

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



OMAN: Birding the Arabian Peninsula

Monday 6th - Saturday 18th November 2023 (Muscat to Salalah)

3 Wise Birding Clients

Leader: Dave Astins

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP:

Omani Owl: A bird in the Al Hajar mountains was voted as 'bird of the trip' Having not seen or heard it on our first attempt, expectation wasn't particularly high, especially as Dave had never seen the species on 5 previous attempts! A switch of location, still conditions, and a patient approach was rewarded with both male and female calling, and the male seen well for several minutes on a wadi cliff above us.

Desert Owl: This species was voted 2nd best bird of the trip, in another remote wadi, this time in the south. We weren't overly optimistic as a large group from the Netherlands arrived at the same spot, but a quick discussion and agreement for co-operation was soon reached, and Wise Birding took the lead with the strategy. We were soon rewarded with brilliant views of a calling male, and spirits were again high as we made our way out of a magical wadi with a sky full of stars shining down on us.



Desert Owl by John Bruce

Waders at Barr al Hikman & Sur Masirah: The wader capital of the Middle East did not disappoint. A flock of over 400 Crab-Plovers at Sur Masirah on Masirah Island in stunning light was a real highlight, as was picking out at least 20 tricky Great Knot at Filim on the mainland opposite. Throw in hundreds of thousands of estuarine birds, including Tibetan Sand Plover, Greater Sand Plover, and Broad-billed Sandpiper, and you have an experience not to be missed.

Mirbat Pelagics: No trip to Oman is complete without a pelagic on the Arabian Sea from Mirbat with Hatem. So good, we went twice! A superb list of seabirds including the key targets of Persian Shearwater and Jouanin's Petrel, with a supporting cast including Masked Booby, Red-billed Tropicbird, and Bridled Tern.

Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak: we finally saw this magical bird on our last day, visiting a well known drinking pool. A great way to finish the trip!



Jouanin's Petrel by John Bruce



Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak by John Bruce

Tour Summary

This was Wise Birding's first tour to Oman and it was such a successful tour it is already in the schedule and fully booked for 2024. This was a 12-night one-way tour, driving from Muscat in the north to Salalah in the south. We ended with 6 nights at a single base in Salalah, which was perfect and a contrast after a fair amount of travelling and 4 different hotels in the first 6 days.

The diversity of habitats and birds in Oman is really special. The group enjoyed birding in varied locations including the Al Hajar mountains in the north at over 2,000m, remote wadis, desert oases on the edge of the Empty Quarter, the unique habitats and birds of Dhofar in the south, Masirah Island and the vast wader haven at Barr al Hikman. Plus a pelagic trip into the Arabian Sea from Mirbat.

After meeting at Muscat International Airport, we eased ourselves into birding with a few sites in and around Muscat, where we became familiar with northern Oman specialities including Indian Roller, Purple Sunbird and Red-wattled Lapwing. We then headed south-west to Nizwa and our base for 2 nights, on the south side of the Al Hajar mountains. A day on the Sayq Plateau, and 2 night-time visits to wadis, produced some exciting and specialist birds including Omani Owl, Pallid Scops Owl, Hume's Wheatear and Lappet-faced Vulture.

The next area to be explored was south and east down the coast. Two great sites adjacent to each other: Barr al Hikman and Masirah Island. The latter is not often on bird tour itineraries, but has some excellent birding and can deliver the unexpected. Highlights on this trip included Brahminy Starling, Asian Koel, and over 400 Crab-Plovers. On the mainland, Barr al Hikman again delivered with hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, including the main targets, Great Knot and Broad-billed Sandpiper.

A range of desert sites further south delivered some superb birding and some unexpected rarities, including Forest Wagtail, Lanner Falcon, Grey Hypocolius, Nile Valley Sunbird, African Collared Dove, 3 species of Sandgrouse, Oriental Turtle Dove and Sociable Lapwing.

Our final destination was Salalah, the centre of the Dhofar region and host to a wonderful range of birds, many of them hard to find anywhere else in Arabia. Most sites were less than an hour from our hotel so more birding and less driving in the second half of the tour. Highlights in Dhofar included Desert Owl, Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak, Yemen Serin, Verreaux's Eagle, Arabian Eagle-Owl, Arabian Scops Owl, Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Small Pratincole.

Whilst based in Salalah we took a pelagic trip out of Mirbat with Hatem, where we recorded an excellent list of seabirds. These included Persian Shearwater, Jouanin's Petrel, Masked Booby, Red-billed Tropicbird and Bridled Tern. On our final day we took a second pelagic with Hatem hoping for Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel, sadly we were unsuccessful but did add a new species in the form of Flesh-footed Shearwater.

Everyone really enjoyed this trip, the length of the trip was perfect and the birding was relaxed, enjoyable and exciting!

We recorded a total of 225 species of bird, 4 mammals and 5 reptiles.

