

# Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



## WESTERN SAHARA: Birds & Mammals Tour

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**Tour Participants:** Kevin Bryan, John Bruce, Paul Kemp and Pat & John Bartley

**Leaders:** Chris Townend & Nico Calcagno

### HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP

**Crowned Sandgrouse:** Great views of six birds coming to drink near Gleb Tachktant.

**Pharaoh Eagle Owl:** An impressively pale individual seen very well near Derraman.

**Sudan Golden Sparrow:** At least 6 birds feeding with a huge flock of 150+ Desert Sparrows at Oued Jenna.

**Fennec Fox:** Great views of two animals during daylight west of Bir Anzarane.

**Ruppell's Fox:** Three young animals scoped during the day as they chased each other amongst the rocks and sand dunes near Derraman.

**Sand Cat:** Our spotlighting sessions were finally rewarded with very close but brief views of an animal NW of Oued Jenna late on the 23rd. Another cat east of Oued Jenna on the evening of the 22nd was most likely this species but not confirmed.

**Horned Viper:** 6+ individuals seen on the road nr Aousserd at night on 22nd & 23rd.



**Horned Viper, Pharaoh Eagle Owl and Sudan Golden Sparrow were just some of the tour highlights**

## **Tour Summary**

*The Western Sahara is easily accessible with daily flights, it has good accommodation, good food and some impressive desert scenery and coast. This 7 night tour targeted the key species of the desert environment with a particular focus on birds that are difficult to find in the Western Palearctic region. A good number of hours were also spent spotlighting for the numerous impressive mammals and reptiles that can be found in this fabulous region of NW Africa.*

*We saw a total of 95 species of bird with all key targets seen except for Golden Nightjar despite much effort! We also saw 10 mammal species, including Sand Cat, Fennec Fox and Ruppell's Fox as well as a number of impressive reptiles.*

## **Thursday 20th April: ARRIVE DAKHLA**

After a well connected flight from the UK via Casablanca and no time difference, we arrived at the quiet and friendly airport at Dakhla during the late evening. Here, we were met by our local hosts Nico, Martina and Sidi who drove us the very short distance to our hotel.

## **Friday 21st April: DAKHLA BAY north - GLEB TACHKTANT - PK23**

After a civilised start time we met for breakfast with views out across the Atlantic Ocean from the hotel's roof terrace. Here, a Black Wheatear sang from the adjacent buildings and a migrant Osprey started our trip list off nicely thanks to Kevin's sharp eye. We then met Nico and Sidi and set off in our two vehicles to explore Dakhla Bay. Highlights around the bay included 150+ Greater Flamingos, 200 Eurasian Spoonbill, a good selection of waders including Kentish Plover, Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit and Curlew Sandpiper. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were by far the commonest gull species with some Audouin's Gulls and smaller numbers of Slender-billed Gulls. However, it was the terns that were the real prize here, as amongst the numerous Caspian Terns were three African Royal Terns, a special species within the Western Palearctic region.

We enjoyed a wonderful picnic lunch on the west side of the bay where the birding was very good. Here we enjoyed our first views of the interesting Great Grey Shrike races of this region along with a number of migrants that included Yellow Wagtail, Tree Pipit and a stunning male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush. As we enjoyed the first of many great picnic lunches we sifted through waders including Curlew Sandpiper and Kentish Plover as well as large flocks of Eurasian Spoonbill.

Our final birding destination for the day was around Gleb Tachktant where highlights included our first Brown-necked Ravens, Greater Hoopoe Lark, Bar-tailed Lark, Thekla Lark Eurasian Thick-knee and a pair of Trumpeter Finch. Migrants here were in small numbers and included Common Reed Warbler, Whinchat and Pied Flycatcher.

## **Saturday 22nd April: GLEB TACHKTANT AREA - OUED JENNA - AOUSERD**

We left our hotel after breakfast ready for our desert adventure as we travelled south west towards the almost deserted town of Aousserd. En route we came across the sad sight of dead African Golden Wolf on the road. It was quite fresh and sadly was to be our only sighting of this recently reclassified species. It was previously thought to be an African variant of the Eurasian Golden Jackal. As we continued our journey, we found another road kill victim, this time an impressive Moila Snake.

