 'flurry' of sightings. Further along the track we all got good views of Desert Lark which is the species I was hoping for, this was the last of our birding, it had been a long but very successful day.

DAY 4 – THURSDAY 23RD MARCH 2017

**TRANSFER FROM BOUMALNE DADES TO MERZOUGA'S ERG CHEBBI DUNE SYSTEM,
WITH SEVERAL BIRDING STOPS ALONG THE WAY**

WEATHER: some cloud early morning then sunshine, a nice cool breeze, top temp. 27C

It was a long day on the road but we broke it up several times by visiting various birding sites, we set off at 7am. Heading south-easterly towards Merzouga. Our first stop was 10 minutes into the journey as we made a second attempt at seeing sandgrouse near the Tagdilt Track.

We dipped again on the sandgrouse, in fact not many species were seen at all, Desert and Red-rumped Wheatears, Greater Short-toed Lark and not much else. So, we continued our journey for another 30 minutes before we stopped again!



Desert Wheatear

A rock quarry was our next destination, it is a regular site for Pharaoh Eagle Owl and last year we also found Maghreb Wheatear there. We spent a long time searching a rock face but the owl was not in its usual 'cave', or so we thought! There was no sign of the Wheatear either but we saw Eurasian Kestrel on the nest, Black, Northern and Seeböhm's Wheatears, Desert Lark, Black Redstart and a Subalpine Warbler.

We walked deeper into the quarry drawing a blank on the owl and as we headed back to the bus Mike mentioned that he may have seen the owl in the cave as he was looking from a track with a higher vantage point! Amazing, why he didn't mention this an hour earlier?

Well, we all climbed a little higher on our return journey and sure enough you could see the PHARAOH EAGLE OWL sitting there in the back of the cave, in fact, it had two fluffy chicks with it. We all enjoyed watching them thanks to Mike, bless his cotton socks.



you can just see the Pharaoh Eagle Owl in its nest-cave

Back in the bus we tried to put some miles behind us but we stopped three times for birds of prey sightings, we logged Long-legged Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon, Booted Eagle and we saw a Short-toed Eagle perched on a pylon.

Eventually we arrived at our first scheduled birding walk, it was a wadi just east of Goulmima where we hoped to see a number of species. The wadi spread out in front of us, it stretched for many kilometers, consisting of a mosaic of a million clumps of grass, the flat landscape was broken only by dense leafless, thorny bushes dotted here and there, a hot, hostile environment that looked lifeless.



the wadi

But it wasn't without life we saw plenty, a dozen or so species of birds, 4 different butterflies, lizards and lots of small wasps and bees were visiting patches of brightly coloured flowers. Our main target bird was the Streaked Scrub Warbler, a wren-like species with a very long tail that often hopped along the sand visiting the grass clumps looking for insects. We found Southern Grey Shrike, (*Lanius meridionalis elegans*), also Desert Wheatear, Bar-tailed Lark, a flock of Greater Short-toed Larks, a group of eight Fulvous Babblers and a single Spectacled Warbler.

We had walked about a kilometer and it looked as though we were out of luck with the Scrub Warbler but then Patrick found a nice surprise, it was a Tristram's Warbler, whilst he was watching it he discovered two Scrub Warblers, fantastic! We watched these busy little creatures working their way through the grass clumps for about half an hour, amazingly the Tristram's Warbler was sticking close to them perhaps forming some kind of feeding relationship.



a bad record shot of the Scrub Warbler

We added several more species on the return journey back to the bus, Patrick got to see his sought-after Desert Swallowtail Butterfly, perhaps a 'just dessert' in the desert! We all watched Eurasian Hoopoe, Common Redstart, Northern Wheatear and a Willow Warbler, it had been a very successful and enjoyable walk.

Next we drove back into Goulmima to pick up picnic supplies we then turned south and headed out of town towards Erfoud. Our picnic stop was at a small river where for the last three years the construction of new bridge has greatly disturbed the environment, the bridge still isn't finished! Nevertheless, it is my favourite place where you can find Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters.



Eurasian Hoopoe

We immediately found a pair of the Moroccan Wagtail, a subspecies of the White Wagtail but not much else until we set off walking along the river bank. A couple of warblers were seen in some giant pampas grass just before we turned a bend and had views over a large shallow pool, this held Little Egret, Little-ringed Plover, Common Snipe and a Green Sandpiper.

Further exploration produced little more, Subalpine and Bonelli's Warbler, a Grey Heron and some very distant Ruddy Shelducks. Whilst we were watching the Shelducks a flock of five Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters flew over us, they failed to land in their usual line of trees so our views were very brief, a nice sighting but not enough for the group's satisfaction.

We hit the road in earnest now, making our way down through Erfoud and onto the 'new' desert road that is now completely tarmac all the way down to Merzouga. We stopped one last time to walk into another wadi looking for Desert Warbler but it was now late afternoon and we saw very little.

The huge Erg Chebbi sand dunes sat on the horizon ahead of us like a creased, golden blanket, the dunes became more imposing as we drew near, stretching for many kilometers and rising many meters above us. Our Kasbah (hotel) for the next three nights sits at the base of the dunes and the main garden-terrace affords extensive views of this extraordinary natural phenomena, we are going to like it here!



