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National Avian Research Center

The National Avian Research Center (NARC) is a research organisation dedicated to the ecologically sustainable use of wildlife. NARC, based in Abu Dhabi, was established through Royal Decree in September 1989 by the Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al Nahyan. NARC's aim is to carry out ecological research to further knowledge, understanding and public interest in the conservation of birds and UAE wildlife in general.

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Compiled and edited by Colin Richardson

Editorial committee

Simon Aspinall
Erik Hirschfeld
John Bannon

emirates bird

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Drawings: *Great Crested Grebe, Cotton Teal, Merlin, Little Pratincole, Golden Plover, Sociable Plovers, Long-toed Stint, Black Tern, White-breasted Kingfisher, Indian Koel, Olive-backed Pipit, Blyth's Pipit, Small Skylark, Eversmann's Redstart, Cetti's Warbler, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Moustached Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Little Bunting, Dead Sea Sparrow* by *Bill Morton*.

Front cover: Although threatened throughout their restricted Asian breeding range, four Sociable Plovers were at Hamraniyah in early January 1993. This was only the 7th record for the country (painting by *Michal Skakuj*).



Editorial

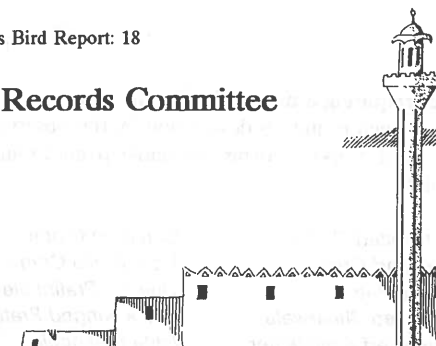
There have been some anxious enquiries about the apparent non-appearance of the 1993 *Emirates Bird Report*. Had they missed it? Had it been lost in the post? Neither was the case. This year's edition had simply taken rather longer than usual to compile, due to the huge (very welcome!) numbers of records received and the enthusiasm by a dedicated band of birders-cum-publishers in trying to raise the standard of the 1993 report. A welcome addition to the Checklist in this edition are charts, graphs and tables which liven it up and help to make sense of some of our often rather random observations. There are tables showing the full results of our waterfowl counts in January and September. Such counts cannot be achieved without the help of many volunteers who can only be imposed on once or twice a year for such a monumental effort. Regular counts need to be undertaken at least monthly in order to gain a better understanding of the needs of shorebirds as they pass through the region in their vast numbers. The National Avian Research Center realises the importance of this and is planning to undertake more regular counts as well as other scientific studies of the country's important wetlands, many of which are critically threatened.

Acknowledgements

This edition has been published under the name of the recently-formed Emirates Bird Records Committee, who take responsibility for assessing rare bird observations in the country. All interesting records are published inside as usual and we are grateful to Simon, Erik and John for their input, made in their own free time. The involvement of the National Avian Research Center in supporting the work of EBRC and in financially assisting the cost of producing this year's *Emirates Bird Report* is greatly appreciated.



Emirates Bird Records Committee



The Emirates Bird Records Committee was formed in 1993 and the first meeting was held on 17th October 1993 in Abu Dhabi under the chairmanship of Erik Hirschfeld. (However Erik had to retire in November 1994 on return to his native Sweden. Colin Richardson is looking after the business of the Committee until a new Chairman is elected.) Other Committee members are Colin Richardson (Secretary), Simon Aspinall, John Bannon and Steve James. The EBRC will assess rare bird reports in the United Arab Emirates and periodically review a number of old reports. The country's bird records will remain in the care of Colin Richardson, while Steve James will receive records on behalf of the Emirates Natural History Group.

All observer's correspondence should be addressed to the Emirates Bird Records Committee (EBRC), P.O. Box 50394, Dubai, UAE. Tel/Fax Dubai (+971 4) 313378

The most recent list of UAE species, published in *Tribulus 1:2* (Richardson & Richardson 1991) will continue as the country's official list, forming the basis for future additions and updates. The Committee will meet three times a year and publish its decisions in this journal annually. Recent (1994) decisions are published later in the report.

Recording procedures

The Committee agreed the following criterion regarding reporting procedures:

A description may be sought by the EBRC in the case of the observer reporting a new species (or subspecies) to the UAE, those species with less than 10 records in the last 10 years, or those species where identification criteria is problematical. In addition, confirmation may be required from observers should the species concerned be unseasonal, reported in unusual numbers, breeding behaviour (for non-breeding species) or any other unusual behaviour.

It appears from records that some species are not as rare as previously thought (ie Honey Buzzard, Montagu's Harrier, Great Knot, Plain Leaf Warbler) and in some cases it is the case that where a species was previously thought common, it is in fact rarely reported reliably (ie Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Greylag Goose, Steppe Eagle, Short-eared Owl). Also due to the increasing skills of some observers, both residents and visitors, the Committee would look at each rare report on its individual merit, occasionally relaxing the need for a description, but retain the right to request a description in most cases.

A full list of species requiring a description follows in the next section.

Species requiring a description by the observer

Species which require a description by the observer are as follows:

(Rare Bird Report Forms, available from Colin Richardson, should be used wherever possible!)

<i>Great Crested Grebe</i>	<i>Common Crane</i>	<i>Blyth's Pipit</i>
<i>Red-necked Grebe</i>	<i>Demoiselle Crane</i>	<i>Olive-backed Pipit</i>
<i>Jouanin's Petrel</i>	<i>Oriental Pratincole</i>	<i>Forest Wagtail</i>
<i>Flesh-footed Shearwater</i>	<i>Black-winged Pratincole</i>	<i>Black Bush Robin</i>
<i>Wedge-tailed Shearwater</i>	<i>Little Pratincole</i>	<i>Thrush Nightingale</i>
<i>Wilson's Storm-Petrel</i>	<i>Kittlitz's Plover</i>	<i>Eversmann's Redstart</i>
<i>Leach's Storm-Petrel</i>	<i>Dotterel</i>	<i>Pied Stonechat</i>
<i>Red-footed Booby</i>	<i>Golden Plover</i>	<i>Finsch's Wheatear</i>
<i>Masked Booby</i>	<i>Sociable Plover</i>	<i>White-crowned Black Wheatear</i>
<i>Brown Booby</i>	<i>Knot</i>	<i>Ring Ouzel</i>
<i>White Pelican</i>	<i>Red-necked Stint</i>	<i>Blackbird</i>
<i>Dalmatian Pelican</i>	<i>Long-toed Stint</i>	<i>Eye-browed Thrush</i>
<i>Bittern</i>	<i>Great Snipe</i>	<i>Fieldfare</i>
<i>Indian Pond Heron</i>	<i>Woodcock</i>	<i>Redwing</i>
<i>Black Stork</i>	<i>Grey Phalarope</i>	<i>Mistle Thrush</i>
<i>Mute Swan</i>	<i>Great Skua</i>	<i>Cetti's Warbler</i>
<i>Bewick's Swan</i>	<i>White-eyed Gull</i>	<i>River Warbler</i>
<i>White-fronted Goose</i>	<i>Sabine's Gull</i>	<i>Moustached Warbler</i>
<i>Greylag Goose</i>	<i>Brown-headed Gull</i>	<i>Blyth's Reed Warbler</i>
<i>Ruddy Shelduck</i>	<i>Common Gull</i>	<i>Icterine Warbler</i>
<i>Cotton Teal</i>	<i>Roseate Tern</i>	<i>Hume's Lesser Whitethroat</i>
<i>Marbled Teal</i>	<i>Sooty Tern</i>	<i>Greenish Warbler</i>
<i>Red-crested Pochard</i>	<i>Black Tern</i>	<i>Yellow-browed Warbler</i>
<i>Red-breasted Merganser</i>	<i>Lesser Noddy</i>	<i>Dusky Warbler</i>
<i>Crested Honey Buzzard</i>	<i>Coronated Sandgrouse</i>	<i>Radde's Warbler</i>
<i>Black-shouldered Kite</i>	<i>Spotted Sandgrouse</i>	<i>Bonelli's Warbler</i>
<i>Brahminy Kite</i>	<i>Blue-bellied Sandgrouse</i>	<i>Blue-and-white Flycatcher</i>
<i>Pallas's Fish Eagle</i>	<i>Woodpigeon</i>	<i>Pied Flycatcher</i>
<i>Griffon Vulture</i>	<i>Eastern Turtle Dove</i>	<i>Bay-backed Shrike</i>
<i>Hen Harrier</i>	<i>Namaqua Dove</i>	<i>Black Drongo</i>
<i>Dark Chanting Goshawk</i>	<i>Indian Koel</i>	<i>Wattled Starling</i>
<i>Goshawk</i>	<i>Bruce's Scops Owl</i>	<i>Dead Sea Sparrow</i>
<i>Levant Sparrowhawk</i>	<i>Scops Owl</i>	<i>Tree Sparrow</i>
<i>Steppe Buzzard</i>	<i>Long-eared Owl</i>	<i>Chaffinch</i>
<i>Lesser Spotted Eagle</i>	<i>Short-eared Owl</i>	<i>Brambling</i>
<i>Steppe Eagle</i>	<i>Egyptian Nightjar</i>	<i>Goldfinch</i>
<i>Imperial Eagle</i>	<i>Alpine Swift</i>	<i>Siskin</i>
<i>Golden Eagle</i>	<i>Little Swift</i>	<i>Linnet</i>
<i>Merlin</i>	<i>Grey-headed Kingfisher</i>	<i>Yellowhammer</i>
<i>Lanner Falcon</i>	<i>White-breasted Kingfisher</i>	<i>White-capped Bunting</i>
<i>Saker Falcon</i>	<i>Pied Kingfisher</i>	<i>Cinereous Bunting</i>
<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>	<i>White-throated Bee-eater</i>	<i>Rustic Bunting</i>
<i>Little Crake</i>	<i>Bar-tailed Desert Lark</i>	<i>Little Bunting</i>
<i>Baillon's Crake</i>	<i>Small Skylark</i>	<i>Yellow-breasted Bunting</i>
<i>White-breasted Waterhen</i>	<i>Temminck's Horned Lark</i>	<i>Reed Bunting</i>
<i>Purple Gallinule</i>	<i>Crag Martin</i>	<i>Red-headed Bunting</i>

Emirates Bird Report 1993**Contributors to the Systematic list**

There are not many resident birdwatchers in the United Arab Emirates, and all are expatriates, so visiting individuals and groups provide a large proportion of each year's records. Their records form the backbone of the *Checklist* and the most interesting sightings are credited to the observer/s.

There is still much to be learnt about the true status of many of the scarcer species and new information on the more common ones is always being added to the pool of knowledge. Many inexperienced birdwatchers, usually with a keen eye for detail, have provided sightings in their gardens often turning up new breeding information, particularly escaped and potential feral species. The UAE is fast becoming a magnet for birdwatching tourists, turning their eyes to Arabia for new and exciting birds in a relatively unexplored landscape. Many of the people listed below only spent a few days in the Emirates, but were thoughtful enough to pass their records on, and for that we are grateful.

Last, and most importantly, our thanks go to the keen regular birders, providing regular records from their favourite patches often rewarded by a rarity or a first record for the country. Well done to all of you! Having said, that we apologise if any names have been inadvertently left out of the list.

Peter Adhemar	Steve James	Len Reaney
Simon Aspinall	Nigel S.Jarrett	Cheryl Remple
John K.Bannon	Marijcke Jongbloed	Colin Richardson
Teri Bailey	Matti Kapanen	R.A. Richardson (RAR)
Graham Clarkson	Dr.Reza Khan	Jane Robertson
Rona Dennis	Eric List	Andrew Ross
Jochen Dierschke	Heikki Luoto	Antero Topp
Gary Feulner	Martin McGill	Tapio Tuomenoja
Eric Flack	David Milner	Steve Turner
Jim Footitt	Patrick Murphy	Heikki Virtanen
Christian Gross	Natur Studien-reisen (NSR)	Maarten Verhage
Jim Hart	Roger & Kate Osborne (RKO)	John Wollett
Peter Hellyer	Patrick Osborne	Mike Wood.
Erik Hirschfeld	Dave Paynter	
Jenny Hollingworth (JHo)	Charles Pilcher	
Sarah Howlett	Rob Qusted	
Brian Hunter	Robert Read (RR)	

Gazeteer of sites referred to in the Systematic List

The gazeteer lists all sites, without distinguishing the important ones, where either large numbers or rare birds regularly occur. The following sites are regularly watched (sometimes daily, but at least monthly) and produce the vast majority of birds logged. Most are described in detail in *The Birds of the United Arab Emirates* (Richardson 1990).