Our first birding stop was at a private oasis where we hoped to find sandgrouse. After a short wait we were soon enjoying great views of a small group of six birds that came to drink and included both male and female birds. Two male Namaqua Doves were also good birds to find in this region and it soon became apparent that the place was alive with migrants. We spent the next hour birding this migrant magnet as we enjoyed great views of Wryneck, Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike, Pied Flycatcher, Common Redstart, Common Reed Warbler, Blackcap and Greater Short-toed Lark. Another quick stop at Gleb Tachktant water tower revealed a lone male Crowned Sandgrouse a lone Trumpeter Finch and presumably the same Whinchat from the previous day.

We then pushed on with our journey to Aousserd as we travelled through some quite amazing desert scenery before we finally arrived at Oued Jenna, approximately 20Km west of Aousserd. A couple of random roadside stops en route and an afternoon exploring Oued Jenna produced no less than nine Cricket Warblers, a juvenile Lanner Falcon, numerous Fulvous Babblers and small flocks of Desert Sparrows. As we continued the last 20Km of our journey towards Aousserd a group of at least 12 Black-crowned Sparrow-larks gave some close but somewhat brief views by the roadside. We checked various Desert Sparrow flocks and despite an impressive flock of 80+ birds we failed to find any hoped for Sudan Golden Sparrows. A White-crowned Wheatear and a female Mash Harrier were pleasant distractions before we arrived at our house in Aousserd which was to be our base for the next two nights.

After an excellent locally cooked meal by the house staff, we then ventured out to do some spotlighting. It was a warm evening and there was lots of small mammal and reptile activity. The evening produced some exciting encounters including many new mammals such as Desert Hedgehog, African Savannah Hare, Lesser Egyptian Jerboa, Lesser Egyptian Gerbil a probable Sand Cat and no less than six Horned Vipers! It was a great night but despite a number of attempts throughout the night for the key bird target species, we had no sight nor sound of any Golden Nightjars!

### **Sunday 23rd April: LEGLAT & OUED JENNA**

Today was all about species quality rather than quantity as we focused our efforts on finding the scarcest species within the Western Palearctic region. After breakfast we explored the Leglat Massif area and returned to nearby Oued Jenna where we focused our effort for much of the morning.

A walk near the Leglat mountain produced the hoped for African Dunn's Lark, a fresh juvenile bird and an excellent addition to the trip list. We then focused on Oued Jenna where after much searching we finally succeeded in finding a small group of at least six Sudan Golden Sparrows feeding with an equally impressive flock of 150+ Desert Sparrows! Other highlights today included more good views of Cricket Warblers, numerous Brown-necked Ravens and Fulvous Babblers, Bar-tailed Lark, and Great Grey Shrike. Migrants included Woodchat Shrike, Spotted Flycatcher, Western Olivaceous (Isabelline) Warbler, Western Orphean Warbler, Common Reed Warbler, Subalpine Warbler and a male Golden Oriole found by Pat. A good selection of birds of prey were also seen with single Short-toed Eagle, pale morph Booted Eagle, female Marsh Harrier and a pair of hunting Lanner Falcons.

After an afternoon siesta at our house in Aousserd we returned to Oued Jenna for another attempt at Golden Nightjar. We waited from sunset and beyond but as is often the case here, the wind was clearly not in our favour. After another excellent field dinner in our base camp tent and our focus reverted to nocturnal mammals and reptiles. We were spoiled with repeat sightings of and more good views of Desert Hedgehog, African Savannah Hare, Lesser Egyptian Jerboa, Lesser Egyptian Gerbil and Horned Vipers. New species seen included great views of Fat-tailed Gerbil and Elegant

Gecko, but finally during the early hours we struck gold with close views of a Sand Cat! It was very wary and clearly did not want to be out of cover for long but with perseverance both vehicles managed good but brief views on a number of occasions, before it gave us the slip!

A final attempt for Golden Nightjar back at Oued Jenna proved fruitless and we returned very happy to our house in Aousserd and enjoyed a good sleep!

### **Monday 24th April: DERRAMAN - OUED JENNA - GLEB TACHKTANT**

This morning we enjoyed a slightly later breakfast before leaving Aousserd to explore the Derraman Massif and a final look at Oued Jenna before returning to the coast.