Erg Chebbi sand dunes on the horizon

Having arrived at 5pm we had plenty of time to relax and to discover our new surroundings before we sat down to dinner at 7:30pm. A delicious four-course meal went down very well, thank you! A little disconcerting was the increase in the wind, very noticeable as we made our way to bed, I hope we are not in for a sand-storm tomorrow!

DAY 5 – FRIDAY 24TH MARCH 2017

ERG CHEBBI and surrounding area, also RISSANI

WEATHER: another glorious day with unbroken sunshine, 27C, light easterly cool wind.

Fortunately, the strong wind that developed last evening had relented by 6am this morning, it was cold with a light wind. We met on the hotel terrace ready to explore the tamarisk scrub right next to the terrace where a natural basin usually holds winter rain-water into March but for the last 4 years I haven't even seen it even damp!

So we walked all over the area peering into the tamarisk bushes where we found numerous Subalpine and Bonelli's Warblers, also Common Chiffchaff, Woodchat Shrike and White-crowned Wheatear. Dozens of Collared Doves were joined by a single Laughing Dove and a couple of Brown-necked Ravens flew over.



Part of Erg Chebbi dunes viewed from the terrace

We did find a small man-made pool from which we inadvertently flushed two Marbled Ducks. We nearly cost one of them its life because just as they circled around after we had flushed them a Peregrine Falcon appeared and went chasing after them, luckily, they both escaped but it was a near miss. After that excitement we went in for breakfast.

At 8am we boarded our 4*4 vehicles and drove off to search the area for a number of species missing from our list. We made several stops in wadis where we discovered Hoopoe Lark, Bar-tailed Lark, Northern, Black-eared, White-crowned and Desert Wheatears. A Lanner Falcon hunted low over the stony plains whilst one or two Booted Eagles circled on the thermals.



Eventually we arrived at a Berber village consisting of just a few buildings and several tents, they also had goat and chicken 'pens' with rooves made from layers of dead branches. It was in and around these branches that a small colony of DESERT SPARROWS was nesting. We enjoyed

prolonged views of several pairs of these very pale birds, we even saw a couple of very dark grey individuals which were obviously hybrids, a mix of House x Desert Sparrow, something I had never come across before.



Desert Sparrow - female



After that excitement we set off in search of Sandgrouse and in the process of doing so we discovered our first Desert Warbler and had sightings of a few more Hoopoe Larks. As for the sandgrouse, well, we will have to wait until tomorrow because the only sniff we had of them was a very distant flock of five which only the drivers saw, some of the group did hear them and from the call we identified them as Crowned Sandgrouse.

We had a long lunch spending two hours back at the kasbah, some of us walked around the tamarisk bushes finding similar species as this morning with the additions of Western Olivaceous and Sardinian Warblers. Lunch was taken on the terrace in warm sunshine, how nice!

For the afternoon we visited the cultivated areas around the town of Rissani some 40km away, we had a very pleasant time walking along a fairly quiet road. We found several pairs of Maghreb Lark (formerly Long-billed Crested Lark) they showed extremely well. Another two flocks of Fulvous

Babblers were also nice to see but the pick of the bunch had to be Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, they looked stunning in the afternoon sunlight as they perched on power lines.

Southern Grey Shrike was also present in good numbers as was Woodchat Shrike, Subalpine Warbler and Collared Dove.



Southern Grey Shrike - *elegans*

A little further north of Rissani a wide dry riverbed (wadi) is lined with mature tamarisk trees and this is where we searched for the recently 'split' Saharan (Olivaceous) Warbler, it is a resident breeding species. The dense foliage of the trees made it difficult to see any birds and none of them were calling or singing. We found numerous Bonelli's and Subalpine Warblers but not the Saharan Warbler.

A couple of Booted Eagles drifted over and mixed flocks of both Common and Pallid Swifts were noted high up, it was a Booted Eagle that provided some 'raptor' entertainment when one of them dashed down to the ground and landed on top of a Feral Pigeon. It squeezed the life out of the pigeon and then began eating it, gruesome!

Our last sighting at this site was of a pair of Laughing Doves, noted as we boarded the bus. During the journey 'home' we had excellent views of Little Owl, this North African subspecies has a nice rusty-brown plumage and is not grey-coloured like the UK version.



Little Owl

Dinner was a little late, we ate at 8pm, not our fault, it was served late. However, it was well appreciated when it arrived.

DAY 6 – SATURDAY 25TH MARCH 2017

RISSANI – OUED GHERIS – ALNIF ROAD

WEATHER: unbroken sunshine all day, cooling breeze. Top temp 25C

We repeated our early morning walk of yesterday around the dry lake outside the hotel and because the wind had dropped there was a lot more bird activity in the tamarisk trees. Plenty of Bonelli's and Subalpine Warblers also a few more Sardinian Warblers and a couple of Common Redstarts, some of group saw Eurasian Hoopoe and most of us watched two Ruddy Shelducks fly over.