ABU DHABI AREA

Bateen Wood
Mushref palace gardens
Eastern lagoon
Western Road lagoon
Al Wathba camel track and woods

DUBAI AREA

Khor Dubai
Zabeel fish ponds
Emirates golf course

EAST COAST

Khor Kalba and surrounds
Ras Dibba
Dibba beach and plain

SHARJAH AREA

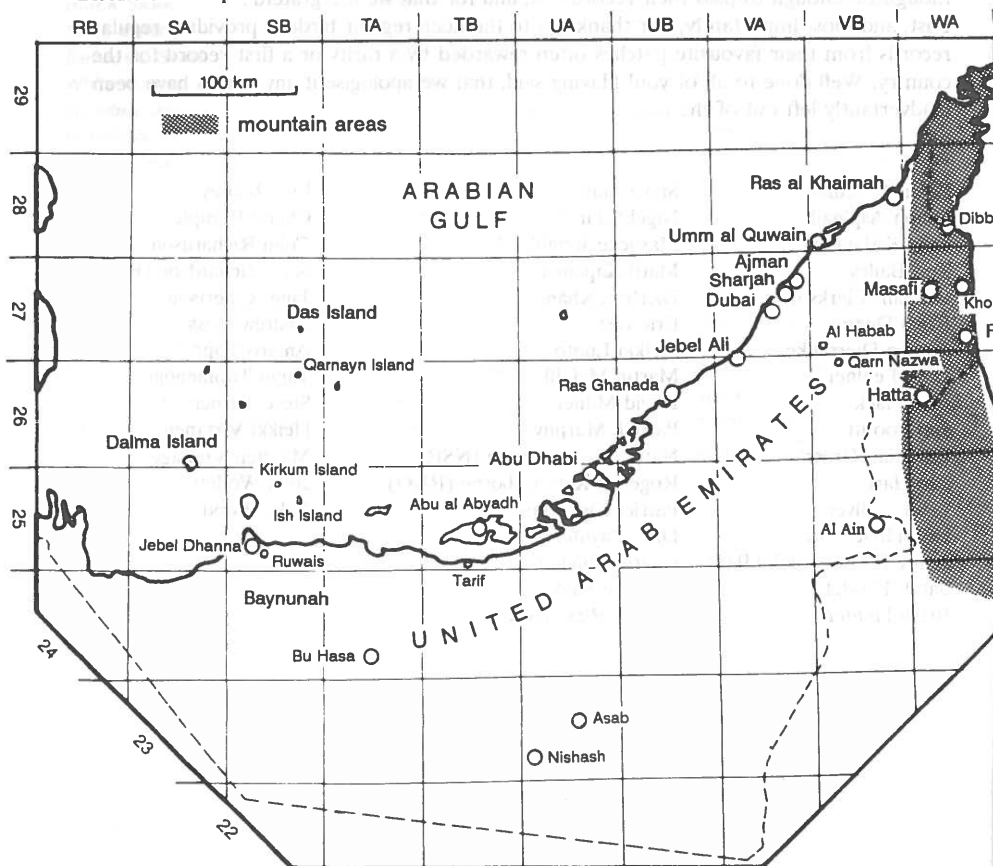
Ramtha tip

RAS AL KHAIMAH

Hamraniyah fields
Al Jazeera Khor
Dhayah mangroves
Wadi Bih

AL AIN AREA

Ain al Faydah
Jebel Hafit
Al Ain sewage/compost plant
camel race track
hanging gardens (Mahdah)



Map of the UAE showing locations of sites mentioned in the report.

The gazeteer lists all sites mentioned in the *Systematic List* and in most of the articles in this report. The grid references are shown on the map on the previous page, and follow those used by the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia (ABBA) project.

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Abu al Abyadh, Abu Dhabi (TB25) | Hamriyah, Sharjah (VB27) | Ruwais, Abu Dhabi (SB25) |
| ABU DHABI (UA25) | Hatta, Dubai (WA26) | Ruwayah, Dubai (VA27) |
| Ain al Faydah, Abu Dhabi (VB25) | Jazeera al Hamrah, RAK (VB28) | Safa Park, Dubai (VA27) |
| AJMAN (VA27) | Jazeeraat Selahah, AD (SB25) | Samaha, Abu Dhabi (UB26) |
| Al Ain (VB25) | Jebel Ali, Dubai (VA27) | SHARJAH (VA27) |
| Al Bu Khoosh, Abu Dhabi (TA27) | Jebel Ali hotel, Dubai (VA26) | Sir Bani Yas Is., Abu Dhabi (SB25) |
| Al Dhafra, Abu Dhabi (SB25) | Jebel Buhays, Sharjah (VB27) | South Yasat Is., Abu Dhabi (RB25) |
| Al Ghar lake, Abu Dhabi (UB25) | Jebel Dhanna, Abu Dhabi (SB25) | Shuwaib, Abu Dhabi (VB26) |
| Al Jazeera Khor, RAK (VB28) | Jebel Faiyah, Sharjah (VB27) | Shuweihat, Abu Dhabi (SA25) |
| Al Kharran, RAK (VB28) | Jebel Hafit, Abu Dhabi (VB25) | Suweihan, Abu Dhabi (VA25) |
| Al Habab, Dubai (VB27) | Jebel Qatar, Oman (VB25) | Sila, Abu Dhabi (RB25) |
| Al Hayer, Abu Dhabi (VB26) | Jebel Rawdah, Oman (VB26) | Siniyah Island, UAQ (VB28) |
| Al Rifaa, Umm al Quwain (VB28) | Jumeirah, Dubai (VA27) | Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi (SB25) |
| Al Wathba, Abu Dhabi (UB25) | Kafai Island, Abu Dhabi ((RB26) | Tarif, Abu Dhabi (TB25) |
| Awir, Dubai (VA27) | Kalba, Sharjah (WA27) | Tayibah, Fujeirah (WA27) |
| Bab, Abu Dhabi (TB24) | Khalidiyah spit, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | Thumayriyah, Abu Dhabi (TA25) |
| Bahrani Island, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | Khasab, Musandam (WA29) | Umm Amin, Abu Dhabi (TA25) |
| Balghelam Island, AD (UB26) | Khatmat Malaha, Sharjah (WA26) | Umm al Fayarrin,
Musandam (WB29) |
| Bateen airbase, AD (UA25) | Khor al Beidah, UAQ (VB28) | Umm al Kirkum (SB25) |
| Bateen Wood, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | Khor Dubai, Dubai (VA27) | UMM AL QUWAIN (VB28) |
| Baynunah, Abu Dhabi (SB24) | Khor Fakkan, East Coast (WA27) | Ummus Saqeem, Dubai (VA27) |
| Beidah dump, UAQ (VB28) | Khor Kalba, East Coast (WA27) | Umm Shaif, Abu Dhabi (TA27) |
| Bida Zayed, Abu Dhabi (TB24) | Khor Khan, Sharjah (VA27) | Wadi Agran, Oman (WA25) |
| Bidiyah, Fujeirah (WA27) | Khor Midfaq, UAQ (VB28) | Wadi Baraq (WA27) |
| Bu Asiba, Abu Dhabi (UB23) | Khutwa, Oman (WA25) | Wadi Bih, Ras al Khaimah (WA28) |
| Bu Hasa, Abu Dhabi (TA24) | Lima Rock, Musandam (WA28) | Wadi Fay, Hatta (WA26) |
| Buraimi, Oman (VB25) | Liwa, Abu Dhabi (TB23) | Wadi Ghayl, Fujeirah (WA27) |
| Bu Tinah, Abu Dhabi (TA26) | Madam plain, Sharjah (VB26) | Wadi Hayl, Fujeirah (WA27) |
| Creek golf course, Dubai (VA27) | Mafraq, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | Wadi Khabb Shamsi,
Musandam (WA28) |
| Das Island (SB27) | Mahdah, Oman (VB25) | Wadi Midfah, UAQ (VB28) |
| Delma Is., Abu Dhabi (SA25/26) | Marbad, Ajman (WA27) | Wadi Qhafi, Oman (WA26) |
| Digdaga, Ras al Khaimah (VB28) | Masafi (WA27) | Wadi Shawkat, RAK (WA27) |
| Dhahiyah, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | Masafi (WA27) | Wadi Sharm, Oman (WA26) |
| Dhadnah, East Coast (WA27) | Mirfa, Abu Dhabi (TA25) | Wadi Shih, East Coast (WA27) |
| Dhaid, Sharjah (VB27) | Murawah Island, AD (TA25) | Wadi Sumayni, Oman (VB26) |
| Dhayah, Ras al Khaimah (WA28) | Musandam, Oman (WA28) | Wadi Tawi Yaeen, Fujeirah (RB28) |
| Daftah, RAK (WA27) | Mushrif Park, Dubai (VA27) | Wadi Uyaynah, Fujeirah (WA27) |
| Dibba, East Coast (WA28) | Mussafah, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | Western Road, Abu Dhabi (UA25) |
| DUBAI (VA27) | North Yasat Is., Abu Dhabi (SA25) | Yasat Islands,
Abu Dhabi (RB/SA25) |
| Eastern lagoon, AD (UA25) | Nadd al Sheba golf course (VA27) | Zabeel fish ponds, Dubai (VA27) |
| Emirates golf crse, Dubai (VA27) | Qarn al Esh, Abu Dhabi (TA25) | |
| Falaj al Mualla, UAQ (VB27) | Qarnayn Island (SB26) | |
| Fujeirah National dairy farm,
Dibba (WA28) | Qarn Nazwa, Sharjah (VB26) | |
| Fossil valley
(Sayh Huwayyah) (VB25) | Qaser Salahah, Abu Dhabi (TB25) | |
| FUJEIRAH (WA27) | Rams, Ras al Khaimah (WA28) | |
| Ghaghah Is., Abu Dhabi (RB25) | Ramtha tip, Sharjah (VA27) | |
| Ghalilah, Ras al Khaimah (WA28) | Ras al Akhdar, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | |
| Ghantoot, Abu Dhabi (UB26) | RAS AL KHAIMAH (VB28) | |
| Ghayathi, Abu Dhabi (SB24) | Ras Dibba, Fujeirah (WA28) | |
| Halaylah Island, RAK (WA28) | Ras Ghanada, Abu Dhabi (UA25) | |
| Hamraniyah, RAK (VB28) | Ras Ghumais, Abu Dhabi (RB25) | |
| | Remah, Abu Dhabi (VA25) | |
| | Rugheilat Farm, Fujeirah (WA27) | |

Review of the Year 1993

by Colin Richardson

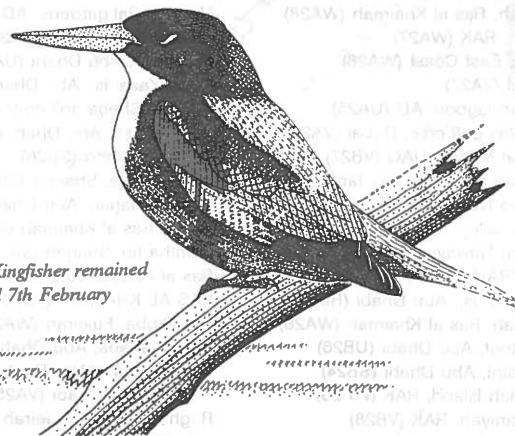
Another remarkable birding year, with 309 species listed over the 12 month period. Amongst this figure are 5 new species for the country, plus seven recorded only once before. Some of the new species were long predicted, as in the case of **Golden Plover** and **Black Tern** which were just waiting for a good substantiated report, from someone who was fortunate enough to be there at the right moment. The same could apply to **Blyth's Pipit**, a species we have wrestled with for years. Many a strange Richard's Pipit has been reported in late autumn and with the benefit of hindsight, some were probably Blyth's Pipit. Nevertheless a relatively difficult bird to identify and many will sympathise with Steve James' story told on page 110. We are proud to have it on the UAE list, ahead of most other Gulf states.

Of the other two new ones, **Greenish Warbler** (of the sub-species *nitidus*, sometimes known as **Green Warbler**) might have been expected, it being a typical long-distance migrant and on the potential list for years. However **Cetti's Warbler** was more of a surprise, particularly as it was in song in ideal reedbed habitat. Runners up to the above, and in order of their occurrence, were **White-breasted Kingfisher** (2nd record), **White-fronted Goose** (3rd), **Dead Sea Sparrow** (2nd), **Black-winged Pratincole** (2nd & 3rd), **Black-shouldered Kite** (3rd), **Knot** (2nd), **Koel** (3rd), **Mute Swan** (2nd) and **Cotton Teal** (3rd). **Black Terns** (1st & 2nd) were seen in April and October, while of **Blyth's Pipit**, the number of records reached three by mid November embracing a total of seven birds.

The UAE list by the end of 1993 stood at a mouth-watering 395 (including 11 feral breeding species), and was set to break the 400 barrier in 1994.

JANUARY

A few good birds from December lingered on into 1993, with the most colourful being the **White-breasted (Smyrna) Kingfisher** at Ramtha tip in Sharjah, only the 2nd record of this Asian species, an Eastern *rubirostris* **Greylag Goose** on the ornamental pond at Safa Park (apparently the only wild goose wintering in the country) and over 50 **Black-necked Grebes** on the vast sewage lagoons at Ramtha.



a White-breasted Kingfisher remained at Ramtha tip until 7th February

Otherwise rather a dull month birdwise, with the early part of the month devoted to waterfowl counts at a time when migrant waders are at their least active. Temperatures fluctuated between 20-25°C for most of the month and the year started calm and clear after some heavy showers on New Year's eve. The first interesting sighting came on January 2nd when an unseasonal male **Lesser Kestrel** was found by a German tour group in Wadi Bih. Four **Sociable Plovers** were in their favourite habitat, a ploughed field at Hamraniyah also on 2nd, where they remained until 20th while six (possibly resident?) **Spanish Sparrows** were discovered nearby. The weather was a little unsettled in mid month and there were further rain showers on 9th, 15th and 20th, and this may have encouraged the arrival of a couple of **White-tailed Plovers** which turned up, one each at Ramtha on 15th and Al Wathba on 23rd. Also at Al Wathba on 20th, a **Ruddy Shelduck**, only the 10th UAE record while on 17th, two **Small Skylarks** flew over Khor Dubai, making a first ever appearance in the Emirate.

