

Wise Birding Holidays

Bird and mammal watching tours



WESTERN SAHARA: Birds & Mammals Tour

Thursday 28th March - Thursday 4th April 2019

4 Wise Birding Clients

Leaders: Paul Buckley & Nico Calcagno

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP

Crowned Sandgrouse: Excellent views of around 20 at Tinehr with more at Gleb Tachktant the following day.

Dunn's Lark: Superb views of numerous birds on the road to Aousserd including two pairs, one of which was feeding young in the nest.

African Royal Tern: Great views of a maximum of 8 birds around Dakhla Bay, alongside multitudes of other terns and gulls.

Cricket Warbler: Good numbers performing very obligingly at an otherwise rather quiet Oued Jenna.

African Desert Warbler: Excellent views along the Aousserd Road.

African Wild Cat/Ruppell's Fox: Inseparable since we saw them together fighting! The fox was clearly the aggressor and the cat much the noisier!

Atlantic Humpback Dolphin: A last gasp success, spotted from the Samarkand Café on the last evening was a great end to the tour!



Dunn's Lark and African Desert Warbler were just two 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 seven-night tour (3 nights in our desert house) targeted the key species of the desert environment with a particular focus on birds that are difficult to find in the Western Palearctic region. We saw a total of 86 species of birds during our time in Western Sahara, a slightly lower total than we might have expected due to the curious absence of any significant numbers of Palearctic migrants. However, we did of course see a number of key specialities of the region including Dunn's Lark, African Royal Tern, Cricket warbler, Desert Warbler and Desert Sparrows. Despite intense searches in both historic strongholds and sites with recent records the Golden Nightjar and Golden Sparrow sadly eluded us this time. Some of the other desert species such as larks and wheatears were also much less abundant around Aousserd than expected, perhaps due to unusually dry conditions over the previous few months.

We also had one evening spotlighting for mammals with an outstanding highlight of a prolonged interaction between a Ruppell's Fox and an African Wild Cat. These were among six terrestrial mammal species seen by the group as well as two marine mammals, a number of impressive reptiles, amphibians & invertebrates.

Thur 28 March: ARRIVE DAKHLA

The group travelled to Dakhla via Casablanca without major incident arriving on schedule just before midnight. **Overnight: Dakhla Hotel**

Fri 29 March: TINEHR FARM - MIJK - DAKHLA RAMSAR ZONE

After a fairly short night we started the tour on a typical bright sunny Dakhla morning from our hotel roof terrace. We wanted to get a few sites covered today so that we were able to set off for Aousserd in good time on Saturday. Our first stop was a new site with a good chance of sandgrouse so we headed out of Dakhla and took the road south to Tinehr Farm. It didn't take too long for the first curious calls to be heard and we were soon entertained by excellent flight and ground views of around 20 Crowned Sandgrouse. After a circuit of the farm we headed back to the main road seeing our first Laughing Doves and three Buff-rumped (Red-rumped) Wheatears.

Next, we decided to head east to Mijk farm to search for migrants. Although we saw some good birds including Wryneck and a fine male Redstart, things seemed fairly quiet migrant wise. Two Common snipe rising from the ponds, a Black-crowned Night Heron plus Lanner Falcon and Western Marsh Harrier kept things lively, while the desert around the Farm entrance offered good views of Cream-coloured Courser (with young) and Temminck's Larks. After a tasty lunch of avocado wraps and apple cake and one final look around the farm, we then headed back to the east side of the bay to explore the Ramsar Zone - internationally important sections of Dakhla Bay. Although many of the birds were quite distant there was still a good variety including Caspian Terns and our first Audouin's Gulls. Waders included Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit and Grey Plover but many thousands of smaller waders too, predominantly Dunlin and Sanderling.

A nice group of European Spoonbill were very far away as was an Osprey that we joked could just be an osprey shaped bag!!