SUMMARY OF DAILY ACTIVITIES

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY / HIGHLIGHTS DAY BY DAY
1	Monday 6 November	Meet up in Muscat in the morning and spend a few hours birding local sites, before heading south-west to Birkat al Mouz . Purple Sunbird, Delicate Prinia, Lappet-faced Vulture and Plain Leaf Warbler. Overnight Nizwa
2	Tuesday 7 November	Al Jabal al Akhdar : Hume's & Red-tailed Wheatear, Striolated Bunting. Wadi al Muaydin : Sand Partridge. Near Nizwa : Omani Owl, Pallid Scops Owl. Overnight Nizwa
3	Wednesday 8 November	Morning drive Nizwa to Mahout . Afternoon Barr al Hikman : Crab-Plover, waders, terns, herons. Ferry to Masirah Island . Overnight Masirah Island
4	Thursday 9 November	Masirah Island all day: Crab-Plover, Pintail Snipe, Booted Warbler, Asian Koel, Brahminy Starling. Overnight Masirah Island
5	Friday 10 November	Masirah Island first thing: White-cheeked Tern. Barr al Hikman : Great Knot, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper. Haima : Forest Wagtail, Upcher's Warbler. Al Ghaftain : Menetries's Warbler. Overnight Al Ghaftain
6	Saturday 11 November	Muntasar Oasis : Spotted Sandgrouse, Bluethroat, Red-breasted Flycatcher. Qitbit : Rosy Starling, Great Grey Shrike. Al Beed Farms : Greater Hoopoe-Lark, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark. Shisr Farms : Sociable Lapwing, Cream-coloured Courser, Pallid Harrier, Oriental Turtle Dove. Overnight Thumrait
7	Sunday 12 November	Mudayy : Grey Hypocolius, Nile Valley Sunbird, African Collared Dove, Lanner Falcon, Crowned and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. Thumrait Tip : Eastern Imperial Eagle, Steppe Eagle. Al Saadah Park : Crested Honey Buzzard, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Long-legged Buzzard. Overnight Salalah
8	Monday 13 November	Salalah area : Medium Egret, Arabian Sunbird, Ruppell's Weaver, African Paradise Flycatcher, Diederik Cuckoo. Raysut : Spur-winged Lapwing, Abdim's Stork. Al Mughsayl : Brown & Lesser Noddy, Brown Booby, Red-knobbed Coot, Desert Owl. Overnight Salalah
9	Tuesday 14 November	Mirbat Pelagic : Persian Shearwater, Jouanin's Petrel, Red-billed Tropicbird, Masked Booby. Atair Sink Hole : Bonelli's Eagle, Palestine Sunbird. Jabal Samhan : Verreaux's Eagle, Arabian Partridge, Arabian Wheatear. Ayn Hamran : Arabian Scops Owl Overnight Salalah
10	Wednesday 15 November	Salalah : Singing Bush Lark, Spotted Thick-Knee, Small Pratincole, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Socotra Cormorant. Overnight Salalah
11	Thursday 16 November	Taqah : Forbes-Watson's Swift. Atair Sink Hole : Yemen Serin. Wadi Kheesh : Pied Cuckoo, Arabian Warbler. Ayn Tobruk : Namaqua Dove, Black-crowned Tchagra. Ayn Razat : Bruce's Green Pigeon. Overnight Salalah
12	Friday 17 November	Ayn Tobruk : Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak. Ayn Razat : Arabian Eagle-Owl. Ayn Hamran : Long-billed Pipit. Mirbat pelagic : Flesh-footed Shearwater, Brown Noddy. Overnight Salalah
13	Saturday 18 November	Transfer to Salalah Airport and onward flights to Muscat and then London.

The following photos were all taken by Wise Birding leader Dave Astins, unless labelled otherwise.