The annual Asian Waterfowl Census carried out on January 7th revealed a number of interesting congregations, including a respectable 31 **Spoonbill** at Khor Dubai, 21 **Great White Egret** at the Zabeel fish ponds, 3 **Ferruginous Duck** and 24 **Whiskered Tern** at Ramtha lagoons and finally 510 **Crab Plover**, 1124 **Lesser Sand Plover**, 21 **Great Knot** and 95 **Terek Sandpiper** at Khor al Beidah.

FEBRUARY

After rather a hot start to the month with temperatures reaching 30°C on 2nd, they soon dropped to the more seasonal 25°C for the following few weeks. Winter visitors are more active in February, and some good birds for the first half of the month included a **Black Kite**, a **Booted Eagle** and two **Spotted Eagles** at Zabeel, six **Avocets** at Al Wathba sewage pools, seven **Bimaculated Larks** and six **Red-throated Pipits** at the nearby camel track and a **Squacco Heron** at Ramtha. The very skulking **White-breasted Waterhen**, which everyone thought had long gone, appeared again at Ramtha for the last time on 7th. It had stayed for 3 months, hiding in thick reeds, and only 3 birders had actually managed to see it over the period!

Eastern Pied Wheatears left their wintering sites early this year probably in advance of the impending storm, and the last bird was seen at Qarn Nazwa on 19th.

A massive heat build-up, peaking at 35°C on 23rd, eventually broke in the evening with an overnight thunderstorm which had the effect of dampening most birding activities for the day. However this freak weather also brought a fall of migrants on 25th, with **Pied Wheatears** most in evidence, with over 10 together at some sites. A **Redwing** showed itself briefly at Al Ain on 25th, while at Abu al Abyadh four **Hypocolius** were the stars for a few days from 25th, with a **Merlin** grabbing some attention on 27th. The storm had jolted migration off to a good start with the appearance of **Woodchat Shrikes**, **Grey Wagtails** and **Hoopoes** at most sites towards the end of the month. In Dubai 570 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** were found at the Khor on 21st. A very early **Cuckoo** was seen near Dibba on 28th and on the same day a pair of **Corn Buntings** were mating on a wire over the fields at Hamraniyah. This was the highest breeding evidence recorded to date in the country and is a positive sign of their ability to colonise new sites (and countries) in the wake of their rejection of the intensive farming methods of western Europe. Sixteen, the year's highest count of **White-collared Kingfisher** were found at Khor Kalba on 27th, while nearby, five **Indian Pond Herons** were feeding around the exposed mangroves in the khor, the only regular wintering site of this species.

MARCH

Undoubtedly the busiest month of the year for birds and birding. The main attraction of March is the variety of migrant wheatears, pipits, shrikes and warblers which occur, many of which are absent in autumn. 1993 came up to the usual standard.

Nighttime temperatures rarely dropping below 15°C for most of the month, and except for a brief heatwave on 8th & 9th, when temperatures rose to over 34°C, the daytime temperatures soon settled down to average 26°C for the rest of the month, and it remained calm and clear with no rain at all. This was ideal weather for bird migration, though nothing lingered for long.

Lesser Kestrels moved along the western edge of the mountains, congregating at the Hamraniyah fields, already numbering 24 by 1st March, while dozens of **Spanish Sparrows** were easy to find at their colony, leaving no doubt as to their breeding status. Three more **Ruddy Shelducks** were found on 6th, this time at Ramtha, while on Abu al Abyadh Island, two **Hypocolius** remained until 2nd, with two **Short-eared Owls** turning up on 3rd and several **Merlins** about the same time. What a pity this island is so remote! By mid-month **Pale Rock Sparrows** were being reported everywhere, peaking at an extraordinary 1,000 at Al Ain on 16th. On the same day, eight species of wheatear were found in the Al Ain area, including a **Finsch's Wheatear** at Fossil Valley. Others on passage included **Pied**, **Black-eared**, **Desert** and **Red-tailed Wheatear**. **Small Skylarks** were reported from Abu Dhabi, Al Wathba and Abu al Abyadh during most of the month, giving many a chance to sort out this rather elusive species. By the last week reports were coming in from Das Island (hats off to Messrs. Reaney and Wood) of **Little Swift**, **Red-breasted** and **Semi-collared Flycatcher** and the rarely seen **Crag Martin**, while lucky ornithologists from NARC, stationed on some of the other islands were finding record flocks of **Great Knot** (227 on 22nd), a singing **Dead Sea Sparrow** on Murawah and a **Cinereous Bunting** on Abu al Abyadh. Other Cinereous Buntings were reported from Al Ain, including two found just outside the UAE, the first record for Oman. By the last few days of the month **White-throated Robins** and **Hume's Lesser Whitethroat** were arriving in good numbers, heralding a potentially good April to come.

APRIL

Early April continued in a similar pattern to late March for the first few days, with **White-throated Robins** and **Redstarts** passing through at a steady pace by mid month. Most resident species were at the peak of their nesting activity, with egg-laying by **Black-winged Stilts** and **Red-wattled Lapwing** completed and young already hatched of **Kentish Plover**, **Hoopoe**, **Crested Lark** and **Great Grey Shrike**. **Spanish Sparrows** were feeding young during the first week of the month, while at Hamraniyah fields the **Lesser Kestrel** flock peaked at an extraordinary high of 97 between 2nd and 4th, the greatest numbers ever recorded in the country. Individual **Namaqua Doves** made brief appearances on Das Island at the beginning and end of the month. Three **Caspian Plovers** and two very early juvenile **Cream-coloured Coursers** turned up on Halaylah Island, enjoyed by the tour group who could not believe their luck at happening to be there at the time. A late **White-tailed Plover** was seen by a few people at Kalba early in the month, while a random count of **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** on 4th at the rapidly shrinking pool in Wadi Bih revealed a healthy local population of about 150 birds. A **Black Tern** in breeding plumage was seen flying along the shoreline at Kalba on 8th, the first for the country and at last on the UAE list! One of the only **Semi-collared Flycatchers** of 1993 was found by chance in a busy plot of bushes near the desert coast at Hamriyah. It was accompanied by two **Black-headed Buntings**, two **Nightingales**, 20 **Willow Warblers**, 10 **Blackcaps** and six **Redstarts**! One or two **Small Skylarks** were monitored by the NARC station on Abu al Abyadh until 18th, while in Abu Dhabi on 17th a **Green**

Warbler was a reward for Steve James, whose report was accepted, and so logging it for the first time in the country. **Eversmann's Redstarts** were found on the usual inaccessible islands, with one at Abu al Abyadh on 13th and another on Das Island on 27th. One wonders if this was the same bird?! With temperatures hovering around 30°C for most of the month, the winter seemed far behind. A hot spell, peaking at 38°C, accompanied by almost windless conditions from 20th to 22nd brought about a flurry of last minute migration, particularly of **Yellow Wagtails**, **Rock Thrushes**, **Isabelline Wheatears** and **Ortolan Buntings**. Das Island turned up two **Hypocolius** on 26th, only one of two spring records for 1993. After a dry month, clouds built up from 26th and drizzle started to fall on 28th.

MAY

The weather moved into summer mode, turning very hot and dry, with no rain recorded throughout the month. Of migrants, **Marsh Warbler** passage built up to a peak, with over 100 at the Emirates golf course on 18th, along with one of many late **Sedge Warblers**. **Golden Orioles** were still a delight at a number of sites, whilst a **Moustached Warbler** (6th record) made a surprising appearance at Abu al Abyadh on 17/18th. At Siniyah Island a pair of **Lesser Short-toed Larks** were found feeding young, the first time this species had been found breeding in the country for 20 years, while even further north, a **Long-legged Buzzard** and an overwintering **Montagu's Harrier** were enjoying the man-made irrigated fields at Hamraniyah. Also at Hamraniyah, **Indian Rollers**, **Little Green** and **European Bee-eaters**, **Hoopoes** and **Turtle Doves** were present in their hundreds in just 500 hectares of man-made parkland. This habitat produced a surprising new breeding species; **Starlings** with recently fledged young were found on 28th, their only known breeding site in Arabia. Many observers reported extraordinary build-ups of **Cream-coloured Coursers** at sheltered lagoons, including 49 at inland pools near Ruwayah on 24th and an exceptional 100 at Khor al Beidah from 26-28th. On coastal shorelines from mid-month, particularly at Umm al Quwain and Kalba there were several reports of odd-looking terns, which appeared to be a mixture of **Common Tern** and **White-cheeked**, the adults having black bills and silver grey wings. Could these be **Common Terns** of the *longipennis* (Asiatic) race, or possibly even *tibetanus*? Clearly more studies are needed of these tricky subspecies. On Das Island, our trusty observers reported a **Little Swift** on 28th, only the 7th record. Perhaps the heat had something to do with it - temperatures in the northern Emirates reached a scorching 49°C on the 28th, and the summer was only just beginning.



a Moustached Warbler made an appearance at Abu al Abyadh Island on 17th May, seen by a member of the National Avian Research Center, stationed there

JUNE

June was very quiet for land birds, with migration virtually over and the best that birdwatchers could hope for would be to keep an eye on the sea. This worked for one observer on 11th at Umm al Quwain where an estimated 78,000 **Socotra Cormorants** appeared from behind the main breakwater and after 20 minutes of flying past in a continuous stream they proceeded to fish about half a mile offshore; an incredible sight. A rather late **Red-necked Phalarope** was reported from the Emirates golf course on 7th, while early in the month **Little Bitterns** were again found in the reed beds at Ramtha, though no-one has yet found proof of them breeding there. It must be only a matter of time.

Excitement in Abu Dhabi when a colony of 570 **Greater Flamingo** were found with eggs at Al Ghar on 7th, hatching a few days later. This was the first breeding record in Arabia since 1922, making it more of a disaster when human disturbance destroyed the colony within the week, and local government authorities bulldozed the site shortly afterwards. Another sad tale of conservation attitudes in the country.

With temperatures hovering around the 40-45°C mark for most of the month, birdwatching was a sweaty task, but for the adventuresome there were still birds to be found. **Barbary Falcons** were present at several nest sites, including the 'hanging gardens' escarpment at Jebel Qatar, where permanent pools attracted birds from miles around, including family parties of **Yellow-throated Sparrow** and flocks of **Trumpeter Finch**, one of few sites they can be found in summer. A dead **Lanner Falcon** was lying beside the road at Al Rifaa, in an area where live ones had been reported on previous years, and in Wadi Bih **Bonelli's Eagles** were regularly hawking above the crags. Several people took advantage of George Chapman's hospitality, whose cottage and grounds at Al Kharran (Ras al Khaimah) held at least one pair of **Bruce's Scops Owl**, which were showing off their young in an old ghaf tree beside the swimming pool. **Black-crowned Finch Lark** with their young started invading shaded desert pools, including Ruwayah where 500 were counted on 25th. There was an invasion too of **Hoopoe Larks** at the Emirates golf course on 25th when 12 were found on the fairways, somewhat of a record for this insular species.

High above 600 metres, on the mountain plateaux east of Ras Al Khaimah, **Chukar**, **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse**, **Hume's Wheatear**, **Scrub Warbler** and **House Bunting** were active throughout the month, some in full song, probably raising a second or third brood in the cool conditions.

JULY

In July the temperature continued around the 38-42°C range, while the cool south-west monsoon was having a far reaching effect on the birdlife offshore in the Arabia Sea. Khor Kalba was a good place to watch **Sooty Gulls**, 100's of non-breeders were lounging on the beach for most of July, while non-breeding **Common**, **White-cheeked** and **Lesser Crested Tern** were present at nearby roosts. The UAE East Coast is strictly outside the range of most visiting petrels and shearwaters, but persistent seawatching usually turns up some **Audubon's Shearwaters** and a few **Wilson's Storm Petrels** in mid-summer, at a time when there is little of interest to be found onshore.

On the 1st a third breeding site of **Reed Warbler** was discovered, at Ain al Faydah, while a day later at Al Habab **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** were found feeding young at a new site near Dubai. **Little Bitterns** were at the Zabeel fish ponds and at Ramtha throughout the month; a regular summer visitor, but still not showing much interest in breeding in spite of the excellent habitat at these sites. At least one **Whiskered** and one **White-winged Black Tern** were also hunting over Ramtha lagoon while a surprise flyover on the 7th was a **Ferruginous Duck**. The Emirates golf course was a good place to watch **Black-crowned Finch**

Lark; at least 200 birds were there on 11th along with 5 **Cream-coloured Coursers**. Return migration had set in by mid month, with **Whimbrel** being amongst the first to arrive, emphasised by 20 at Khor Kalba on 15th.

AUGUST

This was the hottest month, with daytime temperatures reaching a peak of 45°C for several days in mid month while nighttime temperatures rarely sank below a rather steamy 32°C. Air conditions remained calm and dry throughout.

In spite of the heat, migration of several species proceeded apace, particularly shorebirds. Two **Caspian Plovers** were a highlight for several days from 4th on Abu al Abyadh while four **Great Knot** were also there to provide a bonus for those lucky enough to visit the island. As on Abu al Abyadh, Das Island also hosted a number of interesting arrivals, which included **Black-headed Bunting** from 1st, **Rose-coloured Starlings** from 7th and oddly, some early, normally deep winter migrants **Song Thrush** and **Starlings** in the third week.