We enjoyed more quality birds today with a good selection of larks and the now expected Greater Hoopoe Lark and Bar-tailed Lark. An exceptionally pale adult Pharaoh Eagle Owl was possibly the bird highlight of the morning and a lone Pale Rock Martin was another new trip species as it flew back and forth over the sand dunes. Other species included our first Long-legged Buzzard of the trip, more Cricket Warblers, Desert Wheatear and Desert Sparrow. However, it was a mammal that produced most excitement as we spent a good 30 minutes enjoying great scope views of three young Ruppell's Foxes chasing each other high on a sand dune & rocky area. It was a great end to our last morning in this area and a brilliant find by Kevin. We then enjoyed another delicious field lunch in our food tent, thanks to Nico and Sidi, before we returned towards the coast.

A final check of Gleb Tachktant revealed nothing new other than a migrant Grasshopper Warbler seen only by Chris and a Whinchat. We arrived back at the coast, greeted by a cool breeze and Greater Flamingos and a tasty meal at our hotel.

### **Tuesday 25th April: TAOURTA GDNS - DAKHLA BAY West - BIR ANZARANE RD**

Today we treated ourselves to a later start in the knowledge that we were to have a very late finish! Late morning was spent exploring the gardens around Taourta searching for migrants. It was a productive session with a number of new species that included some good views of both Little Swift and Pallid Swift, no less than six Wood Warblers and two Common Nightingales. Other migrants seen well were Eurasian Wryneck, Pied Flycatcher, Common Redstart and Tree Pipit as well as good views of the resident Thekla Larks and Laughing Doves.

Another check of the bay allowed us time to sift through waders and terns again. Highlights included 100+ Whimbrel, a Ruddy Turnstone, Slender-billed Gull, Audouin's Gull, Sandwich Tern, Caspian Tern and great views of seven African Royal Terns. A very enjoyable lunch at the local oyster farm gave great views across the bay and also added Northern Gannet to the all important trip list!

After lunch we headed towards Bir Anzarane where we stopped en route for a superb singing male Buff-rumped Wheatear and our only Fat Sand Rat of the trip before continuing our journey east. Another roadside stop produced fine views of our first Cream-coloured Coursers as they posed beside the road.

We then spent the afternoon exploring the more stony dessert area to the north of the road where we were distracted by more Cream-coloured Coursers, Greater Hoopoe Larks and a lovely group of six Temminck's Larks. Migrants in this seemingly lifeless environment were also present with a lone Garden Warbler, Common Redstart and a fantastic pair of Golden Orioles. The true finale to the evening was thanks to Nico's sharp eyes as he noticed a hole in the ground worthy of a double check. As we turned

the vehicle to investigate further we found ourselves watching two brilliant Fennec Foxes! Presumably, they had just ventured out from their hole and they were taken by surprise and began to run from us allowing their diagnostic black tipped tails to be seen. Despite not chasing after them, they ran across the flat desert terrain allowing everyone to see them well as they disappeared into a distant sand dune complex where we left them in peace and returned for yet another excellent field dinner, complete with all important homemade pear and chocolate cake!

After dinner we took a few minutes to take in the amazing stars in this totally unpolluted environment and then proceeded with our final spotlighting session of the trip. It was a good session, but it soon became clear that we had been spoiled near Aousserd and things were definitely quieter in this area in comparison. However, three Desert Hedgehogs were certainly much appreciated as was an excellent view of African Savannah Hare, just a single Jerboa and a few Lesser Egyptian Gerbil before it was time to return to our hotel at 03.30hrs, exhausted but happy!

### **Wednesday 26th April: POINTE DE LA SARGA - PK23 - GLEB TACHKTANT**

After a later start we were picked up at the hotel by Nico and Sidi and headed to the southern tip of the Dakhla peninsula at Pointe de la Sarga. Here we timed the tide just perfectly and were greeted by hundreds of gulls, mostly Lesser Black-backed with the usual smaller numbers of both Slender-billed Gulls and Audouin's Gulls and a single Black-headed Gull. However, a careful scan of the terns revealed two adult Lesser Crested Terns in with 50+ Sandwich Terns and our key target species was in the bag! A good selection of waders included Knot, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit whilst a singing male Spectacled Warbler in nearby scrub was an added bonus before we headed further up the coast to PK23. Here we enjoyed our last field lunch with a superb view out across the bay and hardly a breath of wind! Such windless conditions are a rarity in Dakhla, so we made the most of our elevated viewpoint and scanned the bay for Atlantic Humpback Dolphins, sadly without success despite the perfect conditions.

