



Tour Report



Oman - Arabian Birding Odyssey
26th November – 6th December 2023

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Sunday 26th November 2023 – Muscat and environs

Warm and sunny all day, light. 30C

The first full day of Oriole Birding's 2nd tour of Oman! The previous day consisted of air travel from London Heathrow and Manchester airports to Doha International airport in Qatar, followed by a short transfer to Muscat in the north of Oman. A couple of delays due to the Heathrow luggage still being in Doha (though fortunately delivered swiftly the following morning) and a slow hire vehicle collection, but before long we were collecting the vehicles and on our way to the hotel for a swift checking and bed!

After a 7am breakfast we headed out the front of the hotel, picking up our first **Common Mynas**, **Indian Silverbills**, **Laughing Doves**, **Pale Crag Martins**, a female **Purple Sunbird** and a superb **BLACK-WINGED KITE** which was perched up beyond the road opposite. Once we loaded into the vehicles we headed to the Muscat rivermouth, where we saw **ARABIAN GREEN BEE-EATERS** briefly in flight, a mix of **Greater Crested**, **Lesser Crested** and **Sandwich Terns** on the beach with good numbers of **SOOTY GULLS** and **Slender-billed Gulls** and a single Black-headed Gull in with them for good measure. A couple of **Western Reef Herons** and **Greater Flamingos** were present, while waders on the mud were represented by a single **Whimbrel**, **Common Ringed Plovers**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Sanderlings**, **Turnstones**, **Kentish Plovers**, **Eurasian Oystercatchers** and a **Greater Sand Plover** on the near mud, while more waders could be seen beyond the bridge (to be checked later). **Pallid Swifts** were trickling west in good number here also, and the odd **Crested Lark** was also present, before we headed further west along the highway to another small rivermouth and overpass. A scrubby area of terrain provided fantastic views of both **INDIAN ROLLER** and **Arabian Bee-eaters**, while a family of 3 juvenile and 2 adult **BLACK-WINGED KITES** were superb to see; evidence of successful breeding here two years in a row, after we recorded their first attempt on our tour last year! **White-eared Bulbuls** were common here, while a single **Red-vented Bulbul** also showed up. A number of noisy **Red-wattled Lapwings** were also present. An **Osprey** was noted distantly, while across the road there were a few **Glossy Ibis** floating around over the Golf Course opposite. On the channel opposite us were a single **INDIAN POND HERON**, a **Citrine Wagtail** and a good selection of small waders; **Marsh Sandpipers** and **Temminck's Stints** being of most note and giving close views. From here we then moved a short way along to the other side of the Muscat River, where we spend an enjoyable half hour working through a good selection of waders and other species. Both **Lesser** and **Greater Sand Plovers** were present and offered excellent opportunities for comparison, while small numbers of **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Common Snipe**, **Black-winged Stilts**, **Common Redshanks** and **Greenshanks**. A single **Isabelline Shrike** was also present here, plus a further **Citrine Wagtail** and **White Wagtail**. From here we then went onto the Al Ansab lagoons.



Indian Roller, Arabian Green Bee Eater and White-cheeked Bulbul



Red-vented Bulbul

On first arriving we enjoyed stunning views of an **Indian Roller** from the vehicles, before parking up and walking through the park. The first lagoon hosted a roost of **Whiskered Terns**, **Red-wattled Lapwings**, **Kentish Plovers**, several **Eurasian Teal** and a few **Little Grebes**, plus a handful of **Little** and **Temminck's Stints**, while the next main lagoon offered fantastic views of these latter waders on the concrete bund below the hide, literally 2 meters away most of the time! A couple of **Squacco Herons** gave brief flight views, while a single **CLAMOROUS REED WARBLER** was even briefer (plus another heard singing but not seen). A small flock of **Common Pochard** and **Tufted Ducks** were out on the water, over 100 **Great Cormorants** roosting in the trees along with a couple of **Great** and **Little Egrets**, plus a couple of **Whiskered Terns** hawking overhead. On land we enjoyed super views of both **Purple Sunbirds** and **DELICATE PRINIAS** in the acacia scrub, while **GREY FRANCOLIN** was also noted but only gave fleeting views. **Common Kingfisher** and **Green Sandpiper** were noted along the small stream which winds through the middle of the reserve, while Common Chiffchaff was seen foraging in the shade here.

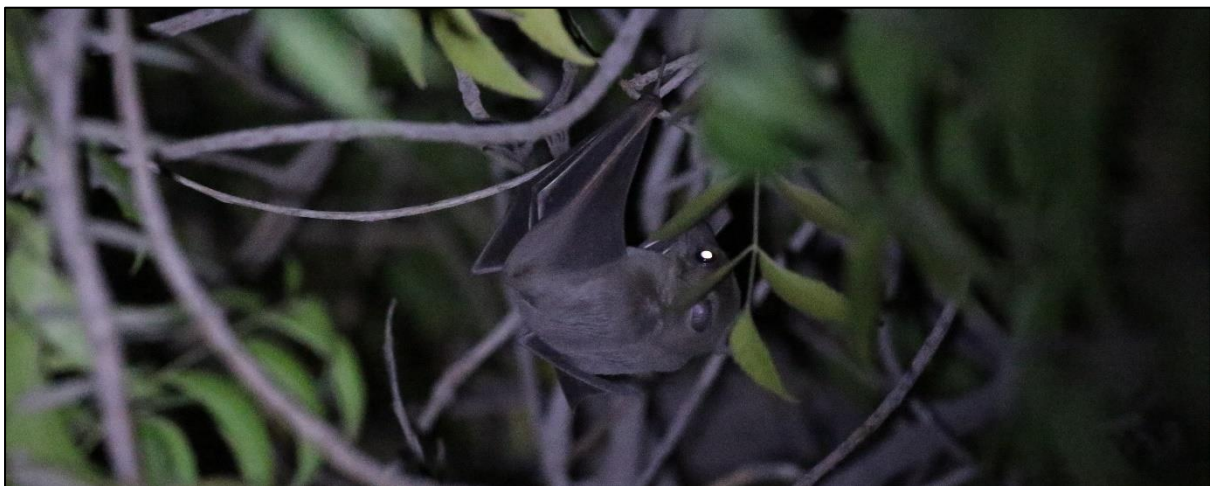


Indian Roller



Delicate Prinia and Purple Sunbird

On getting back to the vehicles we stopped for lunch before driving west to Wadi Bahayis; another rivermouth with thick reedy edges. Here we got to properly observe **INDIAN POND HERON**, taking note of the smoky overall plumage and dark loreal stripe which help separate it from Squacco Heron. Two winter plumage **Little Terns** were flying back and forth here and giving fantastic views, while a **Common Kingfisher** showed well and a couple of **WHITE-SPECTACLED BULBULS** flew through nearby palm trees. We then made our way out along the nearby coastline, getting our teeth into some good flocks of gulls and terns; **Sooty**, **HEUGLIN'S** and **STEPPE GULLS**, **Greater**, **Lesser** and **Sandwich Terns**. Fishing activity offshore ensured a good ebb and flow of birds here, while more distantly we watched many small flocks of **RED-NECKED PHALAROPES** flying low over, and often landing on, the sea. A surprise here was picking up a group of at least 8 **PERSIAN SHEARWATERS** which were associating with a small feeding frenzy; distant but good views. From here we made our way east to the Al Qurum Natural Park, first taking a walk through to the marshes on the south side of the mangrove. The site was good for further views of **Purple Sunbirds**, **Red-vented Bulbul** and a showy **CLAMOROUS REED WARBLER**, while **Purple Heron** was also registered along with **BLUETHROAT**, two **Citrine Wagtails**, two **Spoonbills** and a heavily oiled **Great White Egret**. Back at the vehicles we had both **Alexandrine** and **Ring-necked Parakeets** flying overhead, while a look at the mangroves and beach on the seaward side of Al Qurum revealed further **Greater Sand Plovers**, a single **STRIATED HERON**, around 10 **Whimbrel** and a **Bar-tailed Godwit**. Most of this was now well after sunset and on the limit of useable light, even though it wasn't even 6pm yet! This put us in good stead however to have a go for Pallid Scop's Owl in Qurum Park. We spent a while working through the mature trees in this impressive park, but unfortunately with no joy (though **Egyptian Fruit Bats** and **Indian Rollers** hunting by streetlamps provided entertainment). After a long day we headed back to base, in for a buffet dinner and checklist before bed.