By mid month **Green Sandpipers** and **Swallows** were common everywhere, while **European Rollers**, **Short-toed Larks**, **Tree Pipits**, **Rock Thrushes** and **Isabelline Wheatears** were found at numerous sites from the third week. An unusual find at Khor Dubai on 19th was a **Demoiselle Crane**, probably a genuine vagrant and only the fourth record. Of the colourful long-stay autumn migrants, **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** were now common at Zabeel fish ponds and on the East Coast, particularly south of Fujairah and several **Citrine Wagtails** were reported at Ramtha, Zabeel and Al Wathba from mid month.

A waterfowl count at Khor Dubai on 22nd revealed a huge build-up of waders, including 1,230 **Kentish Plovers**, 1,420 **Lesser Sand Plovers**, 2,880 **Curlew Sandpipers** and 327 **Broad-billed Sandpiper**. Single **White-tailed Plovers** were enjoyed by a number of birders visiting Al Wathba prison pools for several days throughout the month.

Several visits to a newly discovered ravine at Ghayl by Aspinall, Bannon, Hirschfeld and Richardson from 20-29th revealed another surprise. A number of family parties of **Pale Rock Sparrows** were active amongst the sparse vegetation in the ravine, which held just a trickle of water; the second breeding record of the species in the country. One **Bar-tailed Desert Lark** was found at an inland site north of Sweihan on several occasions, until last seen on the 19th, while a pair were found on a sandstone outcrop inland from Ghantoot on 21st, the most northerly (perhaps breeding) record in the UAE. These presumably nomadic birds were never located again in spite of searches during subsequent weeks.

The NARC station on Abu al Abyadh reported that 190 juvenile **Crab Plovers** were raised at the country's (and possibly the Gulf's) largest breeding colony.

By the last few days of the month three **Indian Pond Herons** were already at their Khor Kalba wintering site, while on Das Island a record flock of 23 **Little Egrets** passed over on the 31st.

The month ended as it started, hot and humid.

SEPTEMBER

September continued hot and humid, with no rain and no sign of the end of the summer. The prevailing north-westerly breeze usually developed by mid morning on the Arabian Gulf coast, easing conditions a little, while further inland daytime temperatures reached 40°C most days, peaking at 45°C on 25th. These still conditions were not conducive to migrants dropping in, so the month was relatively poor for birds compared to previous years.

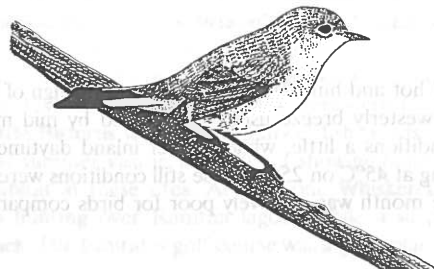
Having said that, an elusive **Icterine Warbler** (7th record) was seen at Jebel Ali on 3rd, while several **Little Crakes** were enjoyed by a number of observers at the Emirates golf course and Al Wathba reedbeds during the month. In contrast, not seen by many were two **Long-toed Stints** at Abu al Abyadh Island on 13th & 14th, also a favoured site of **Great Knot** which peaked at 3 on 15th. An amazing passage of 27 **Pintail Snipes** was witnessed near the Emirates golf course on 3rd, while a **Great Snipe** was present there for a few days from 18th. It looked like being another good winter for **Pacific Golden Plover**, with a well-watched flock of over 60 present there from early in the month. **Eastern Pied Wheatears** were reported from mid month near rocky outcrops and acacia plains, plus a good selection of warblers such as **Upcher's**, **Olivaceous**, **Common** and **Desert Lesser Whitethroat**. A female **White-throated Robin** at the golf course from 27th was the only autumn sighting, and was seen by only a few during its 2 week stay.

Meanwhile on Das Island, Messrs. Reaney and Wood were treated to an assemblage of interesting migrants during the month, starting in the first half with **White-tailed Plover**, **Golden Orioles**, **Rose-coloured Starlings**, up to 8 **Yellow-throated Sparrows** and small numbers of **Black-headed Buntings**. The second half of the month was just as interesting with up to 5 **Common Rosefinches**, 2 **Stone Curlews**, a **Masked Shrike** and 4 **Hobbys** causing havoc amongst a peak in **Sand Martin** movement. The jewel of the month on Das was a **Cinereous Bunting** on 30th.

Anyone fortunate enough to visit Delma Island in September, as Simon Aspinall was, would have witnessed several **Sooty Falcons** actively pursuing autumn migrants, from at least 5 nest sites. The rapid and insensitive development of the island continues to raise concern for the future of this breeding species there.

OCTOBER

It was an interesting month for birds, as the weather began to play more of a part in directing the migration routes of a number of species. The monsoon, dramatically affecting the far south and east of Arabia ended and with it a change became perceptible over most of the region. As high pressure built up over Asia, a north-easterly stream extending from Tibet to the Gulf provided a high level air route for wayward migrants. This was certainly the case with **Blyth's Pipit**. Up to 3 arrived in Abu Dhabi from 12th and were well-studied and photographed, and able to be compared with a couple of **Richard's Pipits** conveniently feeding nearby. This at last, was the first documented record of the species in Arabia. Other eastern migrants reported early in the month included **Olive-backed Pipits** on at Al Wathba, Safa Park and Bateen wood, a (**Hume's**) **Yellow-browed Warbler** on Das Island and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** at the Jebel Ali Hotel. A **Little Bunting** (6th record) at Jebel Ali hotel was reported by visitors from Finland, who were not immediately aware of its rarity value, as it is rather a common bird back home!



a Red-breasted Flycatcher was at the Jebel Ali hotel grounds on 8th October, a favourite site for this species

An uncommon **Bittern** at Al Wathba camel track from 8th was in odd habitat, while a **Black-winged Pratincole** (2nd record) at Al Ain camel track from the beginning of the month caused a local rush, with some arriving just too late to see it. Three **Great Snipe** at the Emirates golf course on 7th were even more elusive and came during peak passage of **Common**, **Pintail** and **Jack Snipe**.

Another **Black Tern** (2nd record) was seen briefly on the East Coast on 13th. Meanwhile on the Gulf coast by the third week an **Egyptian Nightjar** arrived in Abu Dhabi, **Small Skylarks** were taking up winter territory in Al Wathba fields and a **Hume's Lesser Whitethroat** on Balghelam Island on 22nd proved that it does occur in autumn. Further south and west a **Cetti's Warbler** surprised Simon Aspinall when it started singing from the reedbeds at Ruwais, ensuring itself of a place on the UAE list at last. Also making it on to the UAE list was a **Golden Plover** at Al Wathba sewage on 30th, showing that perhaps some of the old 'reports' might have been correct after all.

NOVEMBER

The month started off dry and warm with little wind, daytime temperatures reaching 35°C for most of the first half, dropping to an even more comfortable 29-30°C by the last week. There were some localised storms from 14-17th but no measurable rain was recorded throughout the month. Most days were clear and sunny, becoming overcast by the 29th.

There were some more interesting reports this month, continuing the season when birds are guaranteed to occur well out of their normal range.

On the first day of the month two **Bimaculated Larks** were found at Al Ain camel track, 14 **Hypocolius** made a brief appearance at the Emirates golf course and a **Merlin** (8th record) was seen on Das Island. This was a good start, followed quickly by an influx of **Siskins** at several sites (greatest number for several years), a well-watched **Bittern** at Al Wathba camel track from the 4th and four **White-fronted Geese** in the middle of Abu Dhabi on 5th. The geese were to stay until the end of the year. More **Hypocolius** were found at Al Wathba on the 7th, the Emirates golf course on the 16th and on Das Island on the 27th, making it an exceptionally good year for the species. Meanwhile an injured **Black-shouldered Kite** was taken for treatment to the Central veterinary hospital on 6th, but died before anyone could add it to their year's list! Another **Little Bunting** arrived on Das on the 7th and stayed for most of the month, while at Al Wathba a **Reed Bunting** (4th record) was found on 19th, a species rarely recorded in Arabia.

On the 9th a **Knot** (2nd record) was found amongst several hundred **Great Knot** at Murawah Island, on the same day that a **Long-toed Stint** (8th record) was found at Al Wathba. A few days later single **Woodcocks** were found at the Emirates golf course on the 13th and on Abu al Abyadh on 15th, only the 7th & 8th records. Also at the golf course on the 13th, a female **Koel** (3rd record), appeared only for a few seconds but was never seen again.

It was a good month for **Aquila** eagles, with several reports of the pale *fulvescens* subspecies of **Spotted Eagle** present at Ramtha and Zabeel, **Steppe Eagles** in Dubai and Al Ain and two **Golden Eagles** and an **Imperial Eagle** in the Baynunah area. Two **Dotterels** were also found in Baynunah on 17th.

There was a small influx of rare **Bramblings** on Das Island, Al Wathba and Abu Dhabi island from mid-month, while at the same time several **Red-breasted Flycatchers** were also seen on the islands. Interesting waterfowl ended the month, starting with very brief views of a **Cotton Teal** (3rd record) at the Emirates golf course on the 26th and finishing with the arrival of a long-stay of a **Great Crested Grebe** at the reservoir at Ain al Faydah on 30th.

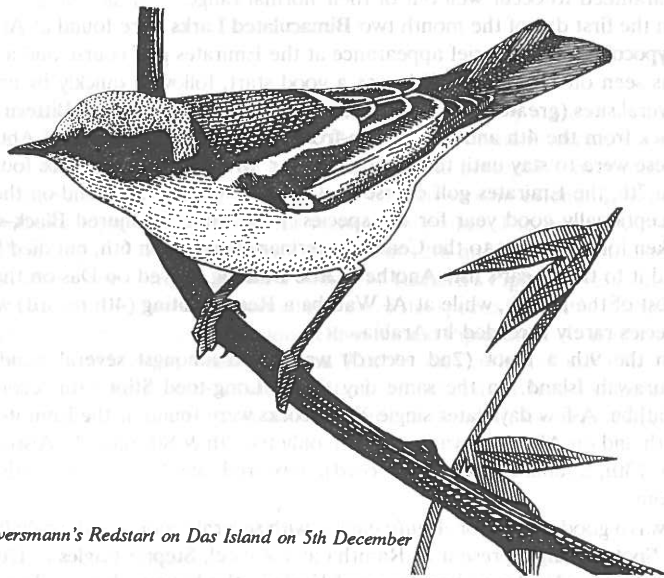
DECEMBER

After November, December was rather dull. However there were a few highspots, including a good selection of raptors around the Hamraniyah fields. Anyone visiting the area would have seen **Spotted Eagle**, **Bonell's Eagle** and **Steppe Buzzard** with a few harriers always in attendance. A total of thirteen **Lapwings** were found at Hamraniyah and Al Ain, making it an exceptional year for this rare visitor! At Al Wathba one or two **Small Skylark** were usually found after a good search, while for many visiting birders up to five **Bimaculated Larks** were a bonus there from the 2nd.

The weather remained warm and calm for most of the month, with temperatures ranging from 25-29°C, until the 25th when a storm swept across the northern Emirates and heavy rain fell for most of the afternoon.

Das Island was spoilt for choice, with a good selection of birds seen throughout the month, including **Common Rosefinch**, a **Robin** (a rarity in Arabia), a beautiful male **Eversmann's Redstart** from the 5th and a possible **Greenish Warbler**, which was first located on the island in November. Another **Merlin** (8th record) was present on Abu al Abyadh on the 11th.