We spent the final part of the afternoon with a walk in the Tachktant area where there was no sign of any hoped for Thick-billed Larks but everyone savoured their last views of Desert Wheatears and Thekla Larks along with the odd migrant that included Common Redstart and Tree Pipit. We returned to our hotel in good time for a final celebratory meal as both Pallid Swift and Common Swift glided over the roof terrace.

### **Thursday 27th April: DEPARTURE**

After an early pick up from the hotel we arrived at the airport and took our flight back to the UK via Casablanca where the tour concluded.

**Conservation Donation – Following this tour to Western Sahara £125 was transferred to the Wise Birding Holiday's central conservation fund. This will be used to support a conservation project in the future, yet to be determined.**

For the last three years Wise Birding Holidays has been supporting a number of small conservation projects. However, we now believe that to make a bigger difference to conservation it seems best to 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 one single project in the hope of achieving more for species conservation. Currently this amounts to around £3,000. Some tours will continue to donate money to help some of the smaller projects that we feel will still benefit from such smaller donations. Please visit our [Conservation News](#) and [Latest News](#) links to find out more.



**Dakhla Town (above) and the Dakhla Bay (below)**





**African Royal Tern was seen well amongst the groups of Caspian Terns (above) and large flocks of Greater Flamingos were common around the bay (below)**





**Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush was a much appreciated migrant (above) and we enjoyed views of the North African races of Great (Southern) Grey Shrikes (below)**





**Greater Hoopoe Lark was a common species (above) and the highly sought after African Dunn's Lark was seen near Oued Jenna (below)**





**We were treated to many Cricket Warbler sightings (above)  
and a strikingly pale Pharaoh Eagle Owl (below)**





**The landscape around Aousserd was quite spectacular**





**The daytime sighting of a family group of Ruppell's Foxes was certainly a trip highlight**





Lesser Egyptian Jerboa (above) Desert Hedgehog (below)





**We saw at least six Sudan Golden Sparrows with an impressive flock of 150+ Desert Sparrows**





**Crowned Sandgrouse came to drink at an oasis near Tachktant**





One of many picnic lunches (above) and a local shepherd in Oued Jenna





**Namaqua Dove (above) and Lanner Falcon (below)**





**Western Orphean Warbler (above) and Pied Flycatcher (below)  
were just some of the migrants we found in the desert**





**Male Desert Sparrow (above) and Desert Wheatear (below)**





**Cream-coloured Courser (above) and Temminck's Lark (below)**





One of numerous Horned Vipers (above)  
and a Fat-tailed Gerbil (below)





**Fennec Fox hole (above) and sadly our only sighting of the newly described African Golden Wolf was a road casualty**





**Dune Gecko (above) and Sudan Mastigure or Spiny-tailed Lizard (below)**





We enjoyed a number of close encounters with African Savannah Hare clearly showing the red nape (above)





**More desert landscapes near Bir Anzarane (above) and Leglat Massif (below)**





**Birding Dakhla Bay (above) and Slender-billed Gull (below)**





**Golden Fringe-fingered Lizard (above) and Dumerils Fringe-toed Lizard (below)**





**Algerian Sand Gecko**

More photos from this and other tours can be viewed on our  
Flickr site: [www.flickr.com/photos/129663578@N06/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/129663578@N06/albums)

## **Wise Birding Holidays Ltd**

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# **Wise Birding Holidays**

*Bird and mammal watching tours*



**WESTERN SAHARA: Birds, Mammals, Reptiles & Amphibians: 20th - 27th April 2017**

**This bird checklist follows the nomenclature and classification from HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World and the associated online resource, HBW Alive**