Abdim's Stork



Indian Pond Heron





Steppe Eagle



Greater Spotted Eagle



Egyptian Vulture



Crested Honey Buzzard



Bonelli's Eagle



Montagu's Harrier by John Bruce



Pallid Scops Owl by John Bruce



Arabian Eagle Owl



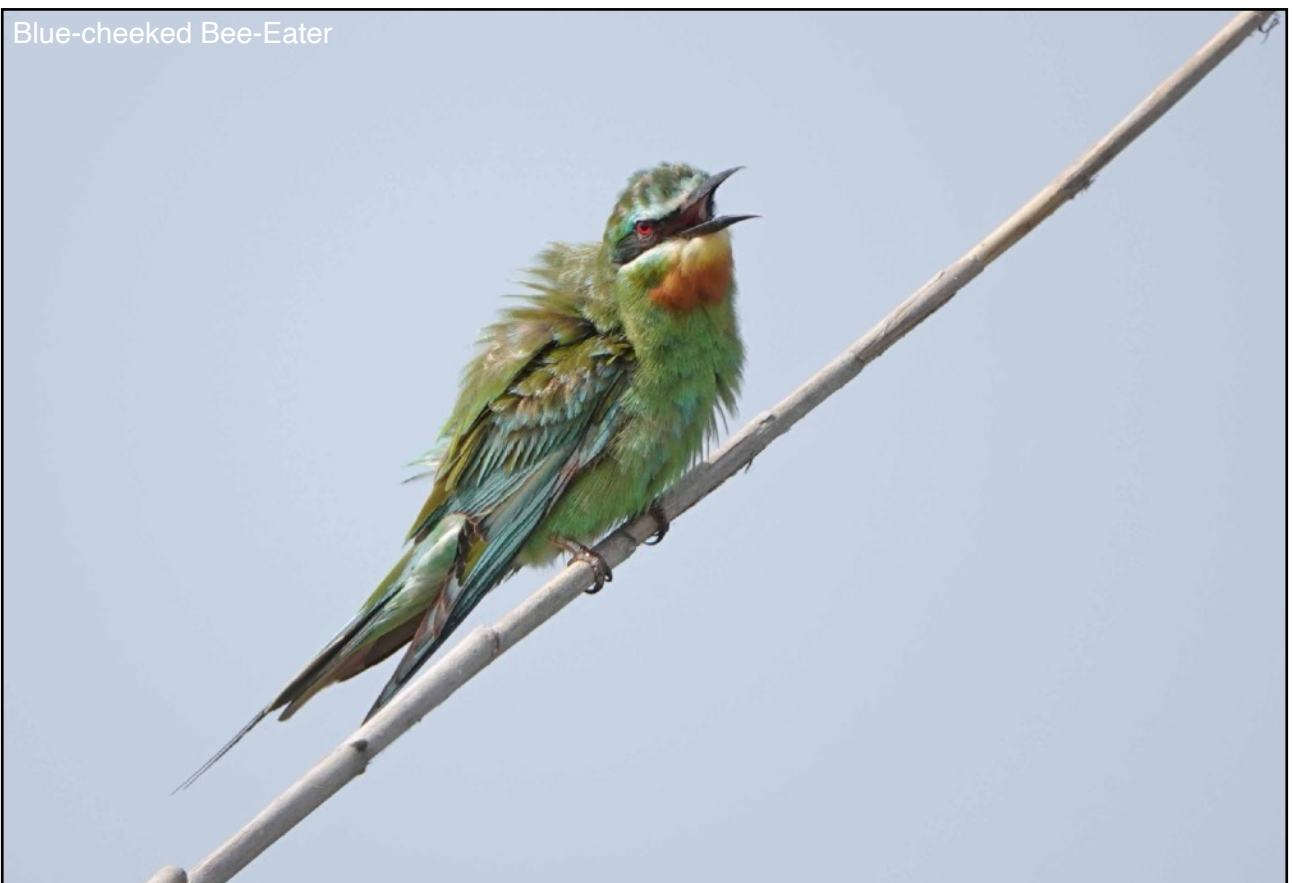
Desert Owl by John Bruce



Desert Owl by John Bruce



Arabian Green Bee-Eater by John Bruce



Blue-cheeked Bee-Eater



Cream-coloured Courser



Spotted Thick-knee



Crab Plover by John Bruce



Tibetan Sand Plover John Bruce



Small Pratincole by John Bruce



Flesh-footed Shearwater



Persian Shearwater



Masked Booby



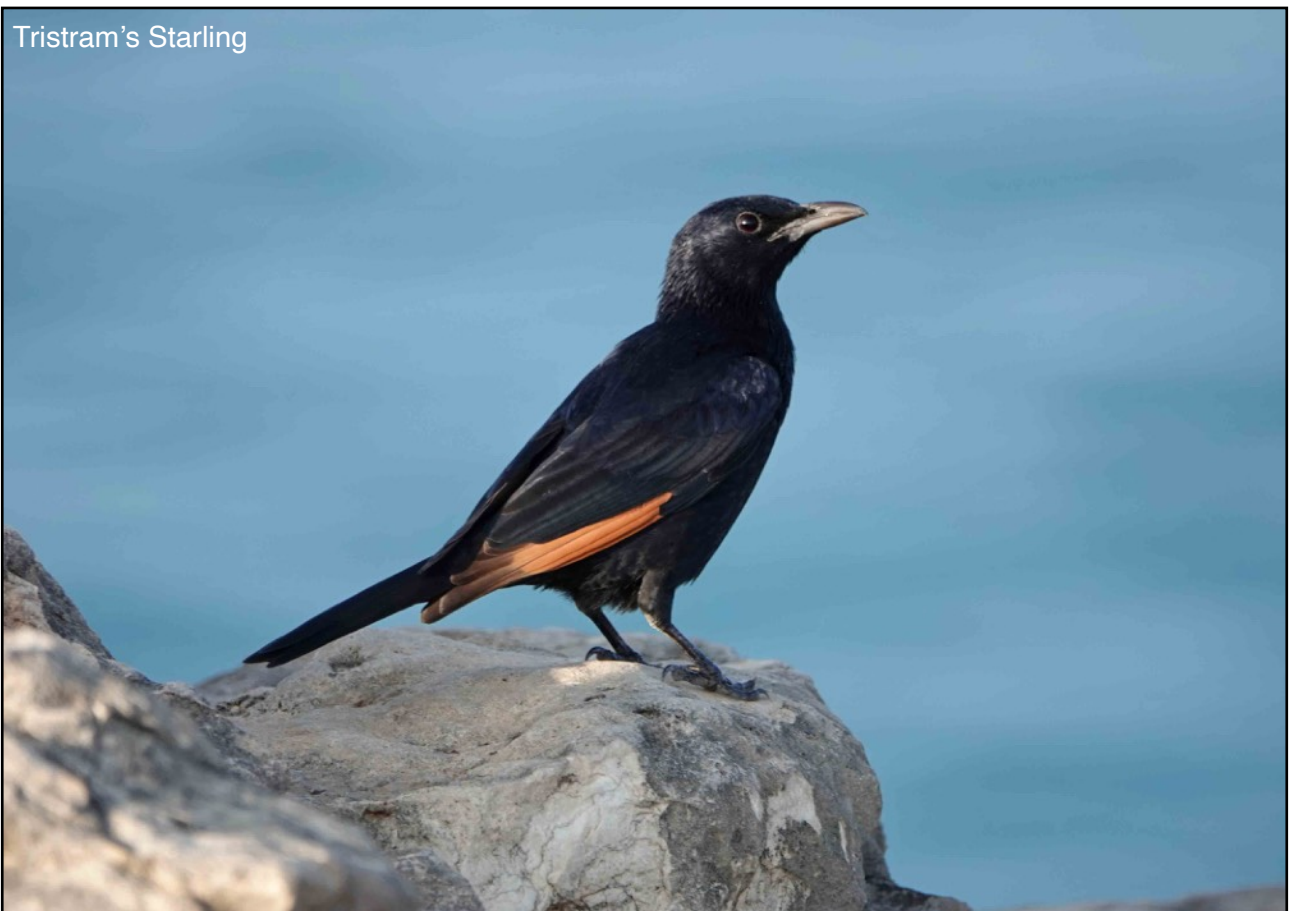
Red-billed Tropicbird by John Bruce



Masked Booby by John Bruce



Black-crowned Tchagra



Tristram's Starling



Diederik Cuckoo by John Bruce



Forest Wagtail

Asian Koel by John Bruce



Indian Roller



Bruce's Green Pigeon



Brahminy Starling by John Bruce



Arabian Partridge by John Bruce



Arabian Sunbird by John Bruce



Pale Crag Martin by John Bruce



Forbes-Watson's Swift by John Bruce



Desert Wheatear by John Bruce



Blackstart



Asian Desert Warbler



Arabian Warbler by John Bruce



Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark by John Bruce



Greater Hoopoe Lark



Desert Lark by John Bruce



Yemen Serin by John Bruce



Long-billed Pipit



Red-throated Pipit by John Bruce

Conservation Donation:

Following this tour to Oman, £150 was transferred to the Wise Birding Holiday's central conservation fund.

To try and make a bigger difference to conservation we pool the donations from most of our tours into one central fund. Once a target amount has been reached this money will be used to support a single project in the hope of achieving more for species conservation. Currently this amounts to over £10,000. However, we do still donate money to support smaller conservation projects that we believe still benefit from smaller donations. Please visit www.wisebirding.co.uk to find out more.