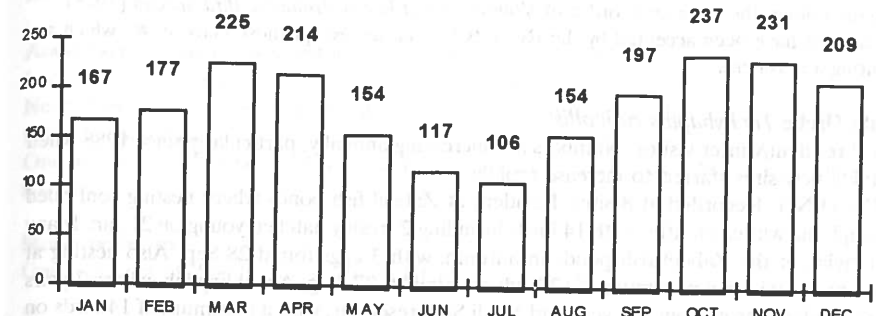
The month ended well with a number of interesting finds, including a well-studied **Black-winged Pratincole** (3rd record) on Kalba beach (first reported as an **Oriental Pratincole**) from the 29th and a **Common Crane** feeding with several **White Storks** at Al Ain camel race track. The race track was alive with singing **Corn Bunting**, an occurrence which would persist well into 1994 and raise the possibility of yet another new breeding species for the country.



a good discovery, a male Eversmann's Redstart on Das Island on 5th December

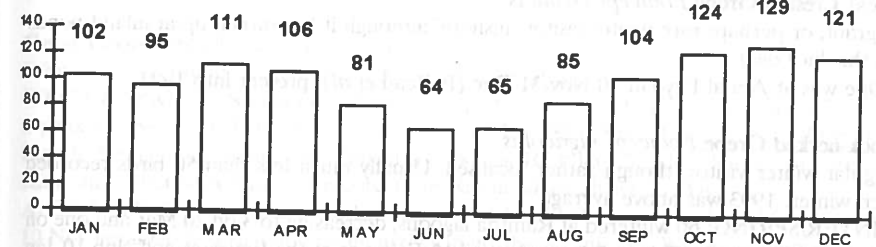
NUMBER OF SPECIES RECORDED/MONTH - 1993

United Arab Emirates



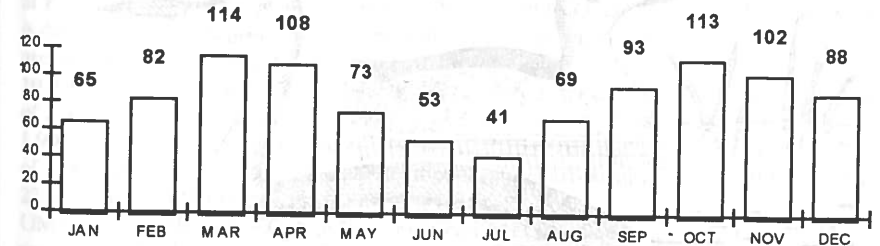
Number of species recorded in the United Arab Emirates, month-by-month in 1993

grebes - terns



Number of non-passerine species recorded in the United Arab Emirates month-by-month in 1993

sandgrouse - buntings



Number of passerine/near passerine species recorded in the United Arab Emirates, month-by-month in 1993

Systematic list of the Birds reported in 1993

Edited by Colin Richardson

Assisted by Erik Hirschfeld, Simon Aspinall and John Bannon

The list follows the taxonomic order of Vouss's *List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species* (1975). All records have been accepted by the Records Committee except those marked '#', which are awaiting assessment.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Local resident/winter visitor. Numbers are increasing annually, particularly since 1988 when suitable new sites started to increase rapidly.

BREEDING: Recorded at 8 sites. Resident at Zabeel fish ponds where nesting continued through the winter months, with 14 birds including 2 freshly hatched young on 21 Jan. Many still laying at the Zabeel fish ponds in autumn, with 3 eggs found 28 Sep. Also nesting at Ramtha tip, where a maximum of 12 birds counted 19-27 Aug, Ain al Faydah, where 2 pairs were resident throughout the year and Wadi Shih reservoir, with a maximum of 14 birds on 29 Aug. Colonisation of the Emirates golf course lake commenced in January when a single bird overwintered followed by a mate on 5 May. Breeding has since been confirmed. 3 wintered in Safa Park until March, one was at Nadd al Sheba golf course 6 Sep and at least 3 were at Al Wathba prison pools in December.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

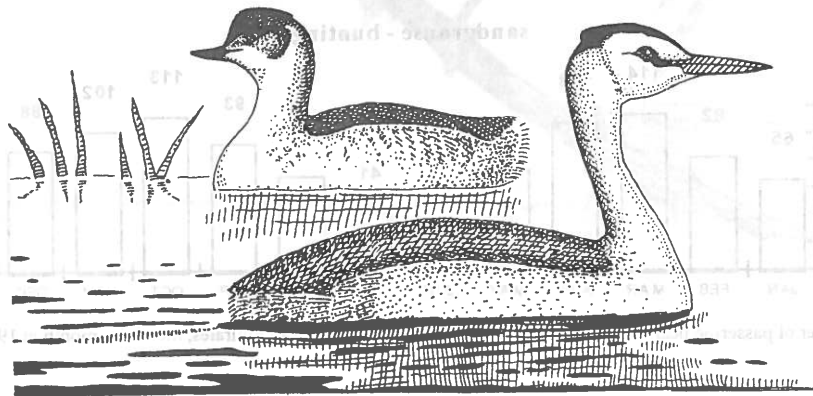
Vagrant, or perhaps rare winter visitor, inshore, although it has turned up at inland ponds (as this bird did).

#One was at Ain al Faydah 30 Nov-31 Dec (R.Read *et al*), present into 1994.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Regular winter visitor, though rather localised. Usually much less than 50 birds recorded each winter. 1993 was above average.

WINTER/SPRING: 60 wintered at Ramtha lagoons, decreasing to 3 on 20 Mar and one on 6 Apr. Up to 8 at the Zabeel fish ponds until 13 Feb, one at the Emirates golf club 10 Jan and one at the Creek golf club 26 Jan. Up to 22 wintered at Al Ghar lake.



a Great Crested Grebe was a long-stay visitor to Ain al Faydah from 30th November, shown here with a Black-necked Grebe for comparison

AUTUMN/WINTER: First reported at Al Ghar lake 8 Sep. Up to 10 were at Ramtha 10 Sep-8 Oct, then 14 were there 12 Nov increasing to 35 by 29 Dec (same numbers as December 1992). One was at the Emirates golf course 17 Oct, increasing to 3 from 27 Nov to end of year. One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 14 Nov to end of year. 5 were inshore off Kalba beach 29 Dec.

Audubon's (Persian) Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri* (*persicus*)

Lack of seawatching by observers results in this species being greatly under-recorded. Nevertheless it is seldom common and is difficult to see from the shore. It is more frequent from late summer.

One was seen off Dibba on 17 Jun and 4 were seen from Sandy Beach Motel, near Dhadnah 8-9 Dec.

Storm-petrel sp.

One was seen off Sandy Beach Motel, Dhadnah on 8 & 9 Dec.

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*

Resident, breeding offshore and on rocky islets off the Musandam in small numbers (100's only). Virtually never seen from the mainland.

One was found dead on beach at Jazirah al Hamra at the end of January (RKO). One on Das island 16 Apr, 2 there 27 Jun and up to 5 seen 14-19 Nov.

50-60 adults, plus at least 15 juveniles still in nest holes on Qarnayn Island 5-9 May.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Winter visitor, numbers appear to be increasing annually.

WINTER/SPRING: Numbers at Zabeel fish ponds increased steadily from 54 on 7 Jan to a peak of 189 on 10 Feb, reducing to 5 on 11 Mar. 89 at Khor Dubai 1 Feb. Rare after March. Stragglers remained at Zabeel fish ponds, Ramtha tip, Khor Dubai, Al Jazeera Khor and other sites until last record from Ras al Khaimah on 21 May.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded Murawah Island 9 Oct. 5 at the Zabeel fish ponds on 10 Nov heralded first sign of migrant arrival in northern Emirates. Wintering numbers of 90 at Khor Dubai 21 Nov and 105 at Zabeel fish ponds 13 Dec.

1992: 500 Khor Al Beidah 6 Dec and 400 at Khor Dubai 10 Dec.

Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigricollis*

Pelagic resident, spectacular numbers sometimes seen from shore between Dubai and Ras al Khaimah and in shallow waters west of Abu Dhabi to Qatar border. Its breeding season is dependant on food availability. Tens of thousands can occur near colonies and all nest sites are seriously threatened by human disturbance.

10,000 at roost on North Yasat Island 31 Mar, where 150 nests out of maximum colony size of 2,000 still with young (Hellyer 1993). On Ghaghah Island 44,000 came to roost 8 Apr and 1,900 nests occupied out of max. colony size of 2,500 (Aspinall 1994). On Selahah a roost of 1,000 seen on 4 Jun. 10,000 were seen off Al Jazeera Khor 27 Dec. 750 Khor Midfaq 23 Jul and 4,132 during seawatch in Abu Dhabi 17 Dec.

UMM AL QUWAIN COLONY: c.400 seen off Siniyah Island, UAQ 19/20 May. A spectacular 78,000 were seen flying and fishing off Umm al Quwain beach 11 Jun and '1000's' were there 13 Aug. 100 per minute (counted over half-an-hour) were flying towards colony at Umm al Quwain 10 Sep and 20,000 were seen from the beach on 26 Sep.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Migrant, not recorded annually in the country. The timings of these records fit in well with previous occurrences.
2 individuals were at Al Wathba fodder fields 8 Oct and 4-6 Nov.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Uncommon passage migrant, regular in summer months (though no nesting recorded). No winter records this year.

SPRING/SUMMER: Single birds were at the Zabeel fish ponds 11 Feb & 24 Mar, Ramtha tip 11 Jun and 7 Jul and Zabeel fish ponds 14 Jul. An exceptional 21 were found at Bateen wood 28 Apr. There were other undated reports between March and June.

AUTUMN: Immatures at Bateen wood 5 Sep and Emirates golf course 24 Sep. 2 were at Safa Park 25 Oct.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Passage migrant/winter visitor, restricted range due to lack of suitable habitat and may nest opportunely at Zabeel fish ponds (where it was first found nesting in 1991).

WINTER/SPRING: Most regular at the Zabeel fish ponds: up to 25 there most days Jan and 30 there 18 Feb, though declining to less than 5 from March to mid April. Up to 11 there 17-24 Apr, and a few recorded May and June.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First autumn records, 2 at Ain al Faydah 5 Aug and one at Al Wathba sewage 8 Aug. One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 14 Aug, increasing to 19 by 5 Sep, peaking at 38 on 14 Oct, with up to 25 remaining to end of year.

Also seen (less than 5 together) at Ramtha tip, Khor Kalba mangroves, Ain al Faydah, Ruwais and Emirates golf course.

Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus*

Resident and locally dispersive, though never common. More regular in autumn and early winter. Singles seen at numerous mangrove areas, breakwaters and harbours, plus Ramtha tip and the Zabeel fish ponds.

Pairs noted April and May, though no nests or young found. Less than 5 pairs Abu al Abyadh mangroves. Alarmed and therefore suspected of breeding in mangroves at Bu Tinah shoals.

4 at Ramtha 27 Aug and at the Zabeel fish ponds 5 Sep and 22 Nov, appearing to favour these areas outside the breeding season.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Rather scarce migrant, occasionally in winter. Fewer records this year of a species that has decreased over much of its breeding range.

SPRING: Singles at Ramtha 7 Feb, at the Zabeel fish ponds 25 Mar, at Ruwayah 30 Mar and at Dhayah 5 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 4 Das island 21 Sep and one at Ramtha Tip 26 Dec.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Khor Kalba is the only site in the UAE that regularly holds wintering numbers of this species. The status is obscured by identification difficulties between Indian Pond Herons and Squacco Herons, especially in immature plumages. A review of their status in the UAE is in progress.

WINTER/SPRING: Regular at Kalba in winter, where records include 2 on 4 Jan, 5 on 27 Feb and 2 on 15 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 3 there 29 Aug. Regularly recorded at Khor Kalba from 13 Oct with up to 3 still there 31 Dec (See plate 1).

Unidentified *Ardeola* sp.

Single unidentified *Ardeola* types at Zabeel fish ponds 26 Apr and at Ramtha 10 Sep and 4 Nov. 5 were at Khor Kalba 26 Oct.

See under *Indian Pond Heron* above.

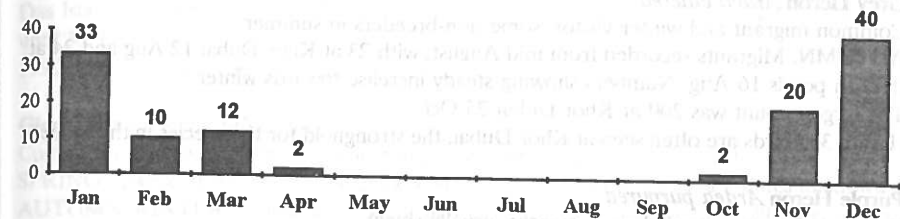
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Regular winter visitor, occasionally at other times.

The green cities of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah regularly hold wintering numbers of this species while single migrants turn up on islands and in other places on the mainland. Predicted as a future breeding species.

WINTER/SPRING: Wintered again in Abu Dhabi where a maximum of 33 were seen on 24 Jan. 2 wintered at Zabeel fish ponds and 4 were at Ramtha until 10 Apr. Smaller numbers at Hamranyah, Abu al Abyadh and Safa Park. 16 at Zabeel fish ponds 18 Feb, were exceptional numbers at this site. Last recorded Abu al Abyadh, 20 Apr-1 May.

Cattle Egrets in Abu Dhabi 1993



AUTUMN: Recorded in Abu Dhabi from 20 Oct with a maximum of 40 Mushref palace gardens 9 Dec. 3 wintering at Umm al Quwain, first noted 26 Dec. 2 seen at Ruwais 20-21 Dec.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta garialis*

A common species and local breeder along UAE shores.

The largest counts were 65 at Ramtha tip 7 Jul, 180 on Abu al Abyadh 15 Sep and 200 Khor al Beidah 24 Oct. Oddly, one was at Ain al Faydah (160 km inland) on 24 Feb.

BREEDING: Clutches complete on Abu al Abyadh from 3 May, with fledging by end July. 7 nests with young found on South Yasat 3 Apr. 40-60 pairs on Umm Amin lost first clutches in May due to egg collectors, with re-lays not even fledged by early August (S.Asprinall).

At least 5 pairs, consisting of white & dark paired together at Siniyah Is. 20 May. See EBR17:49-50 for details of Siniyah Island visit 1993 (Richardson 1993a).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly at freshwater sites. Non-breeding birds can, like many other heron species, overwinter in the UAE. The migrating flock at Das was unusually large.

WINTER/SPRING: Wintering in small numbers at several wetland sites, becoming scarce (generally absent) from May to August.