It was 'sandgrouse' day today we intended to put a lot of effort into finding some, so our destination was the wide open stony plains northwest of Rissani. Along the way to Rissani a beautiful male Montagu's Harrier drifted across the road in front of us, smashing bird.

Our first stop however was at Oued Gheris to look for more migrant species. The oued, or river, was virtually dry but a series of small isolated pools remained and this is where we concentrated our efforts.

Little Ringed and Kentish Plover were first on the list followed by Moroccan Wagtail and then we were treated a wonderful and colourful bird fest. First, we found a couple of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, their vibrant colours were enhanced by the excellent morning light. One perched next to a bright Yellow Wagtail (*iberiae*) and behind them was a Woodchat Shrike!



An isolated pool - part of the Oued Gheris

Other sightings included Maghreb Lark, Red-rumped Swallow, White-crowned & Northern Wheatears, Willow Warbler, Eurasian Chiffchaff, Sardinian Warbler and lots of both Subalpine & Bonelli's Warblers. A huge rubbish tip not far away attracted a large number of Brown-necked Ravens and a few Black Kites, the inevitable sighting of a Booted Eagle also occurred.



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Further down river on the other side of a bridge we found another larger, pool. A number of bird species were coming down to drink which included Fulvous Babbler, Common Bulbul, Serin, Willow Warbler and lots of House Sparrows. We also found another 'new' bird for a list when an Orphean Warbler appeared in the tamarisk bushes near the pool.



Desert Fritillary

For the next hour or so we drove onto the plains and scoured the sparse scrub for sandgrouse. Alas we dipped on the sandgrouse but saw a good variety of other species including three or four Spectacled Warblers, also some colourful Black-eared Wheatears.



the flat landscape of Sandgrouse country

We drove a little further and parked up to eat our picnic lunch and from there we walked for another couple of hours through a wide plateau of scrubland. As we were approaching the end of the plateau Patrick heard and then saw a flock of 10 Spotted Sandgrouse in flight but unfortunately the rest of us were spread too far and wide to share this tumultuous event! A Sandgrouse sighting at last! Patrick saw where they landed, some 800 meters away but when we got there we saw nothing, the birds had gone.

It was around 3pm when we gave up and headed for the bus, we made one last effort to see sandgrouse at the 'drinking pool' we had watched earlier. We enjoyed our time spent there sitting on a sandy bank in the later afternoon sunshine, we added Western Olivaceous Warbler, Green Sandpiper and Common Moorhen to our list and we had some superb sightings of Fulvous Babbler.



Fulvous Babbler



There are two types of birders in this world, Arasers and Leggers, this group generally are Leggers, but sometimes it pays off just being an Araser, we had the best views ever of the Babblers by just sitting still! Mind you we didn't take too much persuading after our epic walking sessions of earlier!



Common Bulbul

We arrived back at kasbah at 5:30pm, and yet, Patrick and Fiona still went for another walk bringing back tales of Hoopoe sightings, at least they never claimed a Kookaburra as one Australian non-birding woman had suggested at dinner.

DAY 7 – SUNDAY 26TH MARCH 2017

TRANSFER FROM MERZOUGA TO TALIOUINE

WEATHER: All day sunshine, top temp 23C. A stiff cold, breeze all day

As the clocks went forward last night it was still dark at 7am this morning so we went straight into breakfast. We had the luggage loaded up and were all on board the bus by 8am. We had to travel some 500km today so we hadn't planned any scheduled birding stops this morning.

We saw many species from the bus, mainly Wheatears and shrikes but also Hoopoe Lark, Laughing Dove, Marsh Harrier, Long-legged Buzzard, Common Kestrel and various hirundines. Our first toilet stop produced Common Redstart, Trumpeter Finch, Subalpine Warbler and Crested Lark. We stopped in Agnz to pick up picnic supplies and 10 minutes later we pulled over to eat it. Lunch-break birds included a Turtle Dove, found by Fiona, several Bonelli's Warblers and not much else.



Subsequent, short birding episodes, produced more Woodchat Shrikes, Yellow Wagtail, Willow Warbler, Eurasian Hoopoe but generally birds were keeping their heads down in windy conditions. It was 23C at 2pm but it felt like 15C. We walked for a kilometer or so on huge stony plains just outside of Taznakt in a last attempt to see more Sandgrouse, again it was windy which reduced our chances somewhat. We found Desert Wheatear, Short-toed Larks, Thekla Lark and a little group of Cream-coloured Coursers.



Our arrival at our hotel, which is found just outside of Taliouine, was at 5pm. We had covered 500km passing through some stunning landscapes and some lifeless moonscapes, but generally the countryside and surroundings were very beautiful.



Trumpeter Finch

Most of us went for a walk at 5:30pm into some almond orchards and small cultivated areas. The windy conditions persisted, bird sightings were few. Greenfinch, African Chaffinch, Great Tit, Sardinian Warbler, Eurasian Hoopoe, Laughing Dove, Serin, Woodchat Shrike and Thekla Lark were all seen during our one-hour excursion.



Eurasian Serin

Dinner was a lovely tajine, one table had beef and the other had chicken, we were all tired and in bed by 9pm.