Common Myna, Clamorous Reed Warbler and Egyptian Fruit Bat

Monday 27th November 2022 – Nizwa and Al Harar mountains

Warm but with some cloud cover, light winds. 25C

Today saw us depart Muscat, heading south up along the line of the high Al Harar mountains and into the rocky desert region which surrounds Nizwa. We departed with a packed breakfast, getting us away early and enjoying our first taste of desert birding before the heat of the day kicked in (though today remained a rather comfortable 25 degrees). We spend a couple of hours birding an area of mature acacia trees interspersed with low sparse vegetation bordering a dry streambed. We visited this same site last year, and enjoyed a noisy party of Arabian Babblers here, but there was no sign today. However the areas was superbly birdy, with lots to take in. One of the first birds we laid eyes on (barring a couple of fabulous **Indian Rollers** noted on the drive) was a really smart **STEPPE GREY**

SHRIKE which remained more or less on view for the duration of our time here. Soon after we were watching another grey shrike; the more typical of this region **Aucheri GREAT GREY SHRIKE**. And to make it a trio we also were joined by a single **Isabelline Shrike** in the acacias. As we made our way slowly through the habitat we couldn't help but notice the rattling dry calls of the **Lesser Whitethroats** of the Central Asian subspecies **halimodendri**; they were everywhere! Whilst working through these we also located a couple of **Common Whitethroats**, a rather sculking **MENETRIE'S WARBLER** and a very elusive **EASTERN ORPHEAN WARBLER**. The group also enjoyed nice views of **ASIAN DESERT WARBLER** here; a fantastic suite of species in a very small area! A female **DESERT WHEATEAR** was our first of the trip, as was a smashing **PERSIAN WHEATEAR** which offered up excellent scope views. A couple of **GREY FRANCOLINS** were flighty, as were a surprise flock of 8 **LICHTENSTEIN'S SANDGROUSE** which exploded from cover under the shade of some acacias and away, calling loudly! One male did land nearby, but we were unfortunately unable to locate it on the ground before it flushed again. A single large pipit turned out to be a superb **LONG-BILLED PIPIT** which we enjoyed fantastic views of. What a great set of birds; we felt we had really earned our breakfasts with all that! We stood by the cars tucking in, and in doing so started to pick up raptors, first with a **SHORT-TOED EAGLE** on a pylon, and then more birds following the line of the Al Harar mountains apparently in active migration. First came **GREATER SPOTTED EAGLES**, with singles followed by a few groups of four or five. A couple of **GRIFFON VULTURES** cruised through with them, as did a small number of **EGYPTIAN VULTURES**, while **BROWN-NECKED RAVENS** were up with them ensuring a swift passage. This was great, but got better as we departed, pulling up alongside a superb congregation of **STEPPE EAGLES**; at least 50 birds associated with a refuse tip and offering a real spectacle! In addition there were at least 30 **EGYPTIAN VULTURES** and a handful of **Greater Spotted Eagles**, and a single **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLE**! Whatever was on offer at this site food-wise, it must have been good!



'Steppe' Great Grey Shrike, Steppe Eagle and Long-billed Pipit

From here we made our way around to another site, where we birded the mouth of an impressive rocky gorge and the wadi outside. Here we managed to locate several **PLAIN LEAF WARBLERS**; the world's smallest *phylloscopus* warbler and a real delightful character, always flicking its wings and tail and with a characteristic set of contact calls. A single **STRIOLATED BUNTING** was only seen in flight here, while birding the acacia trees lining the dry stream bed gave us uncharacteristically excellent views of **EASTERN ORPHEAN WARBLER**. A **TAWNY PIPIT** was another nice bird here. On our drive out we noted a single **Common Kestrel**, before we made our way off the gravel and onto tarmac, heading for lunch nearby at a roadside restaurant which did us a superb mezze spread of kebab meats, hummus and salads which totally hit the spot! From here we headed to our nearby hotel, checked in and took the opportunity to chill for an hour before heading out again for the rest of the afternoon and evening.



Eastern Orphean Warbler

This last stretch of the day led us to a stunning, steep sided wadi , where we would pass the evening and linger into the night in search of the infamous **Omani Owl**. Our initial arrival into the valley was greeted by a couple of active and showy **HUME'S WHEATEARS**, while further **Plain Leaf Warblers**, **Indian roller**, **Arabian Green Bee-eater**, **Pale Crag Martins**, **White Spectacled Bulbuls** and **Rock Doves** were also seen, as was a **Little Owl** perched in a crevice in the rock face. As night fell, we proceeded to pause at various points along the valley, listening intently for any owl calls. At one point Jason heard the quiet 'hu-hu-hu-hu' calls of an **OMANI OWL**, repeated a couple of occasions from somewhere above, but an hour of further listening and scanning with the torch from various points unfortunately produced no further signals. After giving the bird a good punt, we called it an evening and headed back to your hotel for dinner.

Tuesday 28th November 2023 – Journey to Salalah, across the Empty Quarter

Warm and sunny all day, light winds. 32C

Today saw us make the long journey south through the spine of Oman's 'Empty Quarter'; a vast expanse of stony desert interspersed with the occasional refueling station!

We set off at around 7 after a good breakfast, covering a good amount of ground before stopping briefly for fuel accompanied by a male **DESERT WHEATEAR**. Several **BROWN-NECKED RAVENS** were noted along the road, before we made a stop for a short bit of birding at a park at Haima. The irrigated lawns and trees here hosted a single **Eurasian Roller** and also an **Indian Roller** nearby, while 3 **INDIAN POND HERONS** fed completely out in the open on the grass, undeterred by our presence! Three **White Wagtails** were also foraging here, while the mix of acacias and ornamental trees hosted **EASTERN ORPHEAN** and **EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLERS**, **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Common Chiffchaff**; a nice

little haul! Once we had finished here we continued south for another couple of hours, noting a **GREATER HOOPOE LARK** as it flopped across the road as we went, before we pulled off the tarmac and made across a 15km stretch of desert towards the Muntasar oasis. The approach was quiet until near the end of the track, where we were greeted by 4 **GREATER HOOPOE LARKS** which we enjoyed as they strutted back and forth across the track. Bizarrely they were accompanied by a single **GREATER SAND PLOVER** which couldn't have looked more out of place out here in the middle of the desert! Not far ahead of here was the oasis; a superb spot with running water, pools with rushes lined with palm trees and surrounded by several Camels here for a drink. The pools hosted 3 '**CAUCASIAN**' **WATER PIPITS** and a single **RED-THROATED PIPIT**, while in the trees at the back a 1st winter **RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** and **BLUETHROAT** provided a superb duo! **Common Chiffchaff** and **Eastern Orphean Warber** were also present, while the star of the show here was found by the group as they walked the perimeter of the oasis, flushing a **WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN**! The bird sculked around between rushes and, rather unexpectedly, an old palm tree away from the water, giving nice views on occasions on the deck and also in flight; a great bird! **Desert wheatear** was also noted here, but after having lunch it was time to make tracks again, covering another couple of hours of journey before making a final birding stop at Al Beed farms. This area of circular irrigated fields in the desert is a magnet for all sorts of birds, and so it proved this afternoon.



Indian Pond Heron

We drove through the site slowly, scanning the tracks, crop fields and sprinkler heads, picking up a good range of species. Our first **TURKESTAN SHRIKE** was seen well on the sprinkler system alongside **aucheri Great Grey Shrike** and a couple of **ISABELLINE WHEATEARS**, while a pair of superb **CREAM-COLOURED COURSERS** flew in calling and landed nearby, giving fantastic views. A **SHORT-TOED EAGLE** was circling some distant fields, while **Marsh Harriers** and **Common Kestrels** were present hunting the crops. As we stood out of the vehicles scanning through **Desert** and **Isabelline Wheatears** and **Crested Larks**, we heard and picked up in flight a couple of groups of **CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE**, followed by more and eventually numbering around 120 individuals. They landed and we were able to watch them distantly, with further **CREAM-COLOURED COURSERS** and **GREATER HOOPOE LARKS** providing much distraction! A little further on, as the sun was almost setting, a couple of flocks numbering over 50 in total of **GREATER SHORT-TOED LARKS** flew by, while 3 **BLACK-CROWNED SPARROW LARKS** fed confidently along the dirt tracks by the vehicle. Another **Great Grey Shrike** was watched being accosted by 2 male **Desert Wheatears** as we scanned the fields in the low evening light; a superb way to end the birding day, even despite the profusion of flies here! With the light going now

at around 17:30, and with still a couple of hours to drive, we departed and finished the journey to Salalah, arriving at our hotel at 19:30.