SUMMER: Singles at Ain al Faydah 27 May-2 Jun, Abu al Abyadh early June and at Khor al Beidah 24 Jun and 23 Jul.

AUTUMN: The first migrants were recorded from 31 Aug when 23 arrived on Das Island. A respectable 13 were at Ramtha tip from 4 Nov to the end of the year.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: Scarce from April.

SUMMER: Some overwintered, including 3 at Khor Dubai May - July and 2 at the Zabeel fish ponds from 12 June.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Numbers increased again from late August, with 9 at the Zabeel fish ponds 5 Sep and small numbers at other sites from September.

COUNTS: The largest counts were up to 42 at the Zabeel fish ponds 21 Jan - 13 Mar (possibly supplemented by Khor Dubai birds), 7 at the Eastern lagoon 22 Nov, 40 at Khor Dubai 19 Nov, and 20 Ramtha Tip 19 Nov being noteworthy.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Common migrant and winter visitor, some non-breeders in summer.

AUTUMN: Migrants recorded from mid August, with 23 at Khor Dubai 12 Aug and 24 at the fish ponds 16 Aug. Numbers showing steady increase towards winter.

The largest count was 200 at Khor Dubai 25 Oct.

(Up to 300 birds are often seen at Khor Dubai, the stronghold for the species in the UAE).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Regular migrant, recorded most months, usually singly.

WINTER/SPRING: Singles at the Zabeel fish ponds 9 Jan, 30 Jan, 5-18 Feb (possibly same bird). Ones and twos recorded 13 Mar until 13 May, with 3 at the Zabeel fish ponds 28 Mar, one on Siniyah Is. 20 May and 2 at Ain al Faydah 31 May.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Most autumn migrants recorded 25 Aug-31 Oct. 10 were seen on Abu al Abyadh 16 Sep. One remained at the Zabeel fish ponds to 10 Nov. Winter records included 1 juv. at Khor Dubai 13 Dec, and singles at Zabeel fish ponds 12-24 Dec and at Wathba sewage ponds 24-31 Dec.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

An annual migrant occurring in variable numbers. Spring records are rare and there were none in 1993. Autumn records, however, were well above average as the following tables show.

WHITE STORK RECORDS - AUTUMN 1993

	September			October			November			December		
Al Ain	-	-	-	103	1	50	-	-	17	17	17	17
Al Wathba	-	-	-	-	11	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other sites	-	-	-	2	5	1	26	1	8	1	1	1

**WHITE STORK BUILD-UP AT AL AIN CAMEL TRACK
AUTUMN 1993**

	OCT 1st	OCT 2nd	OCT 5th	OCT 9th
No. of birds	1	8	30	103

AUTUMN/WINTER: Accumulation of migrants built up at Al Ain Camel Track from 1-19 Oct with maximum 103 on 9 Oct (see Table above). 50 at Al Ain zoo 28 Oct may have been part of this flock. One arrived at Al Habab on 8 Oct and remained until the following spring. 11 were at Al Wathba camel track on 14 Oct with 4 still there 29 Oct. 4 were at Sweihan fields 15 Oct, with 22 there 1 Nov. 3 were south of Al Hayer 5 Nov and 7 flew north over Das Island on 24 Nov. Up to 17 were again present at the Al Ain camel track from 23 Nov until 31 Dec.

1992: One migrant was at Al Ain Zoo 17 December.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Comparatively few records this year. Only single birds typically occur in the UAE.

SPRING: 2 were at Bateen airbase park 4 Mar (reported by others earlier, dates unknown)

AUTUMN/WINTER: Single birds were at Fujeirah National dairy farm 29 Aug, at the Eastern Lagoon from 10 Sep, at Al Ain sewage works 11 Sep, at the Emirates golf course 27 Sep and at Ramtha Tip on 30 Nov.

2 were reported at Al Wathba sewage late Sep.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Localised migrant and winter visitor, non-breeders overwinter.

WINTER/SPRING: 16 at Al Jazeera Khor 2 Jan and 31 at Khor Dubai 7 Jan, peak winter numbers at these sites. Present throughout year at Khor Dubai.

Up to 2 at the Zabeel fish ponds to late March, peaking at 5 from 17-26 Mar (5 at nearby Khor Dubai 29 Mar, may be same birds). Small flock at Ramtha tip, peaking at 6 on 7 Feb, declining to 2 on 18 Jun. One or two at Khor al Beidah until early April.

SUMMER: 8 overwintered at Khor Dubai, recorded most days June and July, declining to only 6 in August and September.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded from 27 Aug at Khor Kalba, Eastern Lagoon, Abu Dhabi, Abu al Abyadh, Zabeel fish ponds and Ramtha Tip.

Numbers increased at Khor Dubai through November, to 20 on 25 Nov and up to 30 throughout December. 16 were at Ramtha Tip 30 Dec and 32 at Eastern Lagoon, Abu Dhabi 20 Dec.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Mostly a passage migrant and winter visitor. Hundreds of non-breeders regularly oversummer.

BREEDING: The first spring record at Al Ghar lake was of 40 on 19 Feb and the first ever breeding on mainland Arabia was discovered at Al Ghar lake on 7 Jun, when 571 birds were present and about 15 nests were found, described in detail in *Tribulus* 3.2.5-6 (Aspinall & Hirschfeld 1993). Unfortunately, disturbance forced the birds to abandon the colony by 14 Jun after the first chicks hatched. Most of the lakes were filled in later in the year.

(This breeding record was one of the ornithological sensations of the year, but the filling in of the lakes and the disturbance at the site make it unlikely that the species will breed there again).

GREATER FLAMINGO AT AL GHAR LAKE 1993

19.2.93	18.3.93	16.4.93	28.4.93	5.5.93	7.6.93	9.7.93	8.1.93
40	48	145	360	250	571	116	6*

*after disturbance

GREATER FLAMINGOS AT KHOR DUBAI - 1991-3

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1991	1124	1700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	300
1992	860	-	647	-	-	335	278	-	623	-	421	500
1993	515	-	250	-	60	89	-	85	126	-	-	200

COUNTS: Peak counts were 515 Khor Dubai 17 Jan, 91 Eastern lagoon 4 Feb, 190 at Ramtha 20 Mar, 150 at Sir Bani Yas 1 Apr, 200 Khor Dubai 24 Dec and 84 at Ajman sewage dump 26 Dec.

INLAND RECORDS: Flock of 60 seen flying north high in V-formation 20 km west of Masafi 30 Apr.

(A count of only 48 at Khor Dubai on 28 Mar worried the Dubai Government, as it marked a serious decline of numbers at this site).

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Vagrant. Two groups each of 3 birds flying near Bahrani Island, Abu Dhabi 8 Dec, were identified as this species from photographs (N.Cochrane-Dyett *per* EBRC), the 2nd record for the country.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Rare migrant. 4 juveniles, later decreasing to 3, Eastern Lagoon, Abu Dhabi 5 Nov to 31 Dec (and into 1994) (E.Hirschfeld/A.Ross *et al*), the 3rd record.

These birds were originally misidentified as Greylag Geese and demonstrate that caution is needed even when identifying such large birds as geese. The birds were remarkably tame and it is thought that the fourth individual died as a result of people throwing stones at them on several occasions.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Scarce and localised winter visitor. One at Safa park 21 Feb, one on Das island 8 Dec, up to 4 at Ruwais 14 Nov-21 Dec with a peak of 6 there 19 Dec, 2 at Safa Park 16 Dec and 6 at Ramtha Tip from 26 Dec to the end of the year.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Vagrant.

One at Al Wathba sewage 23 Jan (J.K.Bannon), 10th record, 3 at Ramtha Tip 6 Mar (C.Richardson) was 11th record.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon winter visitor most years.

Singles at Ramtha tip 8 Jan, Emirates golf course 10 Jan and Zabeel fish ponds 21-28 Mar. 1992: One at Ramtha Tip 11 Dec increased to 2 from 18 Dec.

Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus*

Vagrant

A female at the Emirates golf course on 26 Nov (C.Richardson), was only the 3rd UAE record of this south Asian species. Previous sightings were in November and February. (It is regular in southern Oman in winter)

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Regular winter visitor, though never common.

WINTER: Ones and twos at the Zabeel fish ponds, Khor Dubai and some other sites until 8 Mar.

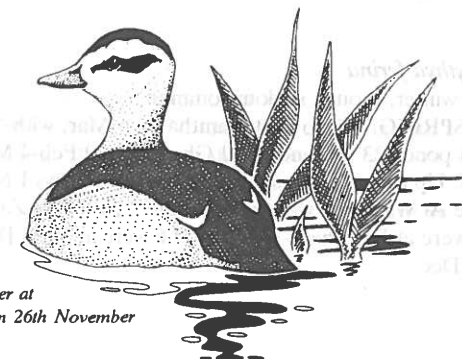
AUTUMN/WINTER: 3 at the Zabeel fish ponds 23 Oct, and 2 at the Emirates golf course were the first autumn records. 12 at the Zabeel fish ponds 1-12 Dec was the largest flock recorded this year. At least 4 wintering at Ramtha tip.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Irregular winter visitor, rarely more than 4 together.

WINTER/SPRING: 2 at the Emirates golf course until 17 Feb, with one remaining to 8 Mar.

WINTER: Female at Ruwais 14-16 Nov, and 2 there 23-26 Nov. Single at Al Wathba sewage 16-30 Nov. One at Emirates Golf Course 20 Nov, increasing to 3 on 27 Nov and up to 8 during December. 2 at Zabeel fish ponds 24 Dec, 2 Ramtha Tip 26 Dec and 1-2 Al Wathba sewage 28-30 Dec.



a Cotton Teal did not linger at the Emirates golf course on 26th November

Teal *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: 80 at Zabeel fish ponds 8 Feb, highest count. Most departed by mid March, although 2 remained at Zabeel fish ponds until 10 April.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded from 7 Sep. 80 at Zabeel fish ponds 17 Nov and 56 at Al Wathba sewage 19 Nov largest flocks seen.

Widespread at other sites.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Commonest wintering duck.

1992/3 WINTER: 620 at Khor Dubai 7 Jan and 250 at the Zabeel fish ponds 10 Feb, season's largest counts.

1993/4 WINTER: 3 at Ramtha 8 Oct first autumn record. 388 at Zabeel fish ponds 12 Dec, c.800 at Khor Dubai 24 Dec and 560 Ain al Faydah 30 Dec were highest counts.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: 9 at Ramtha 8 Jan, otherwise ones and twos at other sites (this species was rather scarce winter 1992/3). One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 8-24 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One at Zabeel fish ponds 23 Oct was first autumn record. 10 at Zabeel 1 Dec. Probably more than this wintering at Khor Dubai, numbers unknown.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Common migrant, rare in winter.

Recorded from 12 Feb to 8 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 3 at Ramtha tip 27 Aug, first autumn record. Fairly common from 2 Sep, with 18 at Ramtha 17 Sep. Other high counts included 11 at Wathba sewage ponds 30 Sep.

2 remained at Emirates golf course until 6 Nov and one was still there on 10 Dec. One was at Ramtha tip 26 Dec.

Garganeys migrate to Tropical Africa in winter when they become scarce in northern Arabia.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Locally common in winter, often at sewage lagoons.

WINTER: The largest flock recorded was 146 at Al Ghar lake 19 Feb. Present until early March, with 22 still at Ramtha tip on 6th.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First sighting was 9 Sep. Largest flocks were up to 70 at Ramtha 30 Nov to end of year, 46 at Al Wathba sewage 28 Dec and 10 at the Emirates golf course 20 Nov.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Regular in winter, though seldom common.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 2 at Ramtha to 6 Mar, with 3 there 7 Feb. Single females at Zabeel fish ponds 23 Jan and at Al Ghar lake 19 Feb-4 Mar.

AUTUMN: Up to 4 at Emirates golf course most days 1 Nov-25 Dec, with 5 there 24 Nov. One female Al Wathba sewage ponds from 2 Nov, 7 at Zabeel 9-11 Nov, with one there to 15 Dec. 6 were at Ramtha 5-30 Nov and 6 were at Khor Dubai 20 Dec. One was at Ruwais sewage 20 Dec.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Generally the scarcest diving duck, usually shy and seldom overwinters in one location.

SPRING: Up to 4 at Ramtha 8 Jan-7 Feb, with 2 present 2-6 Mar. One was at Al Wathba sewage 23 Feb. One flying over Ramtha on 7 Jul was the first ever July record.

AUTUMN: Singles at Zabeel fish ponds 11 Nov, at Al Wathba sewage ponds 22 Nov, at Ramtha Tip 12 Dec and at Ruwais 20-22 Dec. 3 were found at Zabeel fish ponds 24 Dec.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Typically scarce winter visitor.

WINTER: One at Ramtha tip on 15 Jan was the only winter record.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 2 were at the Zabeel fish ponds on 19 Nov, with 8 there on 20 Nov, and up to 4 remaining to 25 Dec. One was at Ruwais 19 Dec and one was at the Emirates golf course 20 Nov-25 Dec with a peak of 4 there 26 Nov. One was at Ramtha Tip 12 Dec.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Previously considered rare but this is yet another year with regular sightings in the Abu Dhabi city area. Bateen wood and the gardens of the Intercontinental Hotel are often used as roosting places.

SPRING: One was in Abu Dhabi 3 Jan, with 2 there 23 Feb-8 Mar and one on 17 and 22 April and 1 May.