We drove back towards the city and crossed to the east coast where we drove for a while along the sandy cliff top. Gulls sometimes loaf here but perhaps a combination of the time of day and the neap tides meant that things were quiet. However, perseverance further south checking a series of sandy bays produced some bird flocks. Among the terns and gulls were a few waders including a Little Stint. Further south at La Sagra we had good views of more Audouin's and Slender-billed Gulls and then two splendid African Royal Terns flew in, giving great flight views in perfect light.

We celebrated a successful first day at the rooftop restaurant with delicious soup, ravioli and trifle. From the terrace we also enjoyed views of several Pallid Swifts.

Overnight: Dakhla Hotel

Sat 30th March: GLEB TACHKTANT - AOUSSERD ROAD - AOUSSERD

We started the next morning observing a resident House Bunting on the top of a nearby building, this being the only place we recorded this species. Our first stop upon setting out into the desert was Gleb Tachktant (also known as Gleb Jdiane), an old water tank which leaks water into a number of small pools, although only one seemed permanent. This was full of tadpoles and small toadlets, which were assumed to be Brongersma's Toad. We soon located six obliging Trumpeter Finches which favoured a fast drying pool. Crowned Sandgrouse flew in and gave more excellent views. A pair of Eurasian Stone-curlew were new and we had brief views of two warblers in the scrub behind the pools which were probably Spectacled Warbler, but were not seen again. There were a family of Great (Southern) Grey Shrikes and more Buff-rumped Wheatears and Thekla Larks.

Birds became fewer as we headed west. About half way along the road we saw our first Brown-necked Ravens and a pair of Long-legged Buzzards, one of which appeared from what was possibly a nesting hole. We stopped for lunch at a Oued around 102km from Aousserd where large numbers of Desert Sparrows had been recorded as well as recent reports of Sudan Golden Sparrow. We had lunch here where we recorded a few sparrows, our first Cricket Warbler, Black-crowned Sparrow Larks and the long-billed race of Crested Lark. After lunch we drove back along the Oued where one of our vehicles eventually picked up much larger numbers of sparrows. We spent an hour or so watching as numbers gradually built up. They were coming to roost in one small area of trees and their ability to disappear once in the tree was quite amazing. There were well over 200 birds by the time the influx dropped off but sadly, no Golden Sparrows amongst them!

Time was pressing so we moved on, stopping briefly at km 83 where we had only poor views of our first Dunn's Lark, but more Black-crowned Sparrow Larks, which were obviously having a good year. We also enjoyed good views of a beautiful African Desert Warbler. We finally reached Aousserd and were introduced to our very comfortable desert house which was to be home for the next three nights. Around the house were our first White-crowned Wheatears and we were able to visit the local shop to have a welcome change from water in the shape of 'Poms' fizzy apple drink.

After dinner we visited a new site where there had been recent reports of a calling Nightjar. It was essentially an extension of Oued Achayf which ran on down to the main road not far from Aousserd. We had a good walk around the whole area but without success. While we were searching, Sidi our driver had seen what appeared to be a Libyan Striped Weasel, a rare sighting, but frustratingly we could not re-locate it. However, on the return journey we did see African Savanna Hares and our first magnificent Desert Hedgehog. **Overnight: Aousserd House**

Sun 31st March: OUED ACHAYF - OUED JENNA - AOUSSERD ROAD

We headed out early and arrived at Oued Achayf at what felt about the right time to listen for any Golden Nightjars. Despite things being quiet again we enjoyed a spectacular sunrise over the desert. After returning to the vehicles for some welcome coffee, we walked back through the site hoping that we might get lucky with some migrants or even come across a day roosting Nightjar. We were encouraged by the presence of a few migrants including a Western Olivaceous (Isabelline) Warbler and a Western Bonelli's Warbler. We also saw five Desert Sparrows. We then went back to Oued Jenna where migrants and Desert Sparrows were surprisingly conspicuous by their absence. However, it certainly delivered in terms of excellent views of Cricket Warbler and Fulvous Babbler. We were also pleased to find the Short-toed Eagle seen last week still sitting tight on its nest.

We returned to Aousserd late morning for an excellent brunch and lashings of excellent and very welcome coffee. We had a relatively lazy afternoon prior to the planned evening spotlighting session but we first took a walk round Aousserd itself. Here, we enjoyed great views of two Pale Rock Martins and the always charming White-crowned Wheatears. After some rest we faced a long evening of spotlighting as we took a temporary break from birds to see what nocturnal mammals we could find. First though, we stopped at dusk at Oued Jenna to listen for any calling Nightjars. We then headed quickly to an area around 80kms from Aousserd which has in the past been good for mammals. Once we reached the area, we began spotlighting and slowly retraced our steps, for much of the time travelling in our vehicles side by side since this stretch of road is so quiet! Things started slowly with a few hares, gerbils and the amazing Lesser Egyptian Jerboa which made a risky run across the front of both vehicles! These quirky creatures captured the imagination of the group and to some were the mammal of the trip.

At around 50kms we finally picked up some strong eyeshine around 50m in from the road. It was quickly apparent that there were two mammals, one giving a strong orange shine and the other green. We immediately identified the white tail tip of a Ruppell's Fox. The other remained hidden for a few seconds longer but was clearly a cat. Looking very hunched and squat it was nonetheless an African Wild Cat. The two animals were fighting and the fox was the prime aggressor and the cat was squealing. The two pursued each other across our gaze for a couple of minutes before disappearing into the night. These were to be our two star mammals of the night as to see them together and interacting so strongly was very exciting indeed. We continued to scan for more mammals keeping an eye out for Eagle Owl but the rest of the journey was quiet and we arrived back at the house tired but happy at around 01.30hrs. **Overnight: Aousserd House**

Mon April 1st DERRAMAN - LAGLAT - OUED JENNA/ACHAYF

We had a slightly later breakfast due to our late night. Today was an opportunity to see some of the key sites in the Aousserd area in particular the rocky massifs of Derraman and Laglat. We headed first to Derraman, a large volcanic hill close to Oued Jenna. We drove across a flat landscape with good numbers of the spectacular Spiny-tailed Lizard, always nervous and ready to bolt down their nearby burrows when disturbed. We parked at the entrance to a path between two rocky outcrops and our attention was attracted by a number of calls, mostly that of Western Subalpine Warbler. This was by far the commonest warbler and given the dearth of other migrants we suspected that many of these birds may winter in Western Sahara. On the near rock face there were also two obvious nests although no birds were present – perhaps either Long-legged Buzzard or Lanner? Close scrutiny alas revealed no Eagle Owl but we did see two Lanner Falcon and our first Western Orphean Warbler of the trip.

We then drove across a very barren plain area towards Laglat. We followed a dry stream and stopped briefly at an area known in the past for Dunn's Lark but it was very quiet and we surmised that the dry year had made conditions unsuitable. We continued into Laglat which appears like a bowl and was very hot, so we proceeded to walk between two scree faces to the east. There were just a few migrants, the best being a male Redstart. Meanwhile sharp-eyed Ian had picked up both Namaqua Dove and our only Desert Larks of the trip just nearby. Although they had been very confiding and close to our lunch spot, despite our best efforts we were not able to relocate them. We went back to a very welcome lunch and respite from the heat. We sheltered in the shadows of a very remote dwelling where a family lived. As always Amina's 'simple' lunch of wraps and cake was delicious. We walked up to the west but it was now too hot for much activity.

We went back to Aousserd and had a rest before another evening of nightjar searching. We drove up to the north end of Oued Jenna and stopped, listened and listened some more, but to no avail. We then returned to the north part of Oued Achayf for one more try. Although there were no nightjars we saw more hares on the way back as well as a beautiful Lesser Egyptian Jerboa which gave very obliging views. **Overnight: Aousserd House**

Tues April 2nd OUED JENNA - AOUSSERD RD - TACHKTANT - DAKHLA BAY

The next morning was our last crack at Golden Nightjar and it's fair to say there was a bit of cynicism about our prospects at this stage! However 'you have to be in it to win it' so we headed back to Oued Jenna around 6am, but once again drew a blank. Perhaps the abnormally dry year forced the birds to move from their usual locations, or whether they were simply already breeding and therefore not interested in calling or responding. Previous trips have shown they do seem to be very erratic when calling. It's clear that there is a lot more to understand about these enigmatic birds.

We returned to the house for one of one of Amina's final superb breakfasts. Once everything was packed, we headed pretty much directly back to the sites beyond 80kms where we had stopped on the way out. Again, what was striking here as we arrived was the plethora of birdsong in this area, compared to areas

further east. The Black-crowned Sparrow Larks were again in full song as were Hoopoe Larks. Virtually our first bird seen was an excellent African Desert Warbler in full song very close to us. It took a little longer to locate the slightly more subtle song of Dunns Lark. We found two pairs in the area including one bird feeding at least two young which was exciting to confirm the breeding.

We moved on to our second big target of the day which was to look again at the area around 102kms where we had seen so many desert sparrows on the way down to Aousserd. This Oued is an area that shows great promise and seems well worth further study. Unfortunately, the sparrows were fewer in number and seemed very dispersed. Either we were too early and they were going to flock together later to roost or the big group we had seen earlier had dispersed. We enjoyed views of the Desert Sparrows, but once again there were still no Sudan Golden Sparrows amongst them.

Our next stop was another visit to Gleb Tachktant. Being later in the day it was quieter than our first visit but at least six Trumpeter Finches were still present and two Cream-coloured Courser families entertained us. We also managed to find a good looking adult Brongersma's Toad among all the toadlets. Chris then picked up a strange looking wheatear which looked unusually dark. He managed to get some pretty good pictures and on a re-examination we concluded it to be a rather worn looking Northern Wheatear. Still, a first for the trip!

Time was pressing and given the lack of migrants we didn't go into Mijk farm but we did check a rocky area along the entrance. We welcomed back Temminck's and Bar-tailed Larks and the Buff-rumped Wheatear was still present. As we neared Dakhla some of the group finally picked up a Desert Wheatear along the road side.

By popular demand we made a stop at the Vagabond kite surfing resort, ostensibly to photograph the resident Black Wheatear, though it did also happen to have a bar! Evidently the lack of wind was hampering the kite surfing as well as the migrants. Back at our hotel we were fondly welcomed by Abdul the manager and we bid a fond farewell to Amina the chef. Back on the rooftop the Pallid and Little Swifts entertained us and we were treated to an excellent tagine and desert.

Overnight: Dakhla Hotel

Weds April 3rd: TAORTA GDNS - OYSTER FARM - WEST COAST - LA SAGRA

Our last day in Dakhla dawned with a welcome sighting of not one but two House Buntings on the nearby rooftop. We then set off to explore the 'Taorta Gardens' and also an adjacent private garden owned by a friend of Nico's that had a couple of very promising looking pools. We first had a quick sea watch with spectacular numbers of Gannets fishing and a couple of skuas including a likely Pomarine Skua. We hoped that the long-awaited migrant bonanza might have appeared by now, but incredibly a couple of Barn Swallows were the only migrants recorded! Also present were Laughing Dove and three Cattle Egrets, new for the trip.

We then turned our attention to the bay and spent an hour or so scanning, primarily for dolphins. There were the usual very distant Greater Flamingos and White-breasted Cormorants amongst other waders and a single Common Sandpiper was new. We continued scanning as we enjoyed an excellent fish lunch

at the Talamaha Oyster Farm. Finally, just as we were about to leave, we spotted movement in the shape of at least four Bottlenose Dolphin. Although distant this was a welcome reward, celebrated with Martina's excellent chocolate cake!

We retraced our steps from the first day along the Atlantic coast to La Sagra. Birds were in similar places with a good flock of gulls and terns. We found two African Royal Terns and a few Audouin's Gulls before they were unfortunately flushed by some local children. At La Sagra there were still good numbers of birds present and we counted well over 100 Slender-billed Gulls, eight Royal Terns and our only Curlew Sandpipers of the trip. We looked in vain for any likely Kelp Gull.