Verreaux's Eagle by John Bruce

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The following bird checklist follows the nomenclature and classification from Gill F, D Donsker & P Rasmussen (Eds). 2024. **IOC World Bird List** (v14.1).

The IOC World Bird List complements three other primary world bird lists that differ slightly in their primary goals & taxonomic philosophy: [Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World](#), [The Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World](#), 4th Edition & [HBW Alive/Bird Life International](#).

The mammal checklist mostly follows the [IUCN framework](#) (Red List) but also the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) www.gbif.org and Handbook of The Mammals of the

Birds

The eBird Trip Report for this tour can be found [HERE](#).



Asian Desert Warbler by John Bruce

Total number of birds recorded: 225 species

Garganey

Spatula querquedula

1 at Hilf on 9th and several at the nearby sewage works.

Northern Shoveler

Spatula clypeata

Recorded at Raysut settling pools, East Khor and Hilf sewage works.

Eurasian Wigeon

Mareca Penelope

7 at East Khor on 15th and 17th.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

5 at Hilf sewage works on 5th, 2 at Raysut settling pools on 13th.

Northern Pintail

Anas acuta

1-2 seen at East Khor, Raysut settling pools, Hilf sewage works, and Qurum Natural Park.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

Up to 20 seen at five locations, including 1 in the desert at Al Ghaftain on 10th.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

11 at Hilf sewage works on 11th, 7 at West Khor on 7th.

Grey Francolin

Francolinus pondicerianus

Introduced to Oman. 4 Qurum Natural Park on 6th.

Sand Partridge

Ammoperdix heyi

Subspecies *intermedius* occurs. 3 Wadi al Muaydin on 7th, 2 Wadi Ashawq on 13th, 8 Atair Sink Hole on 16th.

Arabian Partridge

Alectoris melanocephala

6 at Atair Sink Hole on 16th, 1 at Wadi Kheesh also on 16th.

European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
1 at Ayn Razat at dusk on 16 th .	
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
5 at Ayn Razat on 17 th .	
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>
Subspecies <i>pallidus</i> occurs. 1 at Qurum Natural Park on 6 th was the only bird seen well enough to be sure of this species. Many other 'pale/intermediate' swifts were seen that were either this species or Forbes-Watson's Swift <i>Apus berliozi</i> .	
Forbes-Watson's Swift	<i>Apus berliozi</i>
At least 20 birds visiting a colony at Taqah Cliffs on 16 th .	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
1 at Ayn Hamran on 13 th .	
Jacobin Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
Subspecies <i>jacobinus</i> occurs. 2 at Wadi Kheesh on 16 th .	
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
A male and female/immature at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9 th .	
Diederik Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
A male at Any Razat on 13 th .	
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
1 at Hilf on 9 th .	
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>
Subspecies <i>erlangeri</i> occurs. An estimated 450 at Mudayy on 12 th , and 40 flew over Al Saadah Park (Salalah) on 15 th .	
Spotted Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles senegallus</i>
85 at Muntasar Oasis on 11 th .	
Crowned Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles coronatus</i>
Subspecies <i>saturates</i> occurs. 19 at Mudayy on 12 th .	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Feral birds recorded in widespread locations.	
European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
1 at Shisr Fields on 11 th .	
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
2 of the subspecies <i>meena</i> at Shisr Fields on 11 th .	
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Recorded at a number of sites, especially in the south.	
African Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i>
Subspecies <i>arabica</i> occurs. 2 Mudayy on 12 th .	
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Subspecies <i>cambayensis</i> occurs. Recorded in widespread areas, especially in the south.	
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>
1 at Shisr Fields on 11 th , 1 at Raysut settling pool on 13 th , and 2 at Ayn Tobruk junction on 16 th .	
Bruce's Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron waalia</i>
1 at Ayn Razat on 13 th , 1 at Al Baleed on 15 th , 5 at Ayn Razat on 16 th and 10 there on 17 th .	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Recorded at Qurum Natural Park, Hilf sewage works, East Khor, West Knor, and Ayn Razat.	

- Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*
2 at Khor Mughsayl on 13th, up to 6 at East Khor.
- Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata*
3 at Khor Mughsayl on 13th.
- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Seen at Raysut settling pools, East Khor, and Qurum Natural Park.
- Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*
Seen at a number of sites including East Khor, Khor Raysut, Khor Mughsayl and Barr Al Hikman.
- Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis*
Subspecies *dodsoni* occurs. 8 at Al Baleed on 15th.
- Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*
Recorded from Shannah, Sur Masirah, Khor Raysut and Mirbat.
- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus Himantopus*
Recorded from Qurum Natural Park, Hilf, East Khor, Raysut settling pools, and Taqah.
- Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus*
2 at Raysut settling pools on 13th.
- Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*
10 near Muscat International Airport on 6th, 30 at Qurum Natural Park on 6th, 12 at Raysut settling pools on 13th, 5 at Sahnawt Farm on 15th.
- Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius*
14 at Shisr Farms 11th.
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*
30 at Seeb Beach Park on 6th, 1 at East Khor on 15th.
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
Recorded at 7 sites including Shannah, Sur Masirah and Filim.
- Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*
2 near Muscat International Airport on 6th, 1 at Taqah on 17th.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
2 at Hilf sewage works on 9th.
- Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrines*
Widespread including Muscat, Shannah, Sur Masirah, Salalah. Around 100 birds at Al Beed Farms was notable.
- Tibetan Sand Plover** *Anarhynchus altifrons*
Subspecies *pamirensis* occurs. Seen in pretty much all coastal and wetland habitats, especially numerous at Filim, Shannah, Masirah (the wider Barr Al Hikman area). 10 inland at Al Beed Farms with Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrines* was notable.
- Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultia*
Subspecies *scythicus* occurs. Again recorded at widespread locations usually in the same areas as Tibetan Sand Plover *Anarhynchus altifrons*.
- Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*
1 on a temporary wetland near West Khor on 15th, another at West Khor later the same day.
- Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
Recorded from Qurum Natural Park, Sir Masirah and Filim.
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius phaeopus*
Subspecies *orientalis* occurs. Recorded from Shannah, Sur Masirah, Filim and Khor Mughsayl.

Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Recorded from a number of sites including several thousand at Filim on 10 th .	
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
1 at East Khor on 13 th , 15 th and 17 th , also recorded at Knor Mughsayl and West Khor.	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Recorded in Muscat, Shannah and Sur Masirah.	
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>
At least 20 at Filim on 10 th .	
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>
Recorded from 7 sites, max. 60 at Sahnawt Farm on 15 th .	
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>
2 at Filim on 10 th .	
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Recorded at Shannah, Hilf and Filim.	
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
Between 1 and 3 recorded at Muscat, Hilf and near West Khor.	
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
4 at Shannah on 8 th , 1 at Sur Masirah on 9 th , 30 at Filim on 10 th , and 12 at Khor Raysut on 15 th .	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
3 at Seeb Beach Park on 6 th , several at Shannah on 8 th , and 1 at Taqah on 17 th .	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Recorded at widespread sites including Muscat and Barr Al Hikman.	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Large numbers at Barr al Hikman, Masirah and smaller numbers at coastal sites in Dhofar.	
Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>
Up to 6 birds at Hilf on 9 th , and a single bird at Haima Park on 10 th .	
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
2 near Muscat International Airport on 6 th , 4 at Hilf on 9 th , and 2 at East Khor on 13 th .	
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
2 at Hilf sewage works on 9 th , 1 at Raysut settling pools on 13 th , 1 at East Knor on 15 th , and 100+ on the 2 Mirbat pelagics on 14 th and 17 th .	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Recorded at widespread locations in small numbers, especially in the south.	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
1-2 recorded at several locations, including Hilf, East Khor and Ayn Hamran.	
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>
Recorded from 8 sites including East Khor, Khor Raysut and Barr Al Hikman.	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
1 at Hilf sewage works on 9 th , 2 near West Khor on 15 th .	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
1-2 recorded at 6 sites including Hilf, East Khor and Raysut settling pools.	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Recorded from widespread sites in generally small numbers, including Muscat, Barr Al Hikman, and East Khor.	
Crab-plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>
15 at Shannah on 8 th , around 400 at Sur Masirah on 9 th .	

Cream-coloured Courser***Cursorius cursor***50 at Shisr Farms on 11th, 1 at Ayn Hamran plains on 17th.**Small Pratincole*****Glareola lactea***3 at a temporary wetland near West Khor on 15th.**Brown Noddy*****Anous stolidus***Subspecies *pileatus* occurs. 8 off Al Mughsayl on 13th, 1 from the Mirbat pelagic on 17th.**Lesser Noddy*****Anous tenuirostris***1 off Al Mughsayl on 13th.**Bridled Tern*****Onychoprion anaethetus***1 from the crossing to Masirah Island on 10th, around 50 off Al Mughsayl on 13th, 31 from Mirbat pelagic on 14th, and around 100 from Mirbat pelagic on 17th.**Little Tern*****Sternula albifrons***

Recorded from several sites in small numbers (up to 10) including Shannah, Sur Masirah, East Khor and Mirbat pelagic.

Gull-billed Tern***Gelochelidon nilotica***

1-6 seen at Shannah, Sur Masirah, near West Khor and at Khor Raysut.

Caspian Tern***Hydroprogne caspia***Recorded from 7 sites, generally 1-10 but with a max. of 25 at Khor Raysut on 15th.**Whiskered Tern*****Chlidonias hybrida***Numerous and widespread, largest flocks were 30 at Khor Mughsayl on 13th and 50 at Sahnawt Farm on 15th.**White-winged Tern*****Chlidonias leucopterus***

1-3 seen at 5 sites in both Muscat and Salalah.

Common Tern***Sterna hirundo***

1-6 seen at 6 sites including Masirah ferry crossing, East Khor and Mirbat pelagic.

White-cheeked Tern***Sterna repressa***1 in the harbour at Hilf as we left for the mainland on 10th.**Sandwich Tern*****Thalasseus sandvicensis***

Only recorded in small numbers at Shannah, Sur Masirah and from the Masirah ferry.

Lesser Crested Tern***Thalasseus bengalensis***Regularly seen in coastal areas in small numbers, but a flock of 50 at Sur Masirah on 9th.**Greater Crested Tern*****Thalasseus bergii***Widespread and numerous in all coastal areas, including recently fledged chicks, max. 20 off Al Qurum beach on 6th.**Slender-billed Gull*****Chroicocephalus genei***

Widespread and numerous in all coastal locations.

Sooty Gull***Ichthyaetus hemprichii***

Widespread and numerous in all coastal locations, especially on Masirah, Mirbat and Salalah.

Caspian Gull***Larus cachinnans***We confidently identified 2 in Mirbat Harbour on 17th, and another 2 from the pelagic that afternoon. No doubt more were present in the larger flocks of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, but they do not appear to be numerous.**Lesser Black-backed Gull*****Larus fuscus***3 races occur in Oman, the most widespread being *heuglini* and *barabensis* (very similar to the untrained eye). Both were widespread and numerous in all coastal areas. We did not pick out any certain *fuscus*.

- Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus*
Race *indicus* occurs. 6 from the Mirbat pelagic on 14th.
- Persian Shearwater** *Puffinus persicus*
9 off Al Mughsayl on 9th, 5 off Taqah on 17th, 17 from the Mirbat pelagic on 14th and around 60 from the Mirbat pelagic on 17th.
- Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Ardenna carneipes*
1 from the Mirbat pelagic on 17th.
- Jouanin's Petrel** *Bulweria fallax*
Approximately 50 birds from the Mirbat pelagics on 14th and 17th.
- Abdim's Stork** *Ciconia abdimii*
29 at Shisr Farms on 11th, around 200 at Raysut settling pools on 13th, 35 in Mirbat harbour on 14th and 30 there on 17th.
- White Stork** *Ciconia Ciconia*
41 at Shisr Farms on 11th, 60 at Raysut settling pools on 13th, and 2 at Tawi Atair on 16th.
- Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster*
4 close inshore from Al Mughsayl on 13th.
- Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra*
6 from the Mirbat pelagic on 14th.
- Socotra Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*
10 from the Mirbat Pelagic on 14th, around 500 off Khor Raysut on 15th, 1 from Taqah on 16th with 50 off there on 17th, 100 off East Khor also on 17th.
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Big numbers at Shannah, and between Shannah and Hilf from the ferry crossing.
- Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*
Only seen in Salalah, primarily at East Khor where there were up to 400, and at nearby Sahnawt Farm where there were 100 on 15th.
- Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*
2 at Seeb Beach Park on 6th, 2 at Shannah on 8th, and 2 at Khor Mughsayl on 13th.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Up to 5 at Ayn Razat 13th-17th, 2 at Khor Mughsayl on 13th and 1 at Al Baleed on 15th.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
1-2 seen at widespread locations in the north and south.
- Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis*
Widespread in coastal locations, hundreds at Barr Al Hikman.
- Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*
2 in Mirbat Harbour on 14th.
- Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*
Between 1 and 6 seen at several coastal locations, up to 12 at East Khor.
- Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*
5 at Qurum Natural Park on 6th, 1 at Shannah on 8th, 1 at Hilf on 9th, and 1-2 at East Khor 13th-17th.
- Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
Small numbers recorded in Muscat, Hilf, Raysut, Sahnawt Farm and near West Khor.
- Great Egret** *Ardea alba*
Recorded in Muscat, at Shannah, Sur Masirah and Filim.
- Medium Egret** *Ardea intermedia*
1 at East Khor 13th-17th.

Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Seen at widespread coastal locations.	
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
2 at East Khor on 13 th , 1 on 15 th .	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
1-3 seen at a number of coastal locations, including East Khor, Khor Raysut, Shannah and Sur Masirah.	
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
A total of 12 seen on Masirah Island on 9 th .	
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
1 at Qurum Natural Park on 6 th , 1 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9 th , 1 at Al Saadah Park (Salalah) on 12 th , and 2 in central Salalah on 15 th .	
Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>
1 at Mudayy on 12 th .	
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>
2 at Wadi al Muaydin on 6 th , and 2 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7 th (quite possibly the same 2).	
Short-toed Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
1 at Raysut settling pools on 13 th , 2 near Atair Sink Hole on 14 th , 2 at Jabal Samhan on 14 th , 1 near Atair Sink Hole on 16 th , and 1 at Ayn Razat on 17 th .	
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga clanga</i>
1-2 birds seen at East Khor, Sahnawt Farm, Al Baleed, West Khor and Khor Raysut (all Salalah).	
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
1 at Wadi Kheesh on 16 th .	
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
3 near Muscat International Airport on 3 rd , around 200 at Thumrait waste disposal site on 12 th , and singles at Raysut settling pools on 13 th , Atair Sink Hole on 14 th and 16 th , and Ayn Razat on 17 th .	
Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>
1 at Mudday on 12 th , Thumrait waste disposal site on 12 th , Ayn Razat on 13 th and Atair Sink Hole on 14 th .	
Verreaux's Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>
2 at Jabal Samhan on 14 th .	
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>
2 at Atair Sink Hole on 14 th , and 2 at Jabal Samhan on 14 th .	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
1 at Ayn Razat on 13 th , 1 at Al Saadah Park (Salalah) on 15 th .	
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
1-2 recorded at a number of sites including Shannah, Sur Masirah and Al Mughsayl. 10 at Shisr Farms on 11 th .	
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
1 at Al Balid Farms on 11 th .	
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>
1 at Shisr Farms on 11 th .	
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
2 at Shisr Farms on 11 th .	
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
1 at Al Saadah Park (Salalah) on 12 th , 1 at Ayn Razat on 13 th .	

Pallid Scops Owl	<i>Otus brucei</i>
1 at a wadi in the Al Hajar Mountains on 7 th .	
Arabian Scops Owl	<i>Otus pamela</i>
5 at Ayn Hamran on 14 th , 2 at Ayn Razat on 16 th .	
Arabian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo milesi</i>
1 at Ayn Razat on 17 th .	
Desert Owl	<i>Strix hadorami</i>
2 at Wadi Ashawq on 6 th .	
Omani Owl	<i>Strix butleri</i>
A male and female at a wadi in the Al Hajar Mountains on 7 th .	
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
5 at Ayn Hamran on 13 th .	
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
At least 2 seen from the car around Muscat on 6 th , with several at Qurum Natural Park and 2 at Wadi al Muaydin on the same date, and 1 at Mahout Park on 8 th .	
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
1-2 seen at Hilf, Haima, Shisr Farms, Ayn Hamran, Ayn Razat and Wadi Kheesh.	
Grey-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>
Subspecies <i>semicaerulea</i> occurs in Oman. 2 at Al Saadah Park (Salalah) on 12 th with 1 there on 15 th , 1 at Ayn Hamran on 13 th .	
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
2 at Hilf on 9 th , 2 at Filim on 10 th .	
Arabian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops cyanophrys</i>
Subspecies <i>muscatensis</i> occurs in northern Oman, <i>cyanophrys</i> in southern Oman. 2 in Muscat near the International Airport on 6 th and 4 at Qurum Natural Park on the same day, 2 at Mudayy on 12 th and 2 at Sahnawt Farm on 15 th .	
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>
Subspecies <i>persicus</i> occurs. Good numbers of birds on the move especially in the Salalah area, e.g. 12 Ayn Razat on 13 th and 30 at East Khor on 15 th .	
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
1 at Atair Sink Hole on 16 th .	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
2 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7 th , numerous at both Shisr Farms and Al Balid Farms on 11 th , and 1 at Tawi Atair on 16 th .	
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
1 at Sahnawt Farm on 15 th .	
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Subspecies <i>tanypterus</i> occurs. 1 at Mudayy on 12 th .	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Subspecies <i>pelegrinoides</i> occurs. 1 at Sur Masirah on 9 th , 1 at Jabal Samhan on 14 th .	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameria</i>
Introduced. Recorded at Qurum Natural Park, Mudayy, Sahnawt Farm and Al Baleed.	
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>
2 at Ayn Hamran on 13 th , 1 at Ayn Tobruk junction on 16 th .	