AUTUMN: One was at Bateen wood 9 Sep with 4 there 12 Oct. One was in the same area from 13 Oct-28 Nov, with a juvenile bird reported on 18 Oct. 2 were there 11-12 Nov and 7 Dec. (All latter reports might refer to same 2 birds).

Singles were also reported on Das island 7-12 Oct, south of Dhaid 8 Oct, the Zabeel fish ponds 18 Oct and Al Habab 28 Oct.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

One over Hamraniyah, Ras al Khaimah airport area on 16 December 1992 (T.Tuomenoja), is the 1st record of the species in the UAE and probably Arabia. (See Plate 13).

Two races occur, *orientalis* in Siberia and *ruficollis* throughout the Indian subcontinent. The former is more migratory although the latter by its proximity is probably more likely to occur in Arabia. While treated separately here, they are sometimes regarded as subspecies' of Honey Buzzard *P.apivorus*.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Vagrant.

#One was found with a broken wing Jumeirah c. 6 Nov (*per* C.Remple).

This would be the third record of the species. The previous were in February 1984 and November/December 1992.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

This migrant species is never numerous, on passage or in winter.

WINTER/SPRING: 2 were at Zabeel fish ponds 7-24 Jan, one remaining until 2 Feb. Singles were also at Al Wathba camel track 23 Jan, Ruwayah 23 Feb, Al Jazeera Khor 5 Mar, Khor Dubai 13 Mar, Sharjah 25 Apr and Ain al Faydah 4 May.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Individuals were at Al Habab 11 Sep, 15 km north of Sweihan 29 Sep and at Al Ain camel track 4 Oct.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

This resident species is rarely seen away from the Al Ain-Hatta area, and it seems that most of the UAE population feeds on meat remains at Al Ain Zoo. The main roost is on the tallest radio mast on Jebel Hafit.

A maximum of 92 were counted on Jebel Hafit 4 Oct and 17 Dec. One was at Hatta pools on 15 Jan.

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

A very scarce migrant. It is conceivable that a few pairs may breed in the higher mountains north of a line from Dibba to Masafi, following a spate of records from the area in 1993. One was at Masafi 29 Mar (S.Asplinall). 2 were in Wadi Ghayl 20 Aug SA/C.Richardson), 2 were at Dibba 29 Aug (J.K.Bannon *et al*) and 2 were over Madam plain 2 Oct (SA).

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*

Breeds in neighbouring areas of Oman. No current breeding sites identified in the UAE. One was at Daftah (near Masafi) 10 Mar, 2 adults Al Ain Zoo 5 Oct and one over plain 5km. east of Al Ain Intercon Hotel 17 Dec.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Rather uncommon migrant, winter visitor and suspected resident. All reports listed here. SPRING: Individuals were at Jazeerah al Hamra 1 Mar and nearby Al Jazeerah Khor 5 Apr AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles near Ghayl 20 Aug, on Das island 3 Sep and at Sha'am 12 Dec. One at Ain al Faydah 7 & 10 Sep, with 2 there 30 Dec. One at Al Ain Camel Track 16 & 26 Sep and one near there 31 Dec. Single birds were also seen near Al Hayer 5 Nov and south of Dhaid 9 Dec.

NOTE: It is recorded as breeding in Oman, and the numerous sightings in this 10 mile radius near Al Ain/Oman border suggests these may be resident birds.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Common winter visitor to mudflats and coastal marshes. In recent years has also favoured irrigated fields.

SPRING: Most winter visitors departed by late March. Latest records 21 Apr and a female was on Bu Tinah Island 6 May.

There was a rare summer record of one sub-adult female at Fujairah National dairy farm 22 Jul-27 Aug.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded 9 Sep, becoming common from mid September at most suitable wetland sites.

Wintering birds were found at Zabeel fish ponds, Khor Dubai, Eastern lagoon, Wathba sewage lagoon, Abu Dhabi (up to 8), Ramtha Tip, Khor al Beidah, Western lagoon, Abu Dhabi,, Hamraniyah, Khor Kalba, Al Ain camel track and Ain al Faydah. The largest count during the year was at least 15 at Al Ain Camel Track 5 Oct.

An estimated 50 birds wintered making this species the most common Harrier in winter. Summer records are rare.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Fairly regular migrant and local winter visitor, mostly to grassy fodder fields.

WINTER/SPRING: Singles were at Hamraniyah 2 Jan, Al Habab 21 Jan, at Ruwayah 19 Feb and at Al Wathba camel track 12 Feb and 28 Apr. 3 were at Hamraniyah 2 Mar, up to 4 on Abu al Abyadh Jan to mid Mar with 6 there 25 Mar. 2 were at Al Habab 13 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded from 7 Sep. Ones and twos, mostly Al Wathba, Abu al Abyadh and Al Ain. 3 were at Sweihan 24 Sep and 2 were there 24 Dec (probably wintering in area). 2 immatures were at Al Habab 8 Oct. 3 were at Hamraniyah 27 Dec and 2 adult males were at Al Ain camel track 30 Dec. Singles also reported at Murawah, Yasat, Ghayathi, Ruwais and Baynunah October to December.

Winter movements are not understood, though it is believed that most birds will stay in same vicinity most of season, ie. they might regularly be found at Al Wathba, Al Habab, Al Ain camel track and Hamraniyah from September-March.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Positive sightings of this species are increasing as observers are becoming more confident in separating 'ring-tails' from Pallid (and the odd Hen) Harriers. It usually occurs earlier in autumn and later in spring than Pallid, but is apparently a regular migrant, many overwintering. Immatures have recently been recorded in summer.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 4 at Hamraniyah 2-20 Jan and 1 Mar. One was at Khor Kalba 4 Jan. A second-year male was at Hamraniyah 21 May.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Records include 3 at Al Habab 9 Sep, up to 3 at Al Wathba camel track and one at Wathba sewage ponds 9 Sep-8 Oct. Singles at Delma 10 Sep and Abu al Abyadh 14 Sep, with 3 at Sweihan 20 Sep and one at Emirates golf course 27 Sep.

Regularly recorded at Al Ain Camel Track, with 12 there 2 Oct and up to 25 (mostly Montagu's, but mixed with some Pallid) from 4 Oct to end of year. One at Sweihan 6-15 Oct, one juv. Fujairah National dairy farm 13 Oct, one at Ruwais 21 Oct, one Al Wathba camel track 5/6 Nov and 30 Dec, 4 at Hamraniyah 27 Dec and one male/2 females Al Ain camel track 30 Dec.

'Ring-tail' harriers.

Some not identified to species as follows: One on Abu al Abyadh 18 Apr, one at Al Habab 14 Oct and 3 at Sweihan fields 15 Oct.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Not one of the more conspicuous wintering raptors.

WINTER/SPRING: More than 15 reports. One was seen displaying near Digdaga 22 Jan. Last spring record was one at Wadi Shih, Khor Fakkan 3 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded from 2 Sep with most records from October onwards. A dark bird at Zabeel fish ponds on 7 Oct had features of eastern subspecies *melaschistos* (J.K.Bannon/CR)

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo (vulpinus)*

Scarce migrant, while most pass across Arabian peninsula further west.

ALL RECORDS: Single birds were seen at Bateen wood/Mushref palace gardens 2/29 Oct and 6 Nov, Zabeel fish ponds 24 Nov, 2 were at Hamraniyah 2 Dec and one was at Hamraniyah 27 Dec.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Resident, breeding in winter months in inland desert areas, and dispersing at other times. All year's records listed below.

WINTER/SPRING: Singles, mostly immatures, were at Hamraniyah 20 Jan, 8 & 28 May, at Ramtha tip 7 Feb and at Ain al Faydah 24 Feb

AUTUMN/WINTER: Individuals were at Ghayl 27 Aug (adult), Sweihan 4 & 5 Sep, Al Ain

Zoo 6 Sep, Al Wathba 17 Sep, near Sweihan 22 Sep, at Fujairah National dairy farm 13 Oct, north of Masafi 13 Oct, Digdaga 13 Oct, Baynunah 29 Oct, 12-13 Nov and 20 Dec, and at Al Wathba camel track 5 Nov.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

Vagrant. #One shot, early December Zabeel fish ponds, specimen collected (C.Gross), 2nd record.

Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

Probably the commonest wintering eagle, usually found at mudflats and other wetland areas. WINTER/SPRING: Up to 2 at Hamraniyah 2-20 Jan, 2 Mar, 14 Mar and 4/5 Apr. 2 Wintering around Khor Dubai and Zabeel fish ponds until 18 Feb, with one seen there most days until 26 Mar. One in desert inland Ummus Saqem (near Dubai) 9 Feb, one at Jazeerah al Hamra and 2 at Dayah 1 Mar, one at Khor al Beidah 2 Mar, one at Ramtha 6 Mar and 6 Apr and one in Abu Dhabi 8 Mar. One late bird was at Hamraniyah 28 May. AUTUMN/WINTER: Several wintered, mostly ones and twos together, from 28 Oct at Al Ain (including a *fulvescens*), Zabeel fish ponds/Khor Dubai (including a *fulvescens* on 20 Nov), Abu al Abyadh, Ramtha Tip (including a *fulvescens* from 30 Nov-26 Dec), at Khor al Beidah, Ghaililah/Khatt area (where 5 were seen) and Abu Dhabi.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

Generally a scarce migrant, some wintering in foothills. Still no evidence of major passage through the country from Asian mainland. Regular confusion between immatures of this species and Spotted Eagle.

SPRING: One was reported at Al Ain Zoo late Feb/March, only spring report.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles were over Jebel Hafit 8 Oct and Al Ain camel track 28 Oct (possibly same bird), at Zabeel fish ponds 23/30 Oct, at Al Ain Zoo from early Nov (and into 1994), at Zabeel fish ponds 20-26 Nov and near Ruwais 26 Nov. 3 were encountered in Wadi Agran area, east of Al Ain on 17 Dec.

1992: One on Jebel Hafit 15 Dec and at Al Ain zoo on 17 Dec.

Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

A rare migrant, some years totally unrecorded. 1993 was better than average for the species. No spring records.

One was near Al Ain Zoo 28 Oct and single juvenile were at Baynunah 12 Nov and at Ain al Faydah 23 Nov.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Less than 5 previous reliable records, all from Al Ain area, where last record was in 1990. 2 different sub-adult birds were seen hunting over dunes near Baynunah 13 Nov and 26 Nov (S.Aspinall).

These birds seen in a remote area of the Western Region are likely to be the result of post-breeding dispersal from the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

Unidentified *Aquila* eagles

One *Aquila* not identified to species was at Zabeel 10 Oct

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor, apparently very localised.

Singles were at the Zabeel fish ponds 7 Jan-10 Feb, Hamraniyah 1 Mar and at Bateen wood/Mushref 26 Apr. A dark phase was at Al Ain 1 Nov and pale phase birds were at Dhadnah 7 Dec and at Zabeel from 17 Dec into 1994.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

Several pairs breed in the mountains, dispersing outside the breeding season, when it is more commonly seen at Arabian Gulf coastal and wetland sites.

Single, mostly immature, birds recorded at Zabeel fish ponds 16 Jan, at Ain al Faydah (adult) 24 Feb, Dhayah 1 Mar, Wadi Ghayl 20 Aug, Zabeel fish ponds 21 Sep, Qarn al Esh 25 Sep, Ruwayah 30 Sep, Zabeel fish ponds 5-18 Oct and 11 Nov-9 Dec, Hamraniyah 2 Dec and at Ain al Faydah 17 Dec.

Other records from Masafi in March and April, Hatta in May and in Al Ain in October. 3 were at the Zabeel fish ponds 13 Dec and a pair were soaring over Wadi Shih (Khor Fakkan) 29 Dec.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Resident on islands and on undisturbed headlands and sand spits. Nests during winter months with most birds fledging by late February. Migrants present in winter at most sheltered mudflats and lagoons.

BREEDING: A spring study of breeding Osprey on Yasat, Ghaghah and Kafai islands in western Gulf area (adjacent to Qatar border) revealed that a dense breeding population exists there. Up to 65 active nests (this season's nests) were found 30 Mar-11 Apr and at least 34 were still in use by breeding pairs at this time. In addition, 8 active nests were found on and around islands off Sila peninsula 8-11 Apr. One or two young were the norm. (Full report in *Tribulus* 4.1:5-8 (Aspinall 1994)).

Nest-building Oct/Nov and eggs in mid December Abu al Abyadh. Pairs also found on Murawah Island and Dhabyah.

INLAND RECORDS: Singles at Ain al Faydah 7 & 26 Sep and 6 Oct, at Ruwayah 29 Oct and at Al Ain sewage works 29 Oct. A large count was 8 on Abu al Abyadh 29 Oct.

Note possible evidence of passage on 29 October!

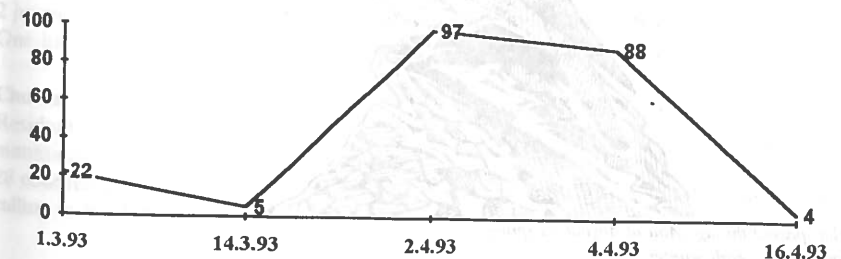
Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Formerly believed rare, now appears to be a regular spring migrant passing northward along the cultivations on the western edge of the mountains. Scarce in autumn and winter.