A lot of the birds were distant, so we attempted to drive around through a sparsely built industrial area to get closer. Unfortunately, this plan didn't really work although we did get to some interesting lagoons with a few birds including a family party of Kentish Plover. As it was late afternoon and we had explored the most obvious haunts we decided to return to the hotel. After welcome ablutions we headed in to Dakhla town for a final team coffee at the Samarkand restaurant located on the bay front. We had no real expectations at this stage, although just as we preparing to leave Ian said ' I think I have a dolphin.' Although very distant the greater bulk and very small fin confirmed it was an Atlantic Humpback Dolphin - a rare species of the West African coast and an excellent mammal with which to finish our trip.

The sighting ensured good spirits as we said goodbye to Chris who had an earlier flight and we enjoyed a final dinner on the rooftop restaurant and thanked the friendly and efficient hotel staff. The next morning the remaining participants departed early for the Casablanca flight with connecting routes back to London.

A huge thanks to tour participant Chris Courtaux for allowing the use of a his wonderful photos throughout this report.





Cream-coloured Coursers were seen well on numerous occasions including some fresh juvenile birds





Crowned Sandgrouse was a key bird to see and we enjoyed great views on two separate days





Western Subalpine Warbler (above) and Western Bonelli's Warbler (below)





**Black-crowned Sparrow-larks (above) were in good numbers this year
and the scenery was always impressive in the desert**





Birding in the desert (above) and Cricket Warbler (below)





The *elegans* race of Great Grey Shrike (above) and Long-legged Buzzard (below)





One of the many impressive Desert Sunsets (above)
and Lesser Egyptian Jerboa (below)





Dunn's Lark is a key speciality of the region





Buff-rumped Wheatear by Sue Healey (above) and White-crowned Wheatear (below)





Greater Hoopoe Lark (above) and Temminck's Lark (below)





The desert scenery around Aousserd (above) and Dakhla Bay (below)





**African Desert Warbler (above) and Female Desert Sparrow (below)
are both desert specialities**





Bar-tailed Lark

Conservation Donation – Following this tour to Western Sahara £120 was transferred to the Wise Birding Holiday's central conservation fund.

For the last three years Wise Birding Holidays has been supporting a number of small conservation projects. However, we now believe that to try and 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 £6,000. Some tours will continue to donate money to help some of the smaller projects that we feel will still benefit from smaller donations. Please visit our www.wisebirding.co.uk to find out more about the project we support.

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WISE BIRDING HOLIDAYS: Bird and Mammal Checklist for WESTERN SAHARA March 28th - 4th April 2019

The bird checklist follows the nomenclature and classification from HBW Alive, del Hoyo, J, Elliott, A et al