DAY 8 – MONDAY 27TH MARCH 2017

TRANSFER FROM TALIOUINE TO AGADIR WITH STOPS AT AOULOZ GORGE – SOUS VALLEY – OUED SOUS

WEATHER: a chilly start but it soon warmed up. Hazy sunshine early morning, clear sky from 10am

We had a fantastic day today, it was our best day as far as bird numbers are concerned, we saw 105 species and took our trip total to 175. At 7:30am we took a short walk into the scrub area around the hotel which produced a number of species but we only added European Bee-eater to our trip list, it was Rita who found them about 20 were roosting in a large tree. Other species seen included; Thekla Lark, Tree Pipit, Common Bulbul, Sardinian, Bonelli's and Subalpine Warblers and lots of common species. Generally migrant species we low in numbers and a bit disappointing.



Thekla Lark

The last leg of our journey to the coast was ahead of us, we still had 200km to go with a couple of scheduled birding stops along the way. Our first stop was in the scenic gorge just passed Aoulouz, the river Sous flows through the gorge and usually holds a good number of species.

We soon found Squacco Heron (3), Grey Heron, Common Moorhen, Little Grebe, Ruddy Shelduck and lots of Common Bulbuls. Again, I thought it was quiet compared to previous years.



Squacco Heron

Our walk into the gorge was very pleasant, beautiful sunshine, a cool breeze with a temperature around 23C, just smashing! A pair of Common Kestrels entertained us with their impressive courtship display, we noted Green and Common Sandpiper, Cattle Egret, Sedge Warbler, Grey & Moroccan Wagtails and plenty of warblers were flitting about in the scrub.

Further into the walk we scoped a Peregrine Falcon and a White Stork, both were on nesting duties, a flock of some 20 Cattle Egrets roosted on a roof! We heard Common Nightingale, added Cirl Bunting and Eurasian Linnet to our list but we failed to find the usual Night Heron roost.



Walking the track into the Gorge

Back at the bus, we scanned the river from the bridge, we spent some time searching the reeds and small pools for crakes and very soon we found a distant Spotted Crake, in the meantime Fiona who was lagging behind us found a Little Crake much closer. We all dashed back down the track to see it, what a cracker, it was a male and showing very well. On returning to the bridge we relocated the Spotted Crake, this time it appeared with a second bird and another Little Crake.



Little Crake

After that excitement we continued our journey, the landscape changed as we moved into the Sous Valley, rolling hills were covered by a 'forest' of Argan Trees, all in fruit. But after a while we passed into flat scrubland again and this is where we took our second walk.

As soon as we got out of the bus we found our target bird, the Black-winged Kite, it sat high on a Cyprus Tree looking marvellous in the morning sunlight and spotted first by Ahmed our driver who insists that "he is the Driver not the Guide". Our walk produced several other interesting species, with Stone Curlew at the top of the list. Also seen was: Black-eared and Northern Wheatear, Moussier's Redstart, Thekla Lark, Olivaceous Warbler and a few Bonelli's Warblers. Both Woodchat and Southern Grey Shrikes were common and a flock of European Bee-eaters flew over us.

One disappointing find was of 4 dead Black Kites, three in one bush!! The carcasses were a couple of weeks old so there was no sign of how they had died, we assumed they were shot for fun!

Moving on we made good progress and reached Agadir by 3:30pm, we logged Pallid Swifts and a number of Lesser Kestrels over Touradant and lots of Maghreb Magpies near Agadir.

After checking into our hotel, unpacking and a quick change we were ready for a good walk, the estuary of Oued Sous was the venue this time. Ahmed dropped us off about 2km from the river-mouth, we intended to walk the 2km and back in the 2 ½ hours we had at our disposal.



Slender-billed Gull

We made slow progress because there were so many species to see! On our side of the river we saw Greater Flamingo, Stone Curlew, Common Redshank, Black-headed, Mediterranean and Yellow-legged Gulls, they were loafing on a sand-bar with groups of Gull-billed and Sandwich Terns. A few meters further on we had good close views of Slender-billed Gulls at a sewage outflow.

On the opposite river bank we watched a host of waders of all shapes and sizes feeding on the muddy shore, from the biggest, Eurasian Curlew, to the smallest, Little Stint, most families were represented. *Limosa*, *Pluvialis*, *Charadrius*, *Calidris* & *Tringa*. Also Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Oystercatcher and one wader that we could not clearly identify because of the distance, but it looked like a Marsh Sandpiper.



Osprey

Nearer to the shoreline the river spread over a large area of sand, fewer birds were feeding there so we concentrated our efforts on a small brackish pool hidden in the shoreline scrub. We had to climb onto a sandy hillock to get better views of the pool and in doing so we were noticed by the guards dotted around the walls of the adjacent Royal Palace. This is a common occurrence and I fully expected the guards to come over and move us on, they do not like a bunch of tourists with cameras and telescopes looking towards the Royal Palace. So, we had a limited time in which to log as many species as possible.

The pool held lots of species it was amazing, ducks were represented by Mallard, Gadwall, Eurasian Teal, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon and Marbled Duck. Waders included; Spotted Redshank, Ruff, Common Greenshank, Common Redshank, Grey Plover, Black-winged Stilts and Pied Avocets. There was also Eurasian Spoonbill, Greater Flamingos, Grey Heron, Little Grebe, Little Egret and Ruddy Shelduck.