Wednesday 29th November 2023 – Salalah area

Warm and sunny all day, light winds. 32C

Our first full day exploring the Salalah area was full of new species, with this fascinating region exhibiting an interesting leap into where afro-tropical and western palearctic avifauna merge. We made our way through the city, soon reaching the coastal plain, where we enjoyed great views of **Black-crowned Sparrow Larks** and a party of 30 **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** disturbed by groups of Camels heading out to graze, while **Barn Swallows** were passing in small numbers. We then continued towards the mountain ridge which characterise the Dhofar, winding our way towards Ain Hamran; a beautiful valley and running stream, with its steep sides lined by deciduous forest including Frankincense trees. On leaving the vehicles we were soon getting our teeth into some of the new birdlife which characterise the area including both **PALESTINE** and **SHINING SUNBIRDS**, superb **AFRICAN PARADISE FLYCATCHERS**, **GRACEFUL PRINIAS** replacing the Delicate Prinias of the northern part of the country, abundant and busy **ABYSSINIAN WHITE-EYES**, **AFRICAN SILVERBILLS**, **RÜPPELL'S WEAVERS**, a very good number of **BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRAS** and the common and very handsome **CINNAMON-BREADED BUNTINGS**. Alongside these species we noted several **ARABIAN WARBLERS** which showed superbly in the acacia trees, both **Isabelline** and **Turkestan Shrikes**, **Tristram's Starlings**, and both **Tree** and **Tawny Pipits**, while a star of the show was a stunning **GREY-HEADED KINGFISHER** which flashed through the area and landed up the wooded hillside, offering good views before disappearing off. With eyes to the skies here we picked up both **BONELLI'S EAGLE** and **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLES** soaring majestically along the ridge above us, with **FAN-TAILED RAVENS** often in tow. It was around mid-morning now, and while we had been enjoying ourselves here, we were keenly searching for another target bird here, which had yet to reveal itself; the Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak. A valley around a kilometre along to the west held a water trough where the birds might come to drink, so we headed over to try for 40 minutes, noting **BOOTED EAGLE** as we drove there, along with both **Desert** and **Isabelline Wheatears**. We paused in the shade of the trees to watch as many birds came to drink at the water, including many **Cinnamon-breasted Buntings**, whilst also enjoying good views of another **BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA** in the background. However there was no sign of the grosbeaks this morning.



Black-crowned Tchagra

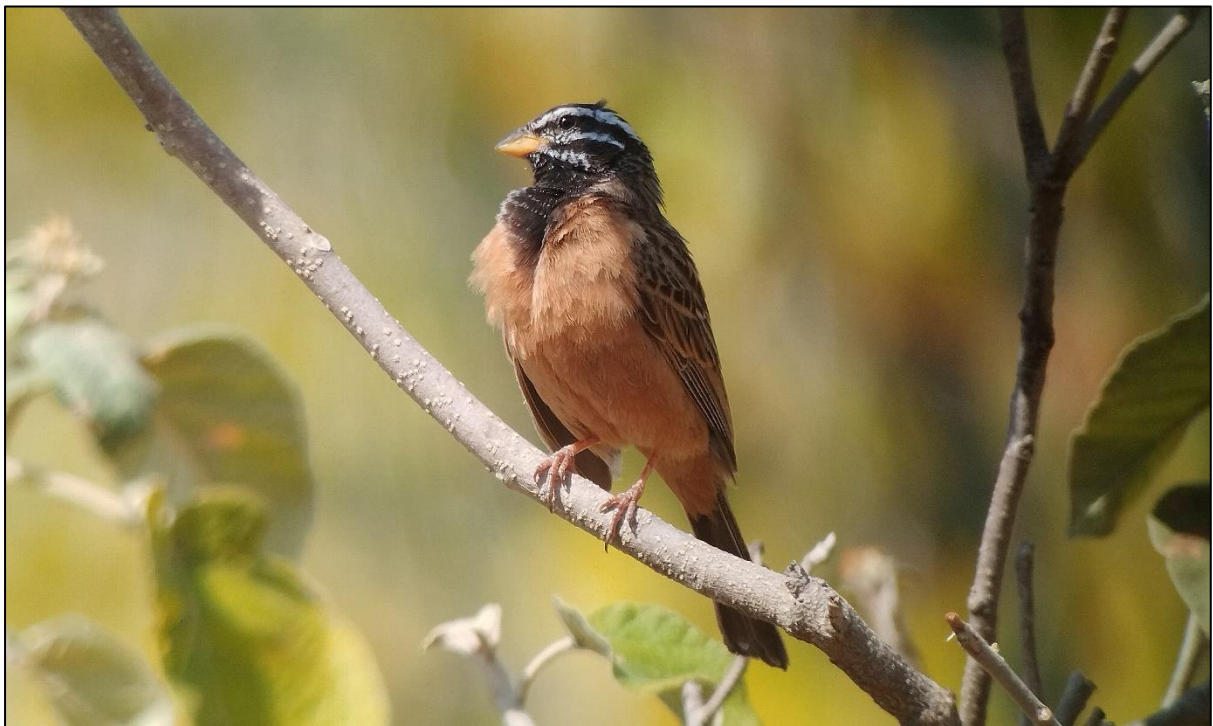


Grey-headed Kingfisher

We chose to take lunch back at Ain Hamran, where we birded the lower stretches of the valley and stream, picking up some nice birds, not least in the form of 2 fantastic **BRUCE'S GREEN PIGEONS** which we watched as they foraged quietly amongst the branches of a large fig tree; superb birds! **White, Grey** and **Yellow Wagtails** were seen along the stream, plus **Common** and **Green Sandpipers**, plus a brief **Wryneck** and a **Eurasian Hoopoe**. With the heat of the day now upon us, we were keen to make our way out to other sites, setting off for Raysut on the western side of the city. The water treatment works here hosted a couple of **SPUR-WINGED PLOVERS** amongst the **RED-WATTLED LAPWINGS**, several **Whiskered Terns** and a **Gull-billed Tern**, **Greater Flamingos** and an array of waders and wildfowl including 3 **Pintail** and 6 **Wigeon**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and good numbers of **Black-winged Stilts**. The day was wearing on now, so we made our way east of the city towards Ain Tobruk, where we waited for nightfall before trying for some owls. We saw another **Booted Eagle** on our way there, while in the beautiful wooded valley held a **Purple Heron** which flew up from the streambed dotted by waterfalls, while a flock of falcons numbering over 20 birds likely hosted several Amur Falcons, though they were too distant to clinch in the fading light. Once the light had gone we positioned ourself in a good spot for Arabian Eagle Owl, where we had such good fortunes the year before. Unfortunately the birds weren't vocal or responsive here tonight, so we moved up the valley, where we heard our first of many **ARABIAN SCOP'S OWLS** of the week, though we unfortunately couldn't locate any close enough to the track that would allow us to try for a view. Once we had given it a good shot, we departed back to the hotel, where we enjoyed a fine dinner before bed.



Bruce's Green Pigeon



'Arabian' Rock Doves and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting

Thursday 30th November 2023 – Salalah, Wadi Darbat, plateau

Our second full day in Salalah saw us heading back into the Dhofar valleys and cloud forests in search of some of its specialities. Leaving the city to the east, we took a route through the fertile plains below the Dhofar slopes again, where we enjoyed watching over 300 **BLACK-CROWNED SPARROW LARKS** which littered the whole area, interspersed by a couple of **Greater Short-toed Larks** and **Crested Larks**. wheatears were represented by both **Desert** and **Isabelline** in good number, while a real highlight were 19 **CREAM-COLOURED COURSERS** which allowed close approach and were a joy to watch as they strode across the plain, with both adults and juveniles noted. Another good bird to see close and on

the deck were a pair of **CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE**. A couple of **Barn Swallows** and a **Great Grey Shrike** were also noted, before we returned to the road and headed un into Ain Hamran again. A male **BROWN SHRIKE** was a stunner here, but sadly brief, while we enjoyed further excellent views of **ARABIAN WARBLER**. Both **Common** and **Black Redstart** were noted further up the valley along with a possible Semi-collared Flycatcher, though the views were brief so we couldn't quite clinch it. A **Bonelli's Eagle** soared overhead before we made our way over to Wadi Kheesh again, to try at the water trough again, this time an hour earlier than yesterday, to see if we could get lucky with grosbeaks, as none were evident again in Ain Hamran today.



Cream-coloured Coursers and Long-billed Pipit

We arrived at Ain Kheesh and positioned ourselves. After about half an hour watching **Black-crowned Tchagra** and many birds coming to drink, we suddenly picked up a superb male **ARABIAN GOLDEN-WINGED GROSBEEK** perched on top of a deciduous tree about 100 meters away! The bird proceeded to fly in towards us, and sat prominent for the next 10 minutes singing and calling to a female deep inside the tree. An absolutely superb show, and felt really rewarding after struggling to locate them thus far.





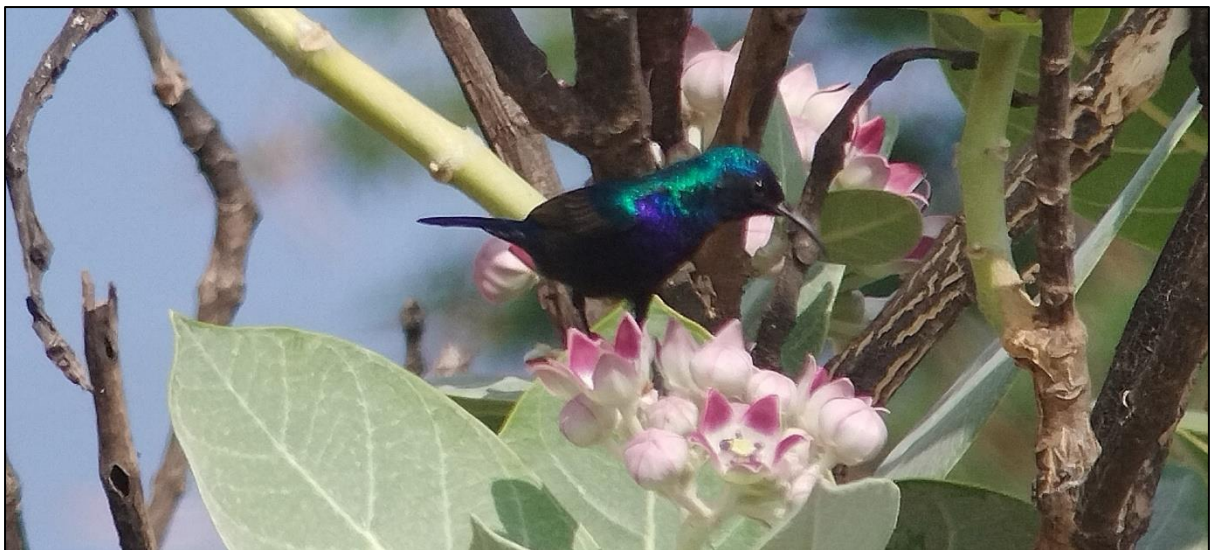
Arabian Golden-winged Finch

Finishing up here, we headed for the uplands, to Atair Sink Hole and Jabal Samhan. On our way up we noted a pale morph Booted Eagle, while further along the road our journey was interrupted in superb fashion by 2 incredible **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLES** (adult and juvenile) which were feeding on the ground, and then perched in a nearby tree. The drive further on yielded our first of several **ARABIAN WHEATEARS** along with Desert and Isabelline Wheatears along the roadsides. We reached the lip of the plateau at Jabal Samham; a scenically impressive site which looks down over the coastal plain, with steep and pristine valleys all along with rocky crags and cloud forest. Almost as soon as we arrived we spotted our main target here; the mighty **VERREAUX'S EAGLE**! There were a male and female following each other below us, first one way and then the other, showing superbly well before they flew around the corner, not to be seen again; what a stroke of luck! The area also hosted further **Arabian Wheatears**, a fly-by **Steppe Eagle**, **Fan-tailed Ravens**, **Tristram's Starlings** and several **Pale Crag Martins**, which all entertained before we headed away, back the short distance to the Atair Sink hole, where we had lunch.



Arabian Wheatear

Our lunch was punctuated by an amazing show from a pair of **BONELLI'S EAGLES** which remained in the air for most of our time here, while a **Namaqua Dove**, on the other side of the size spectrum, was a joy to see. We were searching for **YEMEN SERINS** here, and while our first loop of the area didn't reveal them, another group of birders coming back up from the sinkhole informed us that they had seen them, and we were soon watching a party of 5 birds feeding on the rooftop of a closed café! Nice, if rather drab little birds, and certainly a regional speciality. On finishing up here, we took to the vehicles and made our way down off of the plateau, and back towards the coast, picking up **Short-toed Eagle** and **Booted Eagle** along the way.



Yemen Serin and Palastine Sunbird

We headed to the Dhiariz Wetland, a real jewel of a site, where a *fulvescens* **Greater Spotted Eagle** was present perched on the far banks. The wetland also hosted around 600 **Glossy Ibis**, 2 **Whiskered Terns**, **Temminck's Stint**, **Ruff**, **Black-tailed Godwits**, **Curlew**, **Common** and **Wood Sandpipiers**. Herons were well represented with **Squacco Herons** and **Indian Pond Heron**, **Cattle**, **Little**, **Intermediate**, **Western Reef Herons** and **Great Egrets**, **Purple Heron** and **Grey Herons** all present. An **Osprey** was also noted, while on the beach were **Sooty**, **Slender-billed** and **Heuglin's gulls**, **Caspian** and **Greater Crested Terns**, **Greenshank**, **Kentish Plover** and **Grey Plovers**. A scan of the sea produced a nice close fly-by of 6 **SOCOTRA CORMORANTS**, while over 60 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were also

noted along with an assortment of feeding gulls and terns. This was a fantastic hours birding, with excellent evening light! With the afternoon wearing on, we stopped for coffee before heading to Wadi Darbat, where we would finish off the day. Adult and juvenile **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLES** and a fly-by **SHIKRA** were highlights of the drive up, as were **FORBE'S WATSONS SWIFTS** which we watched hawking over the ridge besides some spectacular waterfalls. another **Bonelli's Eagle** flew over here, while Grey Wagtail, **Common Kingfisher**, **Common** and **Green Sandpipers** were seen along the riverside, as well as many Little Egrets and **Squacco Herons**.



Caspian Terns with Slender-billed Gulls, Greater Crested Tern and 'fulvescens' Greater Spotted Eagle

As dark fell the owling began. We had another crack at getting sight of an **ARABIAN SCOPS OWL**, and while we were in the presence of a crazy density here, with over 10 calling along the top of the valley, none were calling close by, leaving us empty handed again. We also heard both **Little Owl** and **Barn Owl** here, but the stars of the show were to follow, with an amazing show from a pair of **ARABIAN EAGLE OWLS** which spent an hour calling to each other from different points of the valley, one of which showing in plain view in a large tree up the slope, affording us fantastic torchlit views. A fantastic experience, and great to finally get an owl properly under the belt! We drove from here back to the hotel, where we were back for 20:00 and enjoyed a superb buffet dinner.



Arabian Eagle Owl

Friday 1st December 2023 – Mudayy, West Khawr and Mughsayl

Cool to start, then warm and sunny as usual! 31C

An epic of a day today, with an early start followed by a showstopping owling session (with a siesta in between to keep us all energized) and great birds all the way through! We started with a take-away breakfast loaded into the vehicles and carried with us to Mudayy, in the central western region of Oman. We drove through dawn across desert wadis, hills and flat plains to this small town interspersed by small palm tree plantations and a large oasis at the far end. This was home to one of very few wintering populations of **GREY HYPOCOLIUS** in Oman, and would be the focus of our efforts here. Fortunately we were very lucky, with a female bird being found not long after our arrival by Carles, perched on a small deciduous tree and obliging all of us with prolonged views; what a bird! It flew from tree to tree here before diving into cover, calling for a while (a vaguely Wigeon-like 'wee tu tu'!) before evaporating completely never to be seen again. Our wandering yielded at least 5 **Siberian Chiffchaffs**, a **Wryneck**, **NILE VALLEY SUNBIRD**, **DESERT LARK**, a party of 5 **SAND PARTRIDGES** and later another 10, and a couple of **BLACKSTARTS**, while the first flight of **CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE** flying overhead signalled our time to head to a small wet area to attempt to observe them coming to drink. The area did not disappoint, with a phenomenal show of over **600 CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE** coming in over the during course of 30 minutes in small groups, wheeling around and landing at the water's edge, drinking for not much more than a second or two, and then

exploding back into flight and away. Their visit was at times disrupted by an impressive adult and juvenile **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLE** which were keeping a close patrol of the area. In addition, a real highlight was a party of 18 **CROWNED SANDGROUSE** which dropped in early on and hung around for a good while, allowing us to approach and get fantastic views. Eventually they walked over to drink, at their leisure unlike the Chestnut-bellieds, before flying away. Just spectacular! A 1st winter **HOODED WHEATEAR** kept us company the whole time, as did a **Desert Wheatear**, before we headed back to the town.



Blackstart and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse

The morning had been a blinder, but it got better as, with a quick last scout around the oasis, a stunning male **GREY HYPOCOLIUS** flew in and proceeded to feed over the next 5 minutes in a low succulent shrub, allowing us to observe it at leisure; its amazing smooth plumage with no markings except the pearl primary tips and fabulous black mask, tail wagging as it ate seeds or flower buds. This bird then did similar to the female, flying to palms and disappearing completely, leaving us to depart very satisfied. We made the journey back to Salalah, arriving for lunch at 13:00, eating and then taking it easy before departing again at 14:30.



Grey Hypocolious

Our afternoon consisted of several stops at some superb wetland sites. The first, the East Khawr rivermouth near the docks, where 30 minutes or so held some superb birds. **TEREK'S SANDPIPERS** were in good numbers, as were **Temminck's Stints** and **Red-necked Phalaropes** (numbering over 100 offshore), while other waders included Little Stints, Whimbrel and Curlew, Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, Oystercatcher, Greenshanks, Grey Plovers and Black-tailed Godwits. A **Garganey** was with the Teal here, as were 2 **Pintail**, while **Glossy Ibis**, **Greater Flamingos**, 4 **Spoonbills** and several **Western Reef Herons** were also noted. A large number of **SOCOTRA CORMORANTS** lined the rocky shoreline and sea surface, numbering over 50, while at sea we picked up both **BROWN** and **MASKED BOOBIES** distantly. Terns were represented by **Caspian**, **Gull-billed**, **Whiskered** and **Greater Crested Terns**, while the gulls consisted of **Sooty**, **Slender-billed** and **Heuglin's Gulls**. At least 5 **Ospreys** were present here, as well as **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLE**, while **Citrine** and **White Wagtail** were seen, as well as **African Silverbills**. Once we had grilled everything thoroughly we headed out, this time to Al Mughsayl, where we birded the coast and rivermouths. The birding was equally enjoyable, starting with a **PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA** feeding by the road and 4 **RED-KNOBBED COOTS** on one pool. We also picked up **Indian Pond Heron** and **Striated Heron**, a good variety of waders here included 2 very educational **PIN-TAILED SNIPE** with Common Snipe, while 2 **Spotted Redshank** were our first of the trip, accompanied by **Wood Sandpiper**, **Temminck's** and **Little Stints**, **Ruff**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Little Ringed Plover**. A superb party of over 20 **Whiskered Terns** entertained as they hawked for insects over both water and hillside, while 8 **Little Terns** were also roosting here. We then moved towards the larger lagoon, where upon parking a medium sized falcon caught our attention as it careered over the flocks of terns and gulls here. The bird flew around and landed on low powerlines right beside us; a 1st year **LANNER FALCON**! What a bird this was, giving the most amazing views and performing a couple more flybys before disappearing. A single **ABDIM'S STORK** was also here, while the collapsed bridge hosted 4 **Night herons**. A **Desert Wheatear** perched by the cars as we got in and drove to the far end of the most stunning long sand beach. We set up for a bit of sea and shoreline watching, noting a single **BROWN NODDY** perched on a bouy offshore, a **BROWN BOOBY** flying west, a couple of **Lesser Crested Terns** with **Greater Crested Terns** and **Slender-billed Gulls**, 3 **Bar-tailed Godwits** and a few **Grey Plovers** along the beach.

The sun had set low behind the hills here now, so we made our final move of the day, along an impressive wide, dry wadi in search of **DESERT OWL**. We arrived at our selected spot, and as we got out of the vehicles into the dusk we heard the bird calling; it wasn't fully dark yet! Unfortunately after an hour of waiting, listening into the cricket chirp and **Sand Partridge** call-filled night under a superb sky of stars, the bird failed to call again. A fortuitous tip-off from some other birders on their way out of the same wadi however had us intrepidly heading further along the track, and into unknown

territory, where apparently a pair of **DESERT OWLS** had been vocal just 10 minutes earlier! We made our way carefully through sand and stony track to the spot, got out and walked to be faced by an impressive high cliff. Initially there was no sound, but then began the wonderful 'ho-ho-ho' calls of a male **DESERT OWL** emanating from the cliff in front of us! The bird changed position and sounded like it was now on the other side of the wadi, but then a female began to call, and Carles expertly managed to pick it up in the torch for all to see. An amazing owl in an amazing place. We were so pleased to have succeeded despite having to improvise, and the 45 minute drive back ended with a superb buffet dinner and a real sense that we had pulled one out of the bag today.



Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Red-knobbed Coots, Pin-tailed Snipe and Lanner Falcon

Saturday 2nd December 2023 – Mirbat pelagic, uplands and Salalah.

Warm and sunny, light winds all day from the north-east, 31C

Today saw us depart towards Mirbat to the east of Salalah; a small fishing town where we would meet with Hatem, who would be taking us offshore for the morning in search of Arabian Sea seabirds. We were in the harbour by 7:30 after an early breakfast back at base, enjoying the many **Sooty Gulls** on the harbour walls, plus a superb close **STRIATED HERON** on the breakwater blocks. We boarded our boat and began to head out of the harbour, counting a good number of **Night Herons** tucked in amongst the breakwater blocks. The harbour hosted a couple of **Green Turtles** which we saw at close quarters, while continuing the non-feathered theme we were wowed by a fantastic number of cetaceans just out of the harbour. There were fins on show for a good half an hour, and as we slowly travelled out we began to identify several species; an acrobatic **SPINNER DOLPHIN** associating with a good number of **BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS**, around 10 **RISSO'S DOLPHINS** and, most impressive of all, at least 20 superb **FALSE KILLER WHALES** which at one point passed under the boat! Awesome stuff. On to the birds, and the pelagic proved to be superb. We noted **PERSIAN SHEARWATERS** frequently, estimating up to 30 individuals, and enjoyed fantastic views of several sitting on the water beside the boat. One of the biggest targets of our time offshore was **JOUANIN'S PETREL**, of which we saw 5 birds which, while not coming close, gave good views of 2 of the individuals. Furthermore another tubenose that joined us was a superb **FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER** which spent quite a lot of time with us, feeding beside the boat amongst the throngs of **Sooty, Heuglin's and Steppe Gulls**, and also gave fantastic close passes. A real delight! Other great views were had of both **MASKED** and **BROWN BOOBIES** on several occasions, while terns featured throughout, with good numbers of **Little Terns** feeding alongside a single **WHITE-WINGED TERN**, a couple of **LESSER CRESTED TERNS**, several **Greater Crested Terns** and, most surprisingly, a great count of 8 **WHITE-CHEEKED TERNS** which passed in small groups, giving us a fantastic opportunity to run through the identification in winter plumage of this scarce species; grey rump concolourous with the back and a strong black frame to the entire underwing being two particularly useful characters. Amazingly we only saw 2 **Common Terns**! Another superb species with which we shared the water was up to 8 **BRIDLED TERNS**, also giving frequent good views. Add to these sightings the presence of both **Olive-Ridley** and **Loggerhead Turtles**, and it would be fair to say that the pelagic had been a success! We returned back to Mirbat after around 4 hours on the water, stopping to further enjoy the **Green Turtles** in the harbour and the large numbers of **Abdim's Storks** roosting on the shoreline, before returning to shore. We thanked Hatem for his expertise, before grabbing a coffee nearby and heading out for afternoon of land-based birding.

Our afternoon began with a return to the Tawi Atayr uplands on the plateau, with the intention of searching for Arabian Partridge, which proved unsuccessful again. There were many singing **Cinnamon-breasted Buntings** up here, while a flyover beast of a **LAPPET-FACED VULTURE** was certainly a highlight! We also saw both **STEPPE, BONELLI'S** and **EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLES**, while Crested Larks surrounded us while we had lunch scanning the slopes.

Finishing up here, we made our way back down off the plateau and back to Salalah, where we headed through the Al Balid farms and Archaeological site area, dropping on 8 **SPOTTED THICK-KNEES** roosting where we left them last year! A couple of **CRESTED HONEY BUZZARDS** cruised around the back of the coconut plantations as well as a **BOOTED EAGLE**; the former seemingly in low densities this winter. From here we then made to while away the afternoon around the boundaries of the Jarziz farms on the eastern edge of the city. Unfortunately there was no way to access beyond the high fence lines, but we managed some fantastic birding all the same around the fringes! A flock of 200 **Pacific Golden Plovers** flying overhead fortuitously had us stop right beside a perched 1st winter **BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER** which allowed for prolonged viewing, while good numbers of **White Storks** were in the fields

beyond. Walking the scrubby fringes lining the irrigated fields yielded some good birding, including several **SINGING BUSH LARKS**, a superb flyby from a male **PALLID HARRIER**, a male and female **Siberian Stonechat**, two **RICHARDS PIPITS** and at least 7 **Tree Pipits**, several **Yellow Wagtails** (with many more going to roost later), a single sculking **Bluethroat**, a **Steppe Grey Shrike**, **Namaqua Dove**, 6 **Arabian Green Bee-eaters**, a flock of Scaly-breasted Munias and, for sure the highlight here, a fantastic flyover by a really unexpected **SMALL PRATINCOLE**! A brilliant evening here, with the sun and the temperatures dropping making for a very pleasurable end of the days birding, though we weren't quite finished yet! We headed back to the hotel for the evening and an early dinner, before most of the group joined us for another spot of local owling.



Spotted Thick-knee, Blue-cheeked Bee Eater and Singing Bush Lark

After dinner we headed to Ain Hamran, where a wander through the forested slopes revealed several calling **ARABIAN SCOPS OWLS**. And it wasn't too long before we managed to catch sight of one, and were soon enjoying prolonged views of a calling bird over our heads, calling to a couple of neighbours in the deciduous trees surrounding us. A fantastic finish to another excellent day.



Arabian Scops Owl

Sunday 3rd December 2023 – journey Salalah to Duqm

Warm and sunny all day, light winds. 30C

Today saw us depart our hotel with cases packed and ready to transfer up to the east coast of Oman; the destination for tomorrow's birding, and hopefully for some Crab Plovers! However in the meantime we had a bit of travel to get under our belt, with several birding stops along the way. Our first stop was at Jarziz farms again, on the off chance of finding Oriental Skylark but also for a general bird around. We couldn't find any skylarks due to there being no access to the fields themselves this year, though we did note **SINGING BUSH LARKS**, **White** and **Yellow Wagtails**, a flock of **Whiskered Terns** with **White-winged Black Tern** for company, over 500 **Ruff** and a **Desert Wheatear**. We then moved onto Ain Razad; a scenic valley with a stream and lush vegetation running through, where we heard but didn't see **White-breasted Waterhen**, enjoyed great views of 3 **CITRINE WAGTAILS**, an elusive **Bluethroat** plus 5 more heard, an **African Paradise Flycatcher**, a **Long-billed Pipit** which allowed close scope views, a calling and reasonably well observed **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**, both **Clamorous** and **Eurasian Reed Warbler** and an adult **Eastern Imperial Eagle** which drifted overhead.

From here we hit the road, traveling north a couple of hours before turning off to spend a couple of hours birding around the Ubar farms out in the desert plains. Highlights included **Montagu's Harrier**, over 30 **CREAM-COLOURED COURSERS** on what has proved to be a fantastic tour for this species, 2 **European Rollers** on power lines, large numbers of **White Storks**, a **Booted Eagle** and a superb adult **LANNER FALCON**. Good numbers of **Namaqua Doves** were also noted, while several **GREATER HOOPOE LARKS** were also present. We then pushed onwards, making the journey up towards the highway 31, via a very bumpy 60km shortcut on dirt track across the desert; a rattly but very enjoyable experience! Not much noted here but 2 **Greater Hoopoe Larks** and a **Cream-coloured Courser**, before reaching the tarmac road and continuing north, stopping at Qitbit for lunch, where we found a superb **RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER**, 2 **Common** and 3 **Siberian Chiffchaffs** and a fantastic 1st winter **CRESTED HONEY BUZZARD**. Onwards to Maqshin for fuel, and a quick stop at an area of parkland with irrigated lawns, which offered a surprising mix of **Corn Bunting**, **Song Thrush** and several **White Wagtails**, sharing it with **Isabelline Wheatear**, **Isabelline Shrike** and 3 **PIN-TAILED SNIPE**; an eclectic mix if ever there was one! We then continued on towards Duqm, arriving just after 1930, where we checked into another excellent hotel for the night.

Monday 4th December 2023 – Duqm to Nizwa

Warm and sunny all day, moderate winds mid-afternoon and dust storms through empty quarter. 32C

Today we headed out after an early breakfast for our eagerly awaited visit to the intertidal mudflats of Barr Al Hikman; home to half a million wintering wetland birds, and hopefully to the iconic Crab Plover! After a brief pause at a roadside pool which yielded **Great Grey Shrike**, **Clamorous Reed Warbler** and a distant **Osprey**, we then made our way north towards the Barr Al Hikman peninsular. Driving across the dry, sunbaked lagoon beds towards the shore, it was amazing to arrive within sight of the shoreline and see **CRAB PLOVERS** even before we had left the vehicle! We unloaded and walked to the raised mangrove-fringed raised bank overlooking a vast mudflat thronging with waders, where the **CRAB PLOVERS** were superb, showing nice and close and in big numbers; over **180** that we could see from this point! The flock included adult and juvenile pairs, with the adults catching crabs to feed the young. Aside from these stars, we also enjoyed 21 further species of waders, including large numbers of **Bar-tailed Godwits**, **Greater** and **Lesser Sand Plovers**, plenty of **Terek's** and **Curlew Sandpipers** and a flyover group of 20 **Spotted Redshanks**, while a **WHITE-CHEEKED TERN** was noted by Carles. Other terns included **Little**, **Caspian**, **Gull-billed**, **Lesser Crested** and **Sandwich Terns**, while **Osprey** was seen as well as several **Clamorous Reed Warblers**.





Crab Plovers

We then moved the short distance on towards Shannah port, where throngs of gulls greeted us, loafing around the traditional dohw fishing boats. A small area of scrubby habitat behind the harbour hosted a superb group of 4 **BIMACULATED LARKS** feeding amongst salicornia plants. We watched them on the ground before they took flight and were away, with 12 **Black-crowned Sparrow Larks** in tow. Then Chris called a falcon which was coming in from the north-east. It looked small and agile, and with bins on it the diagnostic contrasting flight feather pattern left no doubt; it was a male **AMUR FALCON**! A great bird to pick up on. We then drove back to the first spot, where the tide was now well in and allowed brilliant views of small a variety of waders on the shore. Then we drove round to Filim, where further scanning failed to yield any hoped for Broad-billed Sandpipers, but did give good views to many waders while we tucked into our lunches.

By now it was mid-afternoon, so we hit the road, making our way back to Nizwa with a couple of short refreshment stops along the way. Checking into the hotel, we opted for an early dinner, before most of the group jumped at the chance to return for a second try at **OMANI OWL**. We arrived at around 8pm, and began working our way along the wadi, hearing the bird on a couple of occasions, but never quite pinning it down; it was certainly high up on the cliffs. Compensation came in the form of two superb **ARABIAN EAGLE OWLS** which we were shocked to locate in the torchlight! Tired and ready for bed, we headed back to base.

Tuesday 5th December 2023. Al Harar mountains and Muscat

Cooler up in the mountains, sunny throughout. 32C

Our last full day in Oman had come around, and gave us an opportunity to explore a new area of Oman; the high altitude mountains of Al Harar. We departed our hotel after a leisurely 7am breakfast, before checking out and making our way to the Wadi Birkat road, via the police checkpoint, beginning the steep climb up a winding but scenic road towards Jabal Al Akhdar. We made a number of stops along the way at various viewpoints, getting to grips with the birdlife of this area as we went. **HUME'S WHEATEAR** were noted frequently, often in pairs, and often associating with **PERSIAN WHEATEARS**; the two species frequently seen chasing each other from crag to crag. **Lesser Whitethroats** were seen and heard regularly, while at one stop we enjoyed fantastic views of both male and female **RUFIOUS-TAILED ROCK THRUSHES** making use of overhead wires and showing superb; a great, presumably wintering species to see here. A male **BLUE ROCK THRUSH** was also a delight here, as was a male

EASTERN BLACK REDSTART, while a **STRIOLATED BUNTING** which flew past us and landed distantly on a ridge was well appreciated, as we had only seen a brief fly-over earlier in the trip. We were positioned at around 2200 meters above sea level, and the view was wonderful as we continued further into the mountains. On from here we made a stop in an area with extensive rocky slopes with small bushes and Junipers which looked good for a couple of further target species. We walked a dirt track through the area, enjoying good views of a pair of **HUME'S WHEATEAR**, before pausing to scan, picking up a superb flock of 6 **ARABIAN BABBLERS** which were foraging amongst old junipers, roving across the hillside and coming really close, giving excellent views. Continuing to explore the area, we located a really interesting mixed flock of birds moving through a vegetated valley. The stars for sure were a characterful pair of **STREAKED SCRUB WARBLERS** which dashed along the ground between bushes, tails cocked and showing well. The flock also contained **Hume's wheatears**, **Eastern Black Redstarts**, **Lesser Whitethroats** and a brief pair of **STRIOLATED BUNTINGS**. From here we had our lunch before beginning our descent out of the mountains. The road was extremely steep, requiring full AWD, low gear and brake assist engaged to ensure we didn't burn out the brakes!



Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Hume's Wheatear and Arabian Babblers

We reached the bottom without incident, grabbed a coffee and headed towards Muscat, where we would spend the last of the day searching the coast for Pallas's Gull; a species we failed to connect with earlier in the trip, and unfortunately again today; they appear scarce this year. However we enjoyed some good birding at a rivermouth at Seeb Beach Park. A flock of 15 **PACIFIC GOLDEN**

PLOVERS were good to see, while **STRIATED HERON** and Common Kingfisher were also present along with a flock of **Whiskered Terns**, a single **Temminck's stint** and numerous **Lesser Sand Plovers**. We then moved along the coast in an easterly direction, searching the beaches and rivermouths for roosting gulls, noting **Red-necked Phalarope**, **Lesser Crested Terns** and **Greater Crested Terns** as we went, before the light faded and it was time for us to head into our hotel for the evening. Some of the group opted to join us for a final try for Pallid Scops Owl in Qurum Park, which unfortunately failed to materialise, though **INDIAN ROLLER**, **EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR** and several ***Egyptian Fruit Bats*** were seen before we returned for an 20:30 dinner and bed.

Wednesday 6th December 2023. Flights home

With our flights to Doha at 05:55, we were up early to transfer to the airport, with a smooth transition, boarding on time and arriving in Doha, where the group parted ways, heading to London, Manchester and, for Jason and Carles, to Barcelona.











ORIOLE BIRDING

OMAN - ARABIAN BIRDING ODYSSEY

25TH NOVEMBER - 5TH DECEMBER 2023

List based on Clements Bird Taxonomy, 2021

		26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Comments
	Galliformes - Landfowl: Grouses, Partridges & allies											
1	Sand Partridge (<i>Ammoperdix heyi</i>)						15					
2	Grey Francolin (<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>)	x	x									
	Anseriformes - Waterfowl: Ducks, Geese, Swans & allies											
3	Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	1										
4	Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)				6	x						
5	Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)				3	x	2					
6	Garganey (<i>Anas querquedula</i>)						4					
7	Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)	x			x		x				x	
8	Northern Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>)	x				x	x					
9	Common Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>)	x										
10	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>)	x										
	Apodiformes - Swifts, Hummingbirds & allies											
11	Pallid Swift (<i>Apus pallidus</i>)	x										
12	Forbes-Watson's Swift (<i>Apus berliozi</i>)					x						
	Pterocliiformes - Sandgrouses											
13	Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (<i>Pterocles exustus</i>)			120	30	4	600		4			
14	Crowned Sandgrouse (<i>Pterocles coronata</i>)						18					
15	Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse (<i>Pterocles lichtensteinii</i>)		8									
	Columbiformes - Pigeons & similar											
16	Feral Dove (<i>Columba livia</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
16a	Arabian Rock Dove (<i>Columba livia palaestinae</i>)		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

		26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Comments
17	Eurasian Collared Dove (<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>)	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
18	Laughing Dove (<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
19	Namaqua Dove (<i>Oena capensis</i>)				2	2		1	x	1		
20	Bruce's Green Pigeon (<i>Treron waalia</i>)				2							
Gruiformes - Cranes, moorhens and coots												
21	White-breasted Waterhen (<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>)			1					H			
22	Common Moorhen (<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>)					x	x		x			
23	Eurasian Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>)					x	1					
24	Red-knobbet Coot (<i>Fulica cristata</i>)						4					
Podicipediformes - Grebes												
25	Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>)	x			x	x						
Phoenicopteriformes - Flamingoes												
26	Greater Flamingo (<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>)	x			x	1	x			x	x	
Charadriiformes - Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns, Auks												
27	Spotted Thick-knee (<i>Burhinus capensis</i>)							8				
28	Eurasian Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)	x				1	x			x		
29	Crab Plover (<i>Dromas ardeola</i>)									180		
30	Black-winged Stilt (<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>)	x			x	x	x			x	x	
31	Pheasant-tailed Jacana (<i>Hydrophaisanus chirurgus</i>)						1					
32	Red-wattled Lapwing (<i>Vanellus indicus</i>)	x			x			4			x	
33	Pacific Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>)							200			15	
34	Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)					4	x			x		
35	Common Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)	x					x	x		x	x	
36	Little Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>)	x					2					
37	Kentish Plover (<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>)	x				x	x			x	x	
38	Lesser Sand Plover (<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>)	x								x	80	
39	Greater Sand Plover (<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>)	x		1						x		
40	Common Snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>)	x					x		1		1	

[illegible]

		26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Comments
67	Sooty Gull (<i>Ichthyaetus hemprichii</i>)	x				x	x	x		x	x	
68	Brown Noddy (<i>Anous stolidus</i>)						1					
69	Caspian Tern (<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>)					2	15			x		
70	Greater Crested Tern (<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>)	x				x	x	x			x	
71	Lesser Crested Tern (<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>)	x					x	x		x	x	
72	Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>)	x								x	x	
73	White-cheeked Tern (<i>Sterna repressa</i>)							8		1		
74	Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)							2				
75	Gull-billed Tern (<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>)	x			1		1			x		
76	Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>)	x					8	x		x		
77	Bridled Tern (<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>)							8				
78	Whiskered Tern (<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>)	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	
79	White-winged Black Tern (<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>)							3	1			
Procellariiformes - Petrels, albatroses, shearwaters												
80	Persian Shearwater (<i>Puffinus persicus</i>)	x						30				
81	Flesh-footed Shearwater (<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>)							1				
82	Jouanin's Petrel (<i>Bulweria fallax</i>)							5				
Ciconiiformes - Storks												
83	Abdim's Stork (<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>)			x			1	x	8			
84	White Stork (<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>)			x				20	x			
Suliformes - Cormorants, Anhingas, Boobies												
85	Masked Booby (<i>Sula dactylatra</i>)						1	x				
86	Brown Booby (<i>Sula leucogaster</i>)						1	x				
87	Great Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)	x				1	x			x	x	
88	Socotra Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax nigrogularis</i>)					6	70					
Pelecaniformes - Pelicans, Herons, Ibises & similars												
89	Glossy Ibis (<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>)	x		2		600	x	x	x	x	x	
90	Eurasian Spoonbill (<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>)	2					6					

		26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Comments
91	Striated Heron (<i>Butorides striata</i>)	1					1	1			1	
92	Squacco Heron (<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>)	x				x	x	x	x			
93	Indian Pond Heron (<i>Ardeola grayii</i>)	x		3		2	x					
94	Western Cattle Egret (<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>)	x		x		x		x	x			
95	Black-crowned Night Heron (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)					H	4	8	1			
96	Purple Heron (<i>Ardea purpurea</i>)	1		1		1	1	1	1			
97	Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)	x		1		x	x	x	x	x	x	
98	Intermediate Egret (<i>Ardea intermedia</i>)					1				1		
99	Western Reef Egret (<i>Egretta gularis</i>)	x				x	x	x		x	x	
100	Little Egret (<i>Egretta garzetta</i>)	x				x	x	x	x			
101	Great White Heron (<i>Agrodiaetus albus</i>)	x			x	1				x	1	
	Accipitriformes - Eagles, Buzzards, Old World Vultures & similar											
102	Egyptian Vulture (<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>)		40									
103	Eurasian Griffon (<i>Gyps fulvus</i>)		5									
104	Lappet-faced Vulture (<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>)							1				
105	Western Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)	1				2	8			5	1	
106	Crested Honey Buzzard (<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>)				x			3	1			
107	Greater Spotted Eagle (<i>Clanga clanga</i>)		10			1*						*form fulvescens
108	Steppe Eagle (<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>)		50		x	x	2	x	1			
109	Eastern Imperial Eagle (<i>Aquila heliaca</i>)		1		1	x	3	x	x			
110	Verreaux's Eagle (<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>)					2						
111	Bonelli's Eagle (<i>Aquila fasciata</i>)				4	5		1				
112	Booted Eagle (<i>Aquila pennata</i>)				1	1		2	2			
113	Short-toed Snake Eagle (<i>Circaerus gallicus</i>)		2	1	x	1			1			
114	Shikra (<i>Accipiter badius</i>)					1	1					
115	Western Marsh Harrier (<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
116	Pallid Harrier (<i>Circus macrourus</i>)							1m				
117	Montagu's Harrier (<i>Circus pygargus</i>)								1			