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Species Notes
1	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	1	Always present in Dakhla Bay although usually distant. 30+ seen on 28th March with at least 20 bird on the 3rd April.
2	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	2	Seen in every day. Common around Dakhla with smaller numbers at Aoussserd.
3	Eurasian Collared-dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	3	Common everywhere and seen on all days. Very common in Dakhla.
4	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	4	Two seen at Tinehr Farm on 29th March and several in the Taorta Gardens, Dakhla on the 3rd April.
5	Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	5	One seen at Laglat on 1st April by Ian was a great bird to find.
6	Crowned Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles coronatus</i>	6	Excellent views of c20 at Tinehr Farm on 29th and 4 at Tachktant on 30th March.
7	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	7	Seen by some of the group at Casablanca Airport on the 28th March. Seen on all four days in Dakhla where it is fairly common - 20+ on the 3rd April.
8	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	8	Seen on all four days in Dakhla where it is fairly common. Excellent views in the evening sun from the hotel roof terrace.
9	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	9	At least two on the ponds at Mijk on the 29th March.
10	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	10	Distant groups were ever present in Dakhla Bay with 30+ on the eastern side on 29th March and at least 20 birds around La Sagra on 3rd April.
11	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	11	Single flushed at Mijk on the 29th March and one much more obliging birds near the Oysterfarm, Dakhla on the 3rd April.
12	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	12	Three flying over at Taorta Gardens on 3rd April.
13	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	13	Small numbers always present around Dakhla Bay.
14	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	14	Small numbers always present around Dakhla Bay.
15	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	15	Birds ever present if distant both in Dakhla Bay and on the Atlantic coast. There were at least 500 birds moving off the Atlantic Coast around Taorta Gardens on the 3rd April.
16	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	16	Common at all times around Dakhla Bay, both <i>sinensis</i> and the white-breasted form <i>maroccanus</i> .
17	Eurasian Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus oediconemus</i>	17	Two pairs seen on 30th March, one at Tachktant and another a few kms further east by the roadside.
18	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	18	Single birds seen on Dakhla Bay on both the 29th March and the 3rd April.
19	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	19	A common bird in moderate groups on the tideline all around Dakhla Bay.
20	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	20	Commonly seen in small numbers all around Dakhla Bay.
21	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	21	Small numbers seen around Dakhla Bay on 29th March and 3rd April. A lagoon nr La Sagra had at least 3 pairs with juveniles.
22	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	22	Small numbers seen in Dakhla Bay on 29th March and 3rd April.
23	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	23	Four birds seen on the eastern side of Dakhla Bay on 29th March.
24	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	24	A common bird in sizeable groups on the tideline all around Dakhla Bay .
25	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	25	Small numbers seen around Dakhla Bay, especially on the western side with at least 30 birds on the 29th March.
26	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	26	At least 4 birds present at La Sagra on the 3rd April.
27	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	27	Commonly present around Dakhla Bay, with at least several hundred present on the eastern side on the 29th March.
28	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	28	Commonly present around Dakhla Bay, with low thousands present on the eastern side on the 29th March.
29	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	29	Two birds present at the Mijk ponds on the 29th March.
30	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	30	One present on the Atlantic Coast beach nr Dakhla on the 29th March.
31	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	31	Three individuals seen along the western shore of Dakhla Bay on the 3rd April.
32	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	32	Small numbers on Dakhla Bay on the 29th March and 2 birds again on the 3rd April.
33	Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	33	Several pairs, most with juveniles seen in the vicinity of Mijk and Tachktant and adjacent desert on 29th March and again on the 2nd April.
34	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	34	Around 20 seen in Dakhla Bay on the 29th March mostly on the eastern side. An impressive count of at least 115 birds offering excellent views around La Sagra on the 3rd April.
35	Audouin's Gull	<i>Larus audouinii</i>	35	Small numbers east of Dakhla Bay and along Atlantic coast on 29th March and 5 birds again in the latter area on the 3rd April.
36	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	36	The commonest gull by far around Dakhla with large groups of both <i>grasellsii</i> and <i>intermedius</i> forms present.
37	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	37	Two seen at La Sagra on the 29th March.