View of the river Sous from the bridge at Aoulouz

Then the guards arrived! They were very friendly and understanding, we were allowed to stay for another 10 minutes before they moved us on. Our walk back didn't produce any new species we

searched for Whimbrel without success, it was very pleasant in the lovely evening light, the sunsets there are magical.

A tired group arrived back at the hotel, dinner was taken at 7:30pm we all retired to bed at 9. Tomorrow will be an early start as we are visiting Sous Massa National Park.

DAY 9 – TUESDAY 28TH MARCH 2017

SOUSS MASSA NATIONAL PARK – OUED SOUS

WEATHER: Sunshine all day, nice cooling breeze, top temp. 26C.

We ate our continental breakfast at 6am and it was still dark when we left the hotel at 7am. We drove south from Agadir for an hour before arriving at Souss Massa. One stop was made to look at a colony of Little Swifts, a clump of feathered ball-like nest was found about 3 meters off the ground in a disused garage. The birds themselves were more elusive, we caught sight of little groups of ones and twos as well as a couple of larger Common Swifts.

Souss Massa national park surrounds the river Massa and the main track through the park lies on the north bank and runs all the way down to the beach. It is one of my favourite walks, the weather is always glorious, not a cloud in sight with exquisite light conditions, perfect!



view of the River Massa at the beach

The approach track is also good for birding, we got off the bus and walked about 1km through small farmland plots it was like walking alongside large allotments, the track undulates and on the peaks we had splendid views of the river, the wide flat bottomed valley and the distant hills about 5km away.

We listed a good number of species but generally the migrant numbers were down, a few Willow, Subalpine and Olivaceous Warblers were seen along with Common Redstart and not much else. It was the resident species that stole the show, with House Bunting, Moussier's Redstart, Little Owl, Zitting Cisticola, Laughing Dove, Sardinian Warbler, Serin, Common Bulbul and several common species.



Little Owl

Once we arrived at the reserve entrance the track is much higher giving great views over the river, we walked due west with the sun behind us, the light was great. We added Turtle Dove, Eurasian Linnet, Black-eared Wheatear, Cetti's Warbler but our main target bird, the Black-crowned Tchagra, remained elusive.

Not many birds were on the river it was quite a disappointment, Little Egret, Great & White-breasted Cormorant, Osprey, a fly over Eurasian Spoonbill and not much else. We walked most of the track and stopped at a viewing area where we could scope open muddy areas that were exposed during this low-tide period. A number of wader species were counted there: Curlew Sandpiper (9), Ringed Plover (6), Kentish Plover (6), Grey Plover (1), Greenshank (1) Dunlin (1) and Sanderling (5).



some of the 9 Curlew Sandpipers

At this point 6 of the group decided to return to the bus whilst the rest of us (3) continued to the beach, we saw a few more species on the river and shoreline but the main sighting was of two pairs of Black-crowned Tchagra. We heard the distinctive, melodic song a long time before the

birds actually appeared, they performed well and looked superb, we even got to see their display flight.

Moving on we scoped the beach area picking out our first Black-tailed Godwit, also some more Sanderling and a host of gulls and terns were loafing on a sand-bar. We logged our first Audouin's Gull and out at sea we saw a couple of Northern Gannets.

Plenty of butterflies were on the wing, Patrick and I have a keen interest in identifying them, we listed: Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Greenish Black-Tip, Common Blue, Clouded Yellow, Southern Speckled Wood, Lang's Short-tailed Blue, Small Copper, both Large and Small Whites.



Moroccan Rock Lizard

We met up with the rest of the group at a hotel restaurant where we had lunch out on the terrace watching Spotless Starlings and Common Kestrels. From there we drove back into the village and down to the river, parking the bus by a bridge we got out for a walk. From the bridge we saw; Grey Heron, Red-rumped Swallow, Common Moorhen, Reed Warbler and a fly-over Reed Bunting was seen by some of the group.

Our walk along dry, dirt tracks and through open fields of alfalfa produced lots of sightings, Yellow Wagtails (*iberiae*), Meadow Pipits, Stonechat, Zitting Cisticola and lots of Serins, Linnets, House Sparrows, Crested Larks and a few Cattle Egrets. It was John who spotted a group of 9 Glossy Ibis, they dashed about over the valley. We saw them again a little later, this time they had joined another group, there were about 50 altogether, very nice.



Turtle Dove

We decided to leave after that, driving back to Agadir we arrived around 4:30pm and after a short break at the hotel we left to visit Oued Sous for a second visit. This time we walked up river towards a new bridge. A huge sand-bar was covered in birds, mainly gulls and waders with a few herons, egrets and cormorants. We had lovely time sifting through the masses of birds looking for a new species for our list, which did not happen.



Maghreb Magpie - now given species status - *Pica mauritanica*

There were 14 species of waders and 4 species of gulls, we also saw a swirling mass of around 100 White Storks up on the thermals, an Osprey on a pylon and several Stone Curlews in the river-side scrub.