Great Grey Shrike***Lanius excubitor***

A single *pallidirostris* near Muscat International Airport on 6th, the remainder were all *aucheri* with 1-2 birds at Muntasar Oasis, Qitbit Motel, Shisr Fields, Mudayy and Ayn Hamran.

Isabelline Shrike***Lanius isabellinus***

Subspecies *isabellinus* occurs. 1 at Hilf sewage works on 9th, 1 at Sahnawt Farm and 1 at East Khor on 15th. Several additional first-winter birds were either this species or Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides*.

Red-backed Shrike***Lanius collurio***

1 at Muntasar Oasis on 11th and 1 at Ayn Hamran on 13th.

Red-tailed Shrike***Lanius phoenicuroides***

1 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7th, 1 at Mahout Park on 8th, 1 at Haima Park on 10th, 1 at Tawi Atair on 14th, and 1 at Mirbat on 17th.

African Paradise Flycatcher***Terpsiphone viridis***

1-2 recorded at Ayn Hamran, Ayn Razat, Al Saadah Park (Salalah), Atair Sink Hole and Wadi Kheesh.

House Crow***Corvus splendens***

Common and widespread in both the north and south.

Brown-necked Raven***Corvus ruficollis***

2-5 seen at several sites in the north, through the central desert and the south, including Masirah, Al Ghaftain and Thumrait waste disposal site.

Fan-tailed Raven***Corvus rhipidurus***

Up to 50 at Atair Sink Hole on 16th and 4 at Jabal Samhan on 14th.

Grey Hypocolius***Hypocolius ampelinus***

1 at Mudayy on 12th.

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

Subspecies *doriae* occurs. 1 Al Balid Farms on 11th.

Desert Lark***Ammomanes deserti***

Subspecies *azizi* occurs. 6 at Mudayy on 12th, 4 at Wadi Ashawq on 13th.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark***Eremopterix nigriceps***

Subspecies *melanauchen* occurs. Up to 20 seen at Al Balid Farms, Shisr Fields, Ayn Razat, Wadi Kheesh and Ayn Hamran.

Singing Bush Lark***Mirafrca cantillans***

Subspecies *simplex* occurs. 3 at Sahnawt Farm on 15th.

Crested Lark***Galerida cristata***

1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 10 Al Balid Farms 1/11, present Shisr Farms 2/11, 3 near Jabal Samhan 4/11.

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

2 at Ayn Hamran on 17th.

Red-vented Bulbul***Pycnonotus cafer***

1 at Seeb Beach Park on 6th.

White-eared Bulbul***Pycnonotus leucotis***

Recorded at Qurum Natural Park, Wadi al Muaydin, Al Jebel Al Akhdar, Wadi Bani Habib and Mahout Park.

White-spectacled Bulbul***Pycnonotus xanthopygos***

Widespread and numerous, especially in the Al Hajar mountains and in the south e.g. Wadi al Muaydin, Ayn Razat, Atair Sink Hole.

- Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*
1 at East Khor on 13th, 1 at Sahnawt Farm on 15th and 2 at East Khor on 15th.
- Pale Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta*
Subspecies *obsoleta* occurs. Seen at widespread sites in both north and south Oman.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Up to 6 seen at 7 sites including Shannah, Al Ghaftain and East Khor.
- Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
1 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9th.
- Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*
1 at Wadi Bani Habib on 7th.
- Plain Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus neglectus*
1 at Wadi Al Muaydin on 6th with 5 there on 7th, 5 at Wadi Bani Habib on 7th, 2 at Wadi Qtm on 7th, and 1 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9th.
- Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*
Subspecies *tristis* occurs. 1-6 seen at widespread locations including Wadi Bani Habib, Al Ghaftain and Mudayy.
- Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*
1-2 recorded at Filim, East Khor and Ayn Razat.
- Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata*
1 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9th, and 1 at Ayn Tobruk junction on 16th.
- Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida*
1 at Haima Park on 10th.
- Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis*
Subspecies *yemenensis* occurs. 1-2 recorded at East Khor, Sahnawt Farm, Khor Raysut, near West Khor and Ayn Tobruk junction.
- Delicate Prinia** *Prinia lepida*
Subspecies *carpenteri* occurs. 2 at Seeb Beach Park on 6th, and 3 at Wadi al Muaydin on 6th.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Curruca curruca*
Based on plumage and calls, all records thought to be *halimodendri*. 1-8 birds seen at widespread locations including Wadi Bani Habib, Mudayy and Ayn Hamran.
- Arabian Warbler** *Curruca leucomelaena*
Subspecies *leucomelaena* occurs. 2 at Ayn Razat on 13th, 2 at Wadi Kheesh on 16th.
- Asian Desert Warbler** *Curruca nana*
1 at Wadi al Muaydin on 7th, 1 at Muntasar Oasis on 11th.
- Menetries's Warbler** *Curruca mystacea*
2 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9th, 2 at Al Ghaftain on 10th, 1 at Mudayy on 12th.
- Common Whitethroat** *Curruca communis*
1 at Shannah on 8th, 1 at Muntasar Oasis on 11th, 1 at Mudayy on 12th.
- Abyssinian White-eye** *Zosterops abyssinicus*
Subspecies *arabs* occurs. Numerous in the Dhofar foothills e.g. Ayn Razat, Wadi Kheesh, and Ayn Hamran.
- Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*
Widespread, particularly in urban areas both north and south, e.g. Salalah, Ayn Hamran, Qurum Natural Park.
- Brahminy Starling** *Sturnia pagodarum*
1 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) and Hilf sewage works on 9th.

- Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus*
1 at Qitbit Motel on 11th, and 42 at Shisr Farms also on 11th.
- Tristram's Starling** *Onychognathus tristramii*
Common in the south, from Thumrait and most sites around Salalah and east to Jabal Samhan.
- Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*
1 at Wadi Al Muaydin on 6th, 1 at Shannah on 8th, 1 at Muntasar Oasis on 11th, 1 at Thumrait waste disposal site on 12th and 1 at Wadi Kheesh on 16th.
- Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*
1 at Muntasar Oasis on 11th, 1 at Ayn Tobruk junction on 16th.
- Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*
1 at Al Shamkaiah Park (Hilf) on 9th, 1 at Al Ghaftain on 10th, 3 at Muntasar Oasis on 11th, and 1 at Mudayy on 12th.
- Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Subspecies *phoenicuroides* (Eastern Black Redstart) occurs. 5 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7th, 2 at Wadi Bani Habib on 7th, and 1 at Qitbit Motel on 11th.
- Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*
1 at Wadi Al Muaydin on 6th and 1 at Wadi Bani Habib on 7th.
- Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabelline*
Up to 4 seen at Shisr Farms, Sahnawt Farm, East Khor, Wadi Kheesh and Ayn Hamran.
- Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monachal*
1 at Mudayy on 12th.
- Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*
Subspecies *deserti* occurs. Widely encountered, max. 15 at Shisr Farms on 11th.
- Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*
1 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7th.
- Blackstart** *Oenanthe melanura*
Subspecies *neumannii* occurs. Up to 8 recorded at Mudayy, Ayn Razat, Atair Sink Hole, and Wadi Kheesh.
- Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe chrysopygia*
1 at Wadi Al Muaydin on 6th and 7th, 2 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7th.
- Hume's Wheatear** *Oenanthe albonigra*
4 at Al Jebel Al Akhdar on 7th.
- Arabian Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugentoides*
Subspecies *boscaweni* occurs. 4 at Wadi Ashawq on 13th, 1 at Jabal Samhan on 14th.
- Nile Valley Sunbird** *Hedydipna metallica*
3 at Mudayy on 12th.
- Palestine Sunbird** *Cinnyris osea*
Subspecies *osea* occurs. 2 at Atair Sink Hole on 14th, 1 at Wadi Kheesh on 16th.
- Arabian Sunbird** *Cinnyris hellmayri*
Subspecies *hellmayri* occurs. Recorded at 5 sites in Dhofar where it is easy to see, max. 20 at Ayn Razat on 13th.
- Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiaticu*
Subspecies *brevirostris* occurs. Recorded at 5 sites in the north where it is easy to see, max. 4 at Wadi Bani Habib on 7th.
- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
Widespread and numerous, some birds very pale, presumably *indicus*.

Ruppell's Weaver***Ploceus galbula***

Recorded at a number of sites in Dhofar, including Ayn Razat, Atair Sink Hole, Wadi Kheesh and Ayn Tobruk junction.

African Silverbill***Euodice cantans***

Subspecies *orientalis* occurs. Recorded at Mudayy, Ayn Razat, Wadi Kheesh, and Atair Sink Hole.

Indian Silverbill***Euodice malabarica***

20 at Qurum Natural Park on 6th, 2 Hilf sewage works on 9th.

Forest Wagtail***Dendronanthus indicus***

1 at Haima Park on 10th.

Western Yellow Wagtail***Motacilla flava***

1-3 seen at 7 sites including Shannah, East Khor and Hilf sewage works. All of the males seen were *beema* (Syke's).

Citrine Wagtail***Motacilla citreola***

1 at Seeb Beach Park on 6th, 1 at West Khor on 15th.

Grey Wagtail***Motacilla cinerea***

1 at Ayn Hamran on 13th, and 1 at Ayn Tobruk junction on 16th.

White Wagtail***Motacilla alba***

1-2 birds seen at 10 sites, with a max. of 50 at Shisr Farms on 11th.

Tawny Pipit***Anthus campestris***

4 at Shisr Farms on 11th, 1 at Ayn Hamran on 17th.

Long-billed Pipit***Anthus similis***

Subspecies *arabicus* occurs. 1 at Ayn Hamran on 17th.

Tree Pipit***Anthus trivialis***

1-3 seen at 6 sites including Hilf, Muntasar Oasis and Shisr Fields.

Red-throated Pipit***Anthus cervinus***

3 at Hilf on 9th.

Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak *Rhynchostruthus percivali*

3 at Ayn Tobruk junction on 17th.

Yemen Serin***Crithagra menachensis***

3 at Atair Sink Hole on 16th.

Ortolan Bunting***Emberiza hortulana***

1 singing at Mudayy on 12th (heard only).

Striolated Bunting***Emberiza striolata***

5 at Wadi Bani Habib on 7th.

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting***Emberiza tahapisi***

Common in the Dhofar foothills, e.g. Ayn Razat, Ayn Hamran, Wadi Kheesh & Ayn Tobruk junction.



Crab-Plovers and other waders at Sur Masirah

Mammals

Total number of mammals recorded: 4 species

Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin *Sousa plumbea*

Seen well at Taqah.

Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris*

Seen from pelagic trip off Mirbat.

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

Seen from pelagic trip off Mirbat.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

1 seen well near Ayn Hamran.

Reptiles & Amphibians

Total number of reptiles and amphibians recorded: 5+ species

Green Sea Turtle *Chelonia mydas*

Seen from pelagic trip off Mirbat.

Loggerhead Sea Turtle *Caretta caretta*

Seen from pelagic trip off Mirbat.

Hawksbill Sea Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*

Seen from pelagic trip off Mirbat.

Olive Ridley Sea Turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea*

Seen from pelagic trip off Mirbat.

Dhofar Desert Agama *Pseudotrapelus dhofarensis*

Recorded at Filim and other sites further south

We also recorded several unidentified lizards and a toad species, thought to be

Dhofar Toad *Duttaphrynus dhufarensis*.

Butterflies & Dragonflies

Blue Pansey *Junonia orithya*

Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*

Slender Skimmer *Orthetrum sabina*

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours