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Species Notes
38	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	38	The commonest tern in Dakhla Bay with good numbers seen on 29th and 30th March and again on the 3rd April.
39	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	39	Small numbers in Dakhla Bay on the 29th March and again on the 3rd April.
40	“African” Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus (albididorsalis)</i>	40	This speciality was sen well with two birds at La Sagra on the 29th March. Again 2 birds present there on the 3rd April as well as 2+ further north on the Atlantic Coast.
41	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	41	At least one bird thought to be this species was seen distantly offshore from Taorta Gardens on the 3rd April.
42	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	42	1-2 birds seem on three dates around Dakhla Bay and another off the Atlantic Coast on the 3rd April.
43	Short-toed Snake-eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	43	An adult bird sitting tight on a nest nr Oued Jenna on the 31st March. It had been discovered on the nest a week earlier by the Wise Birding Mostly Mammal Tour.
44	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	44	One dark phase bird seen flying south across Laglat on the 1st April.
45	Western Marsh-harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	45	Two birds seen in flight around Mijk on the 29th March.
46	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	46	Singles seen on three occasions in the desert as well as a pair apparently frequenting a nest hole on the ground on the 30th March.
47	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	47	Two birds seen on the 29th March, one at Tinehr Farm and one at Mijk.
48	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	48	Two birds seen around Mijk on the 29th March and then 2 birds at Derraman and one at Laglat on the 1st April.
49	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	49	One bird seen nr the Oysterfarm at Dakhla on the 3rd April.
50	Great (Southern) Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	50	Pairs and small family groups observed commonly at all locations away from the coast on five dates.
51	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	51	Small numbers common at all desert sites from around 50kms inland. Counts of 16 birds at Aousserd on the 30th March and then 23 birds there on the 1st April.
52	Greater Hoopoe-lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	52	A common lark throughout the desert journey away from the coast until around Oued Jenna. Its beautiful song livened up many areas.
53	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cinctura</i>	53	Small numbers present on three days in the desert areas around Mijk and Tachktant and further inland, though not around Aousserd itself. Scarcer than previous years.
54	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>	54	Two birds seen at Laglat by Ian on the 1st April.
55	Black-crowned Sparrow-lark	<i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i>	55	This stunning bird was common in the belt between around 100kms and 80kms away from Aousserd. At least 20 birds seen or heard in this area on the 30th March.
56	“African” Dunn’s Lark	<i>Eremalauda dunni</i>	56	We saw this speciality around the area 83km from Aousserd on the 30th March and again on the 2nd April when there were at least two pairs present, including one feeding young. They were absent from a site nr Laglat where they had been seen in previous years which looked far too dry this year.
57	Temminck’s Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>	57	Small numbers seen in desert areas in the vicinity of Mijk on the 29th March and again on the 2nd April.
58	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>	58	Singles and pairs seen on four days around Dakhla and as far inland as Tinehr Farm.
59	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	59	One singing at a Oued around 102kms from Aousserd on the 30th March was presumably of the long-billed form.
60	Cricket Warbler	<i>Spiloptila clamans</i>	60	One seen at a Oued 102kms from Aousserd on the 30th March. At least 6 birds seen at Oued Jenna on the 31st March with odd singles at the same site on two subsequent days.
61	Isabelline Warbler	<i>Iduna opaca</i>	61	Single birds seen at Oued Jenna on the 31st March, then Derraman and Laglat on the 1st April.
62	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	62	Two birds seen at Mijk Farm on the 29th March.
63	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	63	Small numbers of migrants seen around Mijk and Dakhla on the 29th March, around Tachktant on the 2nd April and Dakhla on the 3rd April.
64	Pale Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne obsoleta</i>	64	Up to 3 birds seen around Aousserd on 30th and 31st March and 2nd April. Single birds seen at both Derraman and Laglat on the 1st April.
65	Collared Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	65	A single bird seen at Tachktant on the 30th March.
66	Western Bonelli’s Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	66	Single birds seen at Oued Jenna on the 31st March, Derraman and Oued Achayf on the 1st April and Oued Jenna on the 2nd April.
67	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	67	A single bird at Laglat on the 1st April.
68	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	68	One seen at the Oued 102kms from Aousserd on the 30th March was the only record.
69	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	69	Several seen at Mijk Farm on the 29th March.
70	African Desert Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserti</i>	70	Another speciality of the region with one bird singing at a site 83kms from Aousserd and seen on the 30th March and again on the 2nd April.
71	Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	71	Singles seen at both Derraman and Laglat on the 1st April.
72	“Western” Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans inornata</i>	72	The commonest warbler seen on the trip with small numbers at most sites away from the coast on four dates.
73	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	73	Two birds seen poorly at Gleb Tachktant on the 30th March were most likely this species.
74	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Argya fulva</i>	74	At least ten birds seen at Oued Jenna on the 31st March. Smaller numbers also seen at the Oued 102kms from Aousserd on the 30th March and at Laglat on the 1st April.