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Species Notes
1	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	1	Recorded on four days around Dakhla Bay with a minimum of 150+ on the 21st.
2	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	2	Recorded daily.
3	Eurasian Collared-dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	3	Recorded daily.
4	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	4	Recorded on four days around the Dakhla area.
5	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	5	Two males gave excellent views at a private oasis en route to Aousserd on the 22nd.
6	Crowned Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles coronatus</i>	6	A total of seven birds on the 22nd - Six coming to drink at a private oasis en route to Aousserd and 1 bird at Gleb Tachktant.
7	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	7	1-2 birds seen well on the 25th at Taourta Gardens and from our hotel roof terrace and on the 26th.
8	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	8	Good views on the 25th and 26th at Taourta Gardens, our hotel roof terrace and at Pointe de la Sarga.
9	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	9	Two birds seen on the 26th.
10	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	10	Recorded on three days around Dakhla Bay with a maximum count of 200 birds on the 21st and then 40-50 birds on the 25th/26th.
11	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	11	Recorded on three days in small numbers around Dakhla Bay and Pointe de la Sarga.
12	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	12	Recorded on three days in small numbers around Dakhla Bay and Pointe de la Sarga
13	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	13	A 2CY bird on the 25th seen from the Oyster Farm and then 5 birds of various ages on the 26th at Pointe de la Sarga.
14	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	14	Small numbers recorded on the 21st and 26th around the coast.
15	Eurasian Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>	15	The only sighting was of two birds seen well at Gleb Tachktant on the 21st.
16	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	16	Recorded in small numbers on the coast on 21st and 26th.
17	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	17	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast.
18	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	18	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast.
19	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	19	Recorded in small numbers on the coast on 21st and 26th.
20	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	20	Recorded on the coast on 21st with a minimum of 100+ birds seen on the 25th.
21	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	21	1-2 birds recorded on the coast on the 21st and 25th.
22	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	22	Small numbers recorded on the 21st and 26th on the coast.
23	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	23	A single bird recorded in Dakhla Bay on the 25th.
24	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	24	A total of 12 birds seen at Pointe de la Sarga on the 26th.
25	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	25	Small numbers recorded on the coast with a max. count of 6+ birds on the 26th.
26	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	26	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast.
27	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	27	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast.
28	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	28	1-2 birds recorded on the 21st on the coast and a single in Taourta Gardens on the 25th.
29	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	29	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast.
30	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	30	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast.
31	Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	31	Some excellent views on the 25th of at least 12 birds whilst exploring the stony desert habitat on the north side of the Bir Anzarane Road.
32	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	32	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast. A max. count of 15+ on the 26th.
33	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	33	A single adult on the 26th at Pointe de la Sarga.
34	Audouin's Gull	<i>Larus audouinii</i>	34	Small numbers recorded on the 21st, 25th and 26th on the coast. A max. count of 30+ on the 26th.

**WESTERN SAHARA: Birds, Mammals, Reptiles & Amphibians: 20th - 27th April 2017**

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#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Species Notes
35	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	35	The most common gull species recorded in large numbers on the coast on the 21st, 25th and 26th.
36	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	36	Small groups of up to 12+ birds recorded on the 21st and 26th around the coast.
37	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	37	Two birds were seen well in with 50+ Sandwich Terns at Pointe de la Sarga.
38	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	38	A single bird on the 25th in Dakhla Bay and 50+ birds at Pointe de la Sarga on the 26th.
39	“African” Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus (albididorsalis)</i>	39	This speciality of Dakhla Bay was seen very well with 3 birds on the 21st and 7 birds on the 25th. Always with Caspian Terns.
40	Pharaoh Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>	40	A very pale adult was seen well near Derraman on the morning of the 24th.
41	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	41	A single migrant was seen on our first morning from the hotel roof terrace.
42	Short-toed Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	42	A single bird was seen in Oued Jenna on the evening of the 23rd.
43	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	43	A pale morph adult was seen over Oued Jenna on the afternoon of the 23rd.
44	Western Marsh-harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	44	A female looking for a suitable roost site was seen on the evening of the 22nd near Aousserd and again the following morning.
45	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	45	A single bird showed well on the 24th.
46	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	46	A single bird at the private oasis on the 22nd en route to Aousserd.
47	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	47	Singles seen well on the 22nd en route to Aousserd and on the 25th at the Taourta Gardens.
48	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	48	Recorded on three days. A single by PK at Gleb Tachktant on the 21st, a juvenile on the 22nd at Oued Jenna and a pair hunting near Leglat on the 23rd.
49	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	49	A male in Oued Jenna seen by Pat on the 23rd and a pair near Bir Anzarane on the 25th.
50	Great Grey (Southern) Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	50	Excellent views of the North African subspecies <i>elegans</i> throughout the tour. Recorded on six days. <b>Note:</b> HBW classify as a race of Great Grey Shrike whereas other taxonomy classifies as race of Southern Grey Shrike <i>Lanius meridionalis</i> .
51	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	51	Migrants numbering 1-2 birds were seen on three days.
52	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	52	Recorded on six days with flocks of up to 40+ birds on occasions.
53	Greater Hoopoe-lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	53	Excellent views of this always impressive bird on five days.
54	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cinctura</i>	54	Small groups recorded on four days.
55	Black-crowned Sparrow-lark	<i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i>	55	A flock of around 12 birds were seen well but briefly near Oued Jenna on the afternoon of the 22nd as we travelled toward Aousserd.
56	Dunn's Lark	<i>Eremalauda dunnii</i>	56	A single juvenile bird was seen near Leglat on the morning of the 23rd.
57	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	57	A flock of six birds flew over the private oasis on the 22nd.
58	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>	58	Six birds showed very well as we explored the stony desert near Bir Anzarane on the evening of the 25th.
59	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>	59	A common lark species particularly near Dakhla recorded on four days.
60	Cricket Warbler	<i>Spiloptila clamans</i>	60	Some excellent close views of this speciality of the region recorded on three days whilst in the desert. Max. count of 9 birds on the 22nd near Oued Jenna.
61	Isabelline (W. Olivaceous) Warbler	<i>Iduna opaca</i>	61	A single bird seen and heard calling in Acacias in Oued Jenna on the 23rd being typically elusive.
62	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	62	A single migrant seen at the private oasis on the 22nd.
63	Common Reed-warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	63	Recorded on three days. All single birds except for 3+ at the private oasis on the 22nd.
64	Common Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	64	Chris flushed a bird at Gleb Tachktant on the 24th.
65	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	65	Small numbers seen migrating daily.
66	Pale Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne obsoleta</i>	66	Good views of a single bird near Derraman on the 24th after watching 3 Ruppell's Foxes!