Stone Curlew

At 6:15pm we left and returned to the hotel, dinner was at 7:30pm, a lamb Tajine. During the courses we went through the bird log, we had added 6 new species to our list today, which now stands at, 181.

Tomorrow we travel north along the coast to Essaouira for our last night!

DAY 10 – WEDNESDAY 29TH MARCH 2017

TRANSFER FROM AGADIR TO ESSAOUIRA WITH STOPS AT OUED SOUS – CAPE RHIR – TAMRI – TAMANDAR – OUED KSOB

WEATHER: All day sunshine, very little cooling breeze, top temp 31C.

Another day of glorious weather, but without the cooling breeze it got much warmer and a little humid. We left the hotel before 8am and made a third visit to Oued Sous, we literally got out of the bus and scanned the mud-flats from where we stood. Plenty of birds were out there but none of them were 'new' sightings. Osprey, Greater Flamingo, Slender-billed Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot, Grey Plover and Curlew Sandpiper were just a few of the species seen.



Oued Sous on a beautiful, calm morning - oh to be in England now that March is here.....not!



For the next hour we drove north from Agadir along the coast road making one stop at a sandy bay to look at a large flock of roosting gulls, we saw Audouin's Gull with the common gull species and a dozen Sandwich Terns.

At Cape Rhir we looked out over a calm blue sea, dozens of Northern Gannets were passing, heading northward, we also saw a single Great Skua, a single Manx Shearwater and we had two or three sightings of Common Scoter. A couple of Gull-billed Terns also flew by and we found two Whimbrels on the rocks below us.



Greenish Black-tip taken on the slopes at Cape Rhir

From the Cape we drove a little further north to Tamri, we parked in the bay where a large lagoon lies adjacent to a massive reed-bed. We had high expectations of seeing several new species, but in reality, it was very disappointing. We walked to the reed bed but not many species were calling or showing, in the lagoon we saw Grey Heron, Eurasian Coot, Eurasian Spoonbill, White Stork and an Audouin's Gull. Then a single BALD IBIS flew over and not long after another group of around 20 flew along the hillside, they appeared to land just over the brow of a nearby hill.

We quickly drove to where we thought the IBIS might be and sure enough they were standing on the rocky slope, we counted 16 individuals, they were just too far away for us to get reasonable photographs. After watching them for a while we jumped back onto the bus and continued our journey.



record shot of Bald Ibis and of the group watching them



watching the Bald Ibis - except Mike and Lorna

We stopped in Tamri to pick up lunch supplies which was eaten as we travelled, Our next stop was in the Argan Forest just north of Tamanar. It was a good stop because the trees seemed alive with birds including several migrant species. We saw Eurasian Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike, Long-legged Buzzard and we tracked down an Orphean Warbler that was in full song, a female bird was also seen.

A very surprising find was of a Pied Flycatcher we never expected this species, this is early in the year for flycatchers, we also saw two or three Song Thrushes, these winter visitors were very elusive and kept well away from us. Sardinian Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Subalpine Warbler and a second Eurasian Hoopoe went onto the list too.



Pied Flycatcher

Across the main road, the vegetation was a little thicker, with wild barely growing below it. Last year we saw Black-crowned Tchagra there and within minutes we saw one this year too! It was good for the whole group to catch up with this enigmatic species, it looks like a type of shrike with its long, hooked bill but doesn't act like one.



Black-crowned Tchagra

From the Argan forest we completed the last leg of the journey to Essaouira where we made our final birding stop of the day. Ahmed dropped us off by the side of a bridge where the Oued Ksob flows under, the current water level was quite low creating a series of pools. Our intention was to walk a couple of kilometers downstream to the beach along the stony riverbed.

We spent nearly two, most enjoyable hours, watching many species feeding in the pools or coming down to drink, it was amazing to think that such a wildlife paradise existed just a few hundred meters from the busy town centre of Essaouira.



one of the pools along the Oued Ksob

Our main target species was the Brown-throated Martin (aka Plain Martin) which we found almost immediately, in fact there were dozens of them! We also searched for warblers in the scrub finding a good selection: Olivaceous, Reed, Sedge, Subalpine, Willow and Sardinian Warblers.



Brown-throated or Plain Martin

Brightly coloured Greenfinches, Goldfinches, Serins and Linnets came down to drink from the pools, where Common and Green Sandpipers were abundant. Black-winged Stilts, Common Greenshanks and Little-ringed Plovers made up the other waders seen, whilst Little & Cattle Egrets fed in or near the water, Moroccan & White Wagtails flitted about around the pools. On the boulders and in the scrub we listed Black-eared Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, Southern Grey Shrike, Common Bulbul and a couple of Stone Curlews.



Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis algeriensis*)

We finally arrived at a second bridge which gave us a viewing platform from which to scan the river as it flowed into the sea, a huge gull roost could be seen. A single Caspian Tern was in fact, the only tern amongst hundreds of gulls, we could also see a few Cormorants but nothing else.