#	Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Species Notes
75	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	75	One male at Mijk on the 29th March and two at Laglat on the 1st April.
76	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	76	A worn bird at Gleb Tachktant.
77	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	77	A couple of birds briefly around Tinehr, and then 1-2 roadside birds coming back into Dakhla on the 2nd. Numbers seemed surprisingly low.
78	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	78	One possible bird seen nr Tinehr on the 29th March.
79	Buff-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>	79	(Red-rumped Wheatear). At least three birds seen at Tinehr on the 29th March with at least two more seen at Gleb Tachktant on the 30th and near Mijk on the 2nd April.
80	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	80	Fairly common around the coast with small numbers seen on four days around Dakhla and as far inland as Tinehr and Mijk.
81	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>	81	A common bird around Aousserd although not seen further west than Oued Jenna.
82	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	82	Very common in all urban locations and seen every day including occasional birds in the desert.
83	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>	83	A large flock coming into roost at the Oued 102kms from Aousserd. At least 200 birds and probably more on the 30th March, then 40+ on the 2nd April. Seen in much smaller numbers (max 6) at Oued Jenna and Oued Achayf on the 31st March and 1st April.
84	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	84	Small numbers seen around Dakhla on three dates.
85	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	85	At least 6 birds at Tachktant on the 30th March with five there on the return journey on the 2nd April.
86	House Bunting	<i>Emberiza sahari</i>	86	A single bird present on a road adjacent to the hotel in Dakhla on the 29th and 30th March with a pair there on the 3rd April.
	TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS			
1	Desert Hedgehog	<i>Paraechinus aethiopicus</i>	1	One seen at Oued Achayf on the 30th March and one along the Aousserd Road on 31st March.
2	Ruppell's Fox	<i>Vulpes rueppelli</i>	2	One seen inteacting with a wild cat around 50kms from Aousserd on the 31st March.
3	African Wildcat	<i>Felis lybica</i>	3	One seen interacting with a Ruppell's Fox around 50kms from Aousserd on the 31st March.
4	African Savannah Hare	<i>Lepus microtis</i>	4	Small numbers seen on all 4 days at Aousserd.
5	Lesser Egyptian Jerboa	<i>Jaculus jaculus</i>	5	Two animals seen on the Aousserd Road on the 31st March and another nr Oued Achayf on the 1st April.
6	(Lesser Egyptian) Gerbil sp.	<i>Gerbillus gerbillus</i>	6	A number of gerbils were seen on the roads at night but could not be identified to species level.
	CETACEANS			
1	Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	1	At least four seen offshore from the Oysterfarm Dakhla on the 3rd April.
2	Atlantic Hump-backed Dolphin	<i>Sousa teuszii</i>	2	One seen from Samakrkand, Dakhla on the 3rd April.
	REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS			
1	Brongersma's Toad	<i>Pseudepidalea brongersmai</i>	1	An adult seen at Tachktant on the 2nd April was thought to be this species as were tadpoles here and at Tinehr Farm on the 29th March.
2	White-spotted Gecko	<i>Tarentola annularis</i>	2	One seen on the Aousserd Road on the 2nd April.
3	Elegant Gecko	<i>Stenodactylus stenodactylus</i>	3	A number of geckos seen were not identified - either this sp or <i>S. petrii</i>
4	Dumeril's Fringe-toed	<i>Acanthodactylus dumerilii</i>	4	Some of the lizards seen were probably this species, especially in more sandy areas along the Aousserd Road.
5	Golden Fringe-fingered Lizard	<i>Acanthodactylus aureus</i>	5	Common in many desert areas.
6	Sudan Mastigure / Spiny-tailed Lizard	<i>Uromastyx dispar</i>	6	Fairly common the desert around Aousserd, especially the rocky areas of Deraman and Laglat.
7	Sand Viper	<i>Cerastes vipera</i>	7	Sadly the only specimen seen was dead on the road on the 31st March.