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67	Collared Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	67	Single migrants on the 22nd and the 26th.
68	Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	68	A single bird seen well and heard calling in Oued Jenna on the 23rd.
69	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	69	A total of six birds seen on the morning of the 25th as we birded the Taourta Gardens and nearby area.
70	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	70	Small numbers of migrant birds recorded on three days.
71	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	71	At least one bird seen at the private oasis on the 22nd.
72	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	72	Single birds recorded on the 22nd and 23rd.
73	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	73	A single migrant seen in the middle of the stony desert near Bir Anzarane on the 24th.
74	Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	74	Great views of a single bird in Oued Jenna on the morning of the 23rd.
75	Western Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	75	A single migrant in Oued Jenna on the 23rd.
76	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	76	A singing male showed very well near La Pointe de la Sarga on the morning of the 26th.
77	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Argya fulva</i>	77	Seen very well on three days in suitable habitat with a max count of 20+ birds on the 23rd around Oued Jenna.
78	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	78	Single migrants at the private oasis on the 22nd and Oued Jenna on the 23rd.
79	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	79	Good views of two migrants in the Taourta Gardens area.
80	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	80	1-2 birds recorded on four days.
81	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	81	Single migrants recorded on four days.
82	Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	82	A stunning male showed very well on the west side of Dakhla Bay on the 21st.
83	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	83	Single migrants were seen on the 21st, 22nd and the 24th.
84	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	84	A single bird seen on the 21st near Dakhla .
85	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	85	Good views of both male and female birds on four days.
86	Buff-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>	86	A pair were seen approx. 103Km west of Bir Anzarane.
87	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	87	Singing male seen from our hotel roof terrace on the 21st and the 26th.
88	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>	88	This attractive wheatear was recorded on three days.
89	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	89	Relatively common around habitation in the Dakhla area. Recorded on four days.
90	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>	90	Recorded on three days whilst in the desert with some amazing flocks. Max count of 200+ birds in Oued Jenna on the 23rd.
91	Sudan Golden Sparrow	<i>Passer luteus</i>	91	A minimum of 6 birds including at least 3 males with a huge flock of Desert Sparrows on the 23rd in Oued Jenna.
92	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	92	A fairly frequently encountered migrant with up to 4 birds in a day. Recorded on four days.
93	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flavissima</i>	93	1-2 birds recorded on the 21st and 22nd.
94	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	94	A pair at Gleb Tachktant on the 21st and a single female on the 22nd at the same site.
95	House Bunting	<i>Emberiza sahari</i>	95	Heard singing around our hotel on at least three days.