Black-eared Wheatear

Walking towards town we found one last pool where we added Common Redshank to our day-list, but the light was fading, it was 6pm and we were due to be picked up. Ahmed turned up on time with the bus, we jumped on board and he drove us to town. We parked just outside the walled enclosure of the old town and walked to our hotel. The old town consisted of tightly packed buildings, narrow streets full of venders and a hoard of people. The sights, sounds, smells and the general hustle & bustle of the streets exuded a vibrant, thriving atmosphere - such a contrast to our stroll along the river.



part of the beautiful coastline near Tamri

We ate a poor tajine for dinner, it was a pity as it was our last night, but the deserts were nice, followed by mint tea. We still have some birding time tomorrow with the opportunity of seeing some new species.

DAY 11 – THURSDAY 30TH MARCH 2017

TRANSFER FROM ESSAOUIRA TO MARRAKECH AIRPORT A FEW STOPS TO LOOK FOR LARKS

WEATHER: Hazy sunshine to start, then cloudless sun all day, no breeze. Temp 28C

This was our bonus birding day because there are now also evening flights from Marrakech to London so we had this whole extra day to make our way back to the airport.

We arranged to meet at 7:30am but Fiona and Patrick hi-jacked Ahmed the driver at 6am and went off looking for Red-necked Nightjars and Owls. They heard only Tawny Owl and had no sightings of nightjars. However, on their return they watched the sun come up from the roof-terrace and were lucky enough to see a Barbary Falcon chasing Swifts!

At 7:30am our official walk started, we set off to the fishing port area, we worked our way through the narrow streets and alley-ways of Essaouira passing the empty, silent Souk a stark contrast to the vibrant, noisy chaos of last night.



the 'empty' Souk

At the docks it looked like the full fishing fleet was in port, it was an amazing sight to so many empty boats together, with bright blue livery they looked somehow, sinister, even ghostly in the morning mist.



Sun-up over the dock

We scanned the nearby rocks for wading birds including the Ruddy Turnstone which was missing from our list. We saw several of them along with Common Sandpiper, White-breasted Cormorant

and many Yellow-legged Gulls. The mist began to clear and dozens of Swifts dashed across our field of view high up above us, there was a mixture of Pallid and Common Swifts, perhaps more Pallid than Common!



House Bunting

After a lovely breakfast, with the best crêpes and the best coffee of the tour, we set off for the journey to Marrakech. We were about an hour along the road when we stopped for our first walk, Calandra, Sky and Lesser Short-toed Larks were targets as well as Spanish Sparrow.

After an hour in the heat of the day we gave up, one of the larks appeared, Skylark, and we did see Black-eared Wheatear, Crested Lark, Red-rumped Swallow, Southern Grey and Woodchat Shrikes and not much else.

A second stop produced a Whinchat, a small flock of Greater Short-toed Larks, two Stone Curlews and Common Kestrel. A Little Owl brought the bus to a stop a little later, it is amazing that we have seen this species nearly every day and yet past tours struggled to find more than one!

We had lunch at a road-side restaurant, yes you guessed right, it was a tajine lunch! We listened to Common Nightingale, Sardinian Warbler and Common Bulbul as we ate in an open plan terrace.

Our final walk produced nothing really, only three of us got off the bus, it was now 28C with a lot of heat-haze, not good conditions for walking over rocky, flat, cultivated fields.

We reached the airport by 4pm. Ahmed had done a fantastic driving job, his bird spotting is pretty good too! We thanked him warmly and made our way to the departure lounge.

Our trip total finished on 192, not including birds only heard or the subspecies; Moroccan Wagtail & African Chaffinch. We missed a few species during this wonderful trip, but it wouldn't be fun if everything turned up on cue.

If you like the sound of this tour then contact me and book your place for the next one

MARCH 20TH – 30TH 2018

SPECIES SEEN BETWEEN 20TH – 30TH MARCH 2017

	ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae		
1	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	√
2	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	√
3	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	√
4	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	√
5	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	√
6	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	√
7	Marbled Teal	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	√
8	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	√
	GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae		
9	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	√
10	Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>	√
	PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae		
11	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	√
	PHOENICOPTERIFORMES: Phoenicopteridae		
12	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	√
	PROCELLARIIFORMES: Procellariidae		
13	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	√
	CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae		
14	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	√
	PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae		
15	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	√
16	Northern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>	√
17	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	√
	PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae		
18	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	√
19	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	√
20	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	√
21	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	√
22	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	√
	SULIFORMES: Sulidae		
23	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	√
	SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae		
24	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	√
25	White-Breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax maroccanus</i>	√
	ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae		
26	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	√
	ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae		
27	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	√
28	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	√
29	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	√
30	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipitor nisus</i>	√
31	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	√
32	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	√
33	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	√
34	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	√
	GRUIFORMES: Rallidae		
35	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>	√
36	Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>	√
37	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	√
38	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	√

	CHARADRIIFORMES: Burhinidae		
39	Eurasian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Haematopodidae		
40	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae		
41	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	√
42	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae		
43	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	√
44	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	√
45	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	√
46	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae		
47	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	√
48	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	√
49	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	√
50	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	√
51	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	√
52	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	√
53	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	√
54	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	√
55	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	√
56	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	√
57	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	√
58	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	√
59	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	√
60	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	√
61	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	√
62	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	√
63	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Glareolidae		
64	Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	√
65	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae		
66	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	√
67	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	√
68	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	√
69	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus audouinii</i>	√
70	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus</i>	√
71	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	√
72	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	√
73	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	√
74	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	√
75	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	√
	CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercorariidae		
76	Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	√
	PTEROCLIFORMES: Pteroclididae		
77	Spotted Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles senegallus</i>	√
78	Crowned Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles coronatus</i>	√
	COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae		
79	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	√
80	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus excelsa</i>	√
81	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	√
82	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	√

83	Laughing Dove	<i>S. senegalensis phoenicophilia</i>	√
	CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae		
84	Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>	√
85	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	√
	STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae		
86	Pharaoh Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>	√
87	Tawny (Maghreb) Owl	<i>Strix aluco mauritanica</i>	H
88	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua saharae</i>	√
	CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Apodidae		
89	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	√
90	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	√
91	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinus galilejensis</i>	√
	CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae		
92	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>	√
93	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	√
	BUCEROTIFORMES: Upupidae		
94	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	√
	PICIFORMES: Picidae		
95	Levaillant's Woodpecker	<i>Picus vaillantii</i>	√
96	FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae		
97	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	√
98	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	√
99	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus erlangeri</i>	√
100	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus minor</i>	√
101	Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Malaconotidae		
102	Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus cucullatus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae		
103	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis elegans</i>	√
104	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Senator rutilans</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae		
105	Maghreb Magpie	<i>Pica mauritanica</i>	√
106	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax p. barbarus</i>	√
107	Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	√
108	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	√
109	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Paridae		
110	Coal Tit	<i>Pariparus ater atlas</i>	√
111	(Ultramarinus) Af. Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae ultramarinus</i>	√
112	Great Tit	<i>Parus major excelsus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae		
113	Greater Hoopoe Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	√
114	Thick-billed Lark	<i>Rhamphocoris clotbey</i>	√
115	Desert Lark	<i>Ammonanes deserti payni</i>	√
116	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cincturus arenicolor</i>	√
117	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	√
118	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae ruficolor</i>	√
119	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata riggenbachi</i>	√
120	Maghreb Lark	<i>Galerida macrorhyncha randonii</i>	√
121	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpesris atlas</i>	√
122	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>	√
123	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella b. brachydactyla</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae		

124	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae		
125	Brown-throated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola mauritanica</i>	√
126	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	√
127	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	√
128	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Pryonoprogne rupestris</i>	√
129	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	√
130	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica rufola</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Cettiidae		
131	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Scotocercidae		
132	Streaked Scrub Warbler	<i>Scotocerca inquieta saharae</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae		
133	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	√
134	Eurasian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	√
135	Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>	√
136	Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae		
137	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	√
138	Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	√
139	Saharan Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna pallida reiseri</i>	√
140	Western Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna opaca</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae		
141	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae		
142	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Turdoides fulvus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae		
143	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla mauritanicus</i>	√
144	African Desert Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserti</i>	√
145	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	√
146	Tristram's Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserticola</i>	√
147	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	√
148	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	√
149	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae		
150	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla balearicus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae		
151	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae		
152	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla mauritanica</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae		
153	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae		
154	Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	H
155	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	√
156	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus deichleri</i>	√
157	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae		
158	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	√
159	Common Nightingale	<i>Megarhynchos megarhynchos</i>	√
160	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	√
161	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	√
162	Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>	√
163	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Montacilla solitarius</i>	√

164	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	√
165	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	√
166	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	√
167	Seebohm Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi</i>	
168	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	√
169	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	√
170	Red-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oesta</i>	√
171	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura riggenbachi</i>	√
172	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae		
173	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus minor</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae		
174	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	√
175	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	√
176	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>	√
177	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae		
178	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	√
179	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	√
180	Moroccan Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba subpersonata</i>	
181	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Flavissimo flava iberiae</i>	√
182	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Flavissimo flava flava</i>	
183	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	√
184	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus prtaensis</i>	√
185	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae		
186	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	√
187	African Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs africana</i>	
188	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	√
189	Af. Crimson-winged Finch	<i>Rhodopechys alienus</i>	√
190	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	√
191	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris voousi</i>	√
192	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	√
193	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis parva</i>	√
194	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	√
	PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae		
195	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	√
196	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	√
197	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	√
198	House Bunting	<i>Emberiza striolata</i>	√
199	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	√
	BUTTERFLIES		
1	Desert Fitillary		
2	Small Copper		
3	(African) Desert Swallowtail		
4	Swallowtail		
5	Scarce swallowtail		
6	Land's Short-tailed Blue		
7	Green-striped White		
8	Clouded Yellow		
9	Large White		
10	Small White		
11	Cleopatra		
12	Greenish Black Tip		

13	Speckled Wood		
14	Painted Lady		
15	Common Blue		
16			
17	Barbary Ground Squirrel	<i>Atlantoxerus getulus</i>	
18	Fat Sand Rat	<i>Psomomys obesus</i>	
19	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	
20	Algerian Mouse	<i>Mus spretus</i>	
21	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	
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