		26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Comments
	Strigiformes - Owls											
118	Arabian Scops Owl (<i>Otus pamelae</i>)				H	x		3	1			
119	Desert Owl (<i>Strix hadorami</i>)						4					3 heard only
120	Omani Owl (<i>Strix butleri</i>)										H	
121	Western Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)					H	1					
122	Arabian Eagle Owl (<i>Bubo milesis</i>)					3					2	
	Bucerotiformes - Hoopoe											
123	Eurasian Hoopoe (<i>Upupa epops</i>)				1	1		1	1			
	Coraciiformes - Rollers, Bee-eaters, Kingfishers											
124	Indian Roller (<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>)	x	x	1							1	
125	European Roller (<i>Coracias garrulus</i>)			1					2			
126	Grey-headed Kingfisher (<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>)				2							
127	Common Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	x				1					1	
128	Green Bee-eater (<i>Merops orientalis</i>)	x	x					8				
	Piciformes - Woodpeckers											
129	Eurasian Wryneck (<i>Jynx torquilla</i>)				1		1					
	Falconiformes - Falcons											
130	Common Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)		x	10	x	x	1	x	x		x	
131	Amur Falco (<i>Falco amurensis</i>)									1		
	Psittaciformes - Parrots and allies											
132	Alexandrine Parakeet (<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>)	x							x			
133	Rose-ringed Parakeet (<i>Psittacula krameri</i>)	x				x	1		x			
	Passeriformes - Perching & song birds											
134	Black-crowned Tchagra (<i>Tchagra senegalensis</i>)				5	x						
135	Brown Shrike (<i>Lanius cristatus</i>)					1						
136	Isabelline Shrike (<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>)	x	1		1	1	1	x	x			
137	Turkestan Shrike (<i>Lanius phoenicuroides</i>)			1	1							
138	Steppe Grey Shrike (<i>Lanius pallidirostris</i>)		1					1				

		26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Comments
139	Southern Grey Shrike (<i>Lanius meridionalis aucheri</i>)		1	1	1	1	1		x	1		
140	Arabian Babbler (<i>Turdoides squamiceps</i>)										6	
141	African Paradise Flycatcher (<i>Tersiphone viridis</i>)				x	x			1			
142	Grey Hypocolius (<i>Hypocolius ampelinus</i>)						2					
143	White-eared Bulbul (<i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>)	x	x	x						x		
144	Red-vented Bulbul (<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>)	x										
145	White-spectacled Bulbul (<i>Pycnonotus xanthopygos</i>)	x	2		x	x	x	x	x		x	
146	House Crow (<i>Corvus splendens</i>)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
147	Brown-necked Raven (<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>)		x	x			x		x	x		
148	Fan-tailed Raven (<i>Corvus rhidipurus</i>)				x	x		x	x			
149	Greater Hoopoe-Lark (<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>)			15					x	x		
150	Desert Lark (<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>)						2					
151	Bimaculated Lark (<i>Melanocorypha bimaculata</i>)									4		
152	Greater Short-toed Lark (<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>)			60		2			x			
153	Turkestan Short-toed Lark (<i>Alaulada heinei</i>)								x			
154	Black-crowned Sparrow-lark (<i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i>)			4	x	300		x	x	12		
155	Singing Bush Lark (<i>Mirafra cantillans</i>)							8	1			
156	Crested Lark (<i>Galerida cristata</i>)	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
157	Sand Martin (<i>Riparia riparia</i>)						1					
158	Pale Crag Martin (<i>Ptyonoprogne obsoleta</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
159	Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)				x	1		x	x	x		
160	Graceful Prinia (<i>Prinia gracilis</i>)				x	x	x	x	x			
161	Delicate Prinia (<i>Prinia lepida</i>)	x	x								x	
162	Common Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)	x	1	x					x			
162a	Siberian Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita tristis</i>)						5		x			
163	Plain Leaf Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus neglectus</i>)		x									
164	Great Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>)											
165	Clamorous Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>)	x							1	x		

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166	Eurasian Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>)								x			
167	Streaked Scrub Warbler (<i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>)										2	
168	Asian Desert Warbler (<i>Curruca nana</i>)		1									
169	Lesser Whitethroat (<i>Curruca curruca</i>)		x	x	x		x	x			x	
170	Eastern Orphean Warbler (<i>Curruca crassirostris</i>)		1	3								
171	Arabian Warbler (<i>Curruca leucomelaena</i>)				x	x						
172	Ménétriés's Warbler (<i>Curruca mystacea</i>)		x									
173	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler (<i>Iduna pallida</i>)			1					1			
174	Abyssinian White-eye (<i>Zosterops abyssinicus</i>)				x	x			x			
175	Common Myna (<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
176	Tristram's Starling (<i>Onychognathus tristamii</i>)				x	x	x	x	x			
177	Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)								1			
178	Common Rock Thrush (<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>)										3	
179	Blue Rock Thrush (<i>Monticola solitarius</i>)										1	
180	Bluethroat (<i>Luscinia svecica</i>)	1		1				x	6			
181	Black Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>)					1					3	ssp. phoenicuroides
182	Siberian Stonechat (<i>Saxicola maurus</i>)							1				
183	Isabelline Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>)			10	x	x	x	x	x			
184	Desert Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>)		1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
185	Blackstart (<i>Oenanthe melanura</i>)					1	x	x	1		1	
186	Arabian Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe lugentoides</i>)				x	10		x				
187	Hume's Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe albonigra</i>)		3								8	
188	Hooded Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe monacha</i>)						1					
189	Persian Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe chrysopygia</i>)		2								4	
190	Red-breasted Flycatcher (<i>Ficedula parva</i>)			1					1			
191	Nile Valley Sunbird (<i>Hedydipna metallica</i>)						x					
192	Palestine Sunbird (<i>Cinnyris osea</i>)				x	x			x			
193	Shining Sunbird (<i>Cinnyris habessinicus</i>)				x	x		1	x			

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194	Purple Sunbird (<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>)	x	x							x	x	
195	House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
196	Rüppell's Weaver (<i>Ploceus galbula</i>)				x	x		x	x			
197	African Silverbill (<i>Euodice cantans</i>)				x	x	x	x	x			
198	Indian Silverbill (<i>Euodice malabarica</i>)	x	x	x							x	
199	Citrine Wagtail (<i>Motacilla citreola</i>)	x					x		3		1	
200	White Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba</i>)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
200a	Masked Wagtail (<i>M.a. personata</i>)									1		
201	Grey Wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>)	1			x	x						
202	Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>)				2	1		x	x			
203	Richard's Pipit (<i>Anthus ricardi</i>)							2				
204	Tawny Pipit (<i>Anthus campestris</i>)		1	3	2				x			
205	Long-billed Pipit (<i>Anthus similis</i>)		1			1			1			
206	Red-throated Pipit (<i>Anthus cervinus</i>)			1								
207	Tree Pipit (<i>Anthus trivialis</i>)				1	2		6				
208	Water Pipit (<i>Anthus spinolleta</i>)			3								ssp. coutellii
209	Yemen Serin (<i>Crithagra menachensis</i>)					3						
210	Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak (<i>Rhynchostruthus percivali</i>)					2						
211	Striolated Bunting (<i>Emberiza striolata</i>)		1								5	
212	Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>)				x	x	x	x	x			
Additional Species												
213	Black-winged Kite (<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>)	6										
214	Little Owl (<i>Athene noctua</i>)		1			1						
215	Common Whitethroat (<i>Curruca communis</i>)		1									
216	Cream-coloured Courser (<i>Cursorius cursor</i>)		8			19			40			
217	Eurasian Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)		1									
218	Spur-winged Plover (<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>)				2							
219	Common Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>)					1						

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