**WESTERN SAHARA: Birds, Mammals, Reptiles & Amphibians: 20th - 27th April 2017**

This bird checklist follows the nomenclature and classification from HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World and the associated online resource, HBW Alive

#	Common name	Scientific name	#	Species Notes
<b>MAMMALS</b>				
1	Desert Hedgehog	<i>Paraechinus aethiopicus</i>	1	Recorded on three nights from the Aousserd and Bir Anzarane roads. Maximum count of 3 animals on the 25th close to the Bir Anzarane road.
2	African Golden Wolf	<i>Canis anthus</i>	2	Sadly our only sighting of this newly described species was of a road casualty on the 22nd near the Dakhla - Aousserd road junction.
3	Ruppell's Fox	<i>Vulpes rueppelli</i>	3	A fabulous day time encounter with 3 youngsters playing in the sand on the morning of the 24th near the Derraman Massif.
4	Fennec Fox	<i>Vulpes zerda</i>	4	Two animals 30 minutes before dusk north of the Bir Anzarane Road approximately 20Km West of Bir Anzarane on the evening of the 25th.
5	Sand Cat	<i>Felis margarita</i>	5	A cat most likely this species was seen approx. 7Km east of Oued Jenna on the evening of the 22nd whilst spotlighting, but a little too distant to be 100%. However, a very close sighting during the late evening of the 23rd approx 10Km NW of Oued Jenna gave no doubt as to the identification. It gave very close but brief views on a number of occasions as it slinked through the vegetation, just metres from our vehicles!
6	African Savannah Hare	<i>Lepus microtis</i>	6	All sightings at night whilst spotlighting. One animal on the 22nd and two on the 23rd near Oued Jenna and one on the Bir Anzarane Road on the 25th.
7	Lesser Egyptian Jerboa	<i>Jaculus jaculus</i>	7	Fabulous views and multiple animals seen during spotlighting sessions on the 22nd and 23rd near Oued Jenna. A single only on the Bir Anzarane Road on 25th.
8	Lesser Egyptian Gerbil	<i>Gerbillus gerbillus</i>	8	Well into double figures seen during spotlighting sessions on the 22nd and 23rd near Oued Jenna and very few on the Bir Anzarane Road on the 25th.
9	Fat-tailed Gerbil	<i>Pachyuromys duprasi</i>	9	Excellent views of a single animal whilst spotlighting the Aousserd Road on the evening of the 23rd.
10	Fat Sand Rat	<i>Psammomys obesus</i>	10	A single animal on the Bir Anzarane Road whilst watching Buff-rumped Wheatears!
<b>REPTILES &amp; AMPHIBIANS</b>				
1	African Green Toad	<i>Bufoetes boulengeri</i>	1	Large numbers of small immatures were present at the Gleb Tachktant Water Tower.
2	Dune Gecko / Egyptian Sand Gecko	<i>Stenodactylus petrii</i>	2	Seen very well on the 23rd whilst spotlighting the Aousserd Road.
3	Algerian Sand Gecko	<i>Tropicolotes algericus</i>	3	A single seen at the Ruppell's Fox site on the morning of the 24th.
4	Golden Fringe-fingered Lizard	<i>Acanthodactylus aureus</i>	4	Seen well on the west side of Dakhla Bay on the 21st.
5	Dumeril's Fringe-toed	<i>Acanthodactylus dumerilii</i>	5	Recorded on a number of occasions during the tour.
6	Sudan Mastigure / Spiny-tailed Lizard	<i>Uromastix dispar</i>	6	Recorded on the 22-24 April with some impressive specimens.
7	Böhme's Agama	<i>Trapelus boehmei</i>	7	Glimpsed on a number of occasions during the tour with the best sighting on the 24th.
9	Desert Monitor	<i>Varanus griseus</i>	9	Singles recorded on the 22nd and the 24th whilst travelling on the Aousserd Road.
10	Horned Viper	<i>Cerastes cerastes</i>	10	Some excellent encounters, particularly when spotlighting the Aousserd road on the warm night of the 22nd when at least 6+ individual were seen. Sadly, we also found some recently dead specimens killed on the road.
11	Moila Snake	<i>Rhagerhis moilensis</i>	11	Found dead on the road on the 22nd en route to Aousserd.

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