WINTER: One male was in Wadi Bih on 3 Jan.

SPRING: Spring passage first noted when 3 were above sea cliffs north of Dibba (Oman) 26 Feb. 22 were found in Hamraniyah grass fields 1 Mar. Numbers peaked at 97 on 2 Apr and dropped to 4 on 16 Apr when last seen there (see graph below).

Lesser Kestrel build-up at Hamraniyah - Spring 1993



One was on Abu al Abyadh 24-26 Mar, 55 were seen along cultivated plain between Al Ain and Dhaid on 28 Mar, at least 2 were in Masafi area 29 Mar, 2 were at Yasat Island 1 Apr and 2 north-east of Al Ain 2 Apr. The last spring record was a male at Bu Tinah 6 May. (Full report of Lesser Kestrel migration in *EBRI* 7:47-48 (Aspinall 1993)).

AUTUMN: Singlers were north of Shuwaib 17 Sep, at Al Habab 30 Sep and on Abu al Abyadh 29 Oct. 2 were near Al Hayer 19 Sep and 2 were found at Al Ain camel track 8 Oct.

WINTER: 3 were at Hamraniyah 27 Dec, probably wintering locally.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Thinly spread resident, common on passage, many wintering.

WINTER: Up to 5 wintering together at bigger fodder fields, such as Hamraniyah, Sweihan and Al Ain camel track, with 10 at Al Ain camel track 3 Oct and 10 at Al Wathba camel track on 24 Oct.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

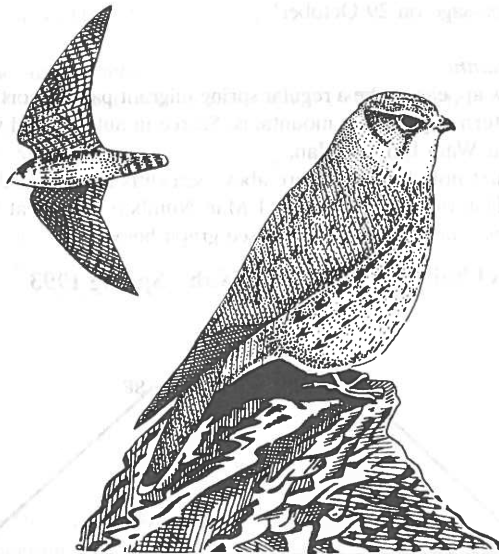
Vagrant. Males were on Abu al Abyadh 26 Feb-4 Mar & 10 March (S.Aspinall/G.Clarkson), and on #11 Dec (M.McGill). #One was on Das Island 1-2 Nov (M.Wood), the 5th to 8th UAE records. Previous have been in February, August, November and December.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Rather scarce migrant, mostly in autumn.

SPRING: Singlers on Abu al Abyadh 27 Apr and Al Wathba camel track 28 Apr were the only spring records.

AUTUMN: Up to 3 were at Das island 10 Sep-8 Oct, one was on Abu al Abyadh 14 Sep, one was at Ruwais 25 Sep, 2 were at the Emirates golf course 6 Oct, one was at Al Wathba camel track 8 Oct and one was at the Jebel Ali hotel grounds 9 Oct.



several Merlins passed through Abu al Abyadh in spring, with others reported in early winter

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*

Breeds on remote islands and headlands in south west Gulf (also in Oman-administered Musandam). Rarely seen on passage on mainland.

BREEDING: A minimum of 11 seen and 5 nest sites located on Delma Island 8-11 Sep, when the oldest brood appeared to be about 3 weeks short of fledging ie. from last few days of September. At least 3 seen (possibly 5) and at least one nest site located on Sir Bani Yas island 29 Sep-1 Oct. At least 12 were seen at Ras Ghumais, Sila from 22-29 Oct, perhaps dispersal from nearby nest sites (within 20 km) following breeding season (Aspinall 1994). Other records away from breeding areas were of one on Abu al Abyadh 16 Oct and one injured bird found in Jumeirah in early November (*per* C.Remple).

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

A rare falcon in the UAE, whose status is still a mystery. There are other records of juveniles in summer.

One juvenile, without jesses or rings was found dead at side of RAK road at Al Rifaa 21 Jun (J.K.Bannon/C.Richardson). #An adult on the Dubai-Al Ain road, 55 km from Dubai, 28 Oct (M.Kapanen/A.Topp).

1992: #2 at Al Ain Zoo on 17 Dec (TT).

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*

Migrant and winter visitor, usually trapped, rarely seen in the wild.

One seen at Khor al Beidah 16 Jan (J.K.Bannon) was the only winter-spring record.

AUTUMN: singlers were seen on the causeway to Abu al Abyadh 17 Sep (M.McGill), Al Hamdiya on 2 Nov (H.Luoto) and with jesses in Safa park 4 Nov.

Generally falconers' escapes are noted "with jesses"; however some others may also be escapes but not distinguishable from wild birds. Releases were reported on Murawah and Qarnayn Islands in March and May respectively.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Regular migrant and winter visitor, most trapped in autumn, few released in spring. Following list of probable genuine migrants:

WINTER/SPRING: Singlers seen at Khor Kalba 15 Mar, on Das island 19-20 Mar, 23 Mar and 30 Mar, on Jebel Hafit 31 Mar and on Das island 2-3 Apr and a rather late bird on 14 May.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Individuals on Das island 27 Oct, at Al Ain camel track 17 Nov, Das island 18 Nov, at Wathba sewage 30 Nov and another 14 Dec. One was seen hunting waders on Murawah Island 23 Nov and an adult female was at Dhadnah 8 Dec.

Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

A localised mountain resident. Although treated as a full species here it is sometimes regarded as a subspecies of *F.peregrinus*.

2 juveniles on Jebel Hafit 10 Jun, 4 there 8 Oct and one there 4 Nov, probable nest site. One juv. was at Digdaga 25 Jun and another was at Dhadnah 22 Jul.

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*

Resident on hillsides and mountain plateaux east of Ras al Khaimah (and throughout the mountains in Oman-controlled Musandam).

28 counted from road, Wadi Bih (UAE) to Wadi Khabb Shamsi (Oman) 5 Nov and heard calling in Wadi Bih 27 Dec.

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus*

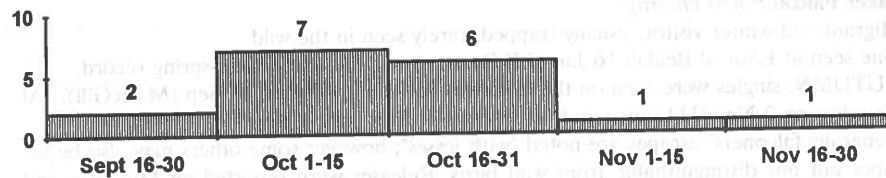
A common resident, rapidly expanding its range throughout the country. Some probably introduced.

BREEDING: Now breeds in several places on Abu Dhabi island and at Al Wathba. It is abundant on Abu al Abyadh due to introduction.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Passage migrant, probably under-recorded. Sometimes heard calling in suitable habitat in spring, but nesting not yet proven.

SPRING: 5 were at Digdaga 10 Mar and at least 3 were heard calling at Hamraniyah 1-14 Mar. Singles seen in Wadi Bih 26 Mar and on Abu al Abyadh 13 Apr, 31 May and 5 Jun. **SUMMER:** One Das island 28 Jun and 3 heard calling Fujeirah National dairy farm 22 Jul. Summer records are scarce but European populations of Quails are known to have complex movement patterns, possibly laying second clutches after migration to new breeding areas in late summer. The autumn occurrence was greater than normal.

AUTUMN 1993 RECORDS OF QUAIL

AUTUMN: One was at Al Habab 26 Aug. At least 18 birds were recorded 14 Sep to 17 Nov, the majority in the second half of October (see histogram above). One was at the Emirates golf course 3 Dec.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Surprisingly the scarcest migrant rail in the UAE. Only one recorded each in 1991 and 1992, so 1993 was a relatively good year for the species.

One rail seen briefly at Ramtha tip 8 Jan, was probably this species. At Al Wathba sewage one was seen 3/30 Sep, 2 from 31 Oct-4 Nov and one on 28 Dec. Up to 2 were heard at Ruwais reedbeds most visits 21 Oct-12 Dec.

Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana*

Fairly common migrant.

SPRING: One was on Das Island 15 Apr and one was at Zabeel fish ponds 24 Mar and 10-17 April.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One was at the Emirates golf course 10 Oct. One was at Ruwais 26 Nov. At Al Wathba sewage one was seen 1 Oct, 14-15 Oct & 24 Oct with 2 there 3 Nov and one there 30 Nov & 24-31 Dec. (December records are very rare).

The Al Wathba sewage ditch was well-covered by crane-watchers as regular visits were made there in autumn in connection with ringing. Unfortunately the water supply was cut off there in December.

Little Crane *Porzana parva*

Regarded as a rare migrant, though many overlooked or reported as Baillon's Crane. Singles were at the Emirates golf course 4-6 Sep (C.Richardson), Al Wathba sewage 9 Sep (S.James/E.Hirschfeld), the Emirates Golf Course 23-27 Sep (M.McGill/C.Richardson/E.List), and #at Al Ain camel track #17 Oct (caught by M.McGill). The 4th to 7th records if all accepted. Previous records have been in October, March and April.

Baillon's Crane *Porzana pusilla*

Scarce migrant.

#Singles were at Deira (Dubai) 23 Oct (M.Kapanen/A.Topp), at Al Wathba sewage 3-7 Nov (S.James/E.Hirschfeld).

The first records of this scarce and skulking species since 1990.

Little/Baillon's Crane *Porzana parva/pusilla*

One was at Al Wathba sewage ponds 17 Sep and one was found dead at Zabeel fish ponds 19 Sep.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

A scarce and irregular migrant. 1993 was a poor year for this species.

Singles on Abu al Abyadh 22-24 Apr and at the Emirates Golf Course 27 Oct were only reports.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Regular migrant and winter visitor, locally resident.

10 at the Zabeel fish ponds 5 Feb, largest number together.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Localised winter visitor to few available freshwater areas.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 5 at the Zabeel fish ponds until 21 Feb

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded in small numbers from 27 Oct at Zabeel, Ain al Faydah, Al Wathba sewage ponds, Ruwais, Ramtha Tip and Emirates Golf Course.

The largest congregation was 7 at Ramtha Tip 26 Dec.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Vagrant.

One at Al Ain camel track from 31 Dec (M.McGill), which remained into 1994, was only the 5th record for the country. (See Plate 9).

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*

Vagrant. #One was at Khor Dubai 19 Aug (J.Hart), origins unknown, the 4th record.

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor, becoming increasingly scarce. Practically all are hunted or captured soon after arrival in Oct/Nov.

Singles were seen near Tawam hospital, Al Ain 8 Oct (T.Bailey) and in Baynunah area 23 Oct, 28 Oct and 13 Dec (S.Aspinall).

Up to 8 were seen on Murawah Island 16-20 Mar and on 10 Nov (S.Aspinall), possibly escapes from nearby breeding centre.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Migrant and winter visitor, few oversummer.

LARGE COUNTS: 128 at Khor al Beidah 8 Jan, c.100 at Khor Dubai 3 Mar and 84 there 22 Sep, 40 at Khor al Beidah 24 Oct, 40 at Dhabyiah 20 Nov, 50 at Khor Dubai 24 Dec, 90 at Khor al Beidah 26 Dec.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor. Opportunist breeder in suitable habitat.

Largest breeding colony at Al Ghar lakes, nests and eggs seen mid April and 145 birds seen 9 Jul. Nesting in smaller numbers at Al Wathba sewage, Fujairah rubbish dump, Al Ain sewage works and Al Ain drainage pool.

LARGE COUNTS: At Al Ghar lake 76 on 16 Apr, 154 on 28 Apr and 40 there 5 May. 50 were at Al Wathba sewage on 4 Mar, 200+ at Ramtha Tip 19 Aug and 50 at Al Ain drainage quarry 8 Oct.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor, becoming less frequent.

6 were at Al Wathba sewage 22 Jan-3 Feb and one was there 19 Feb and 7 Apr - the only records in 1993.

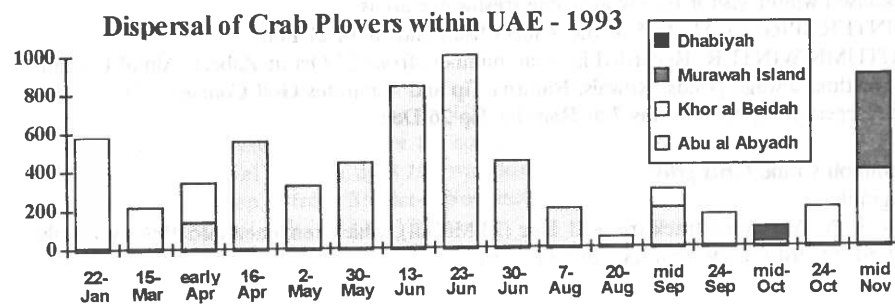
Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*

Summer visitor to breeding grounds on inshore islands west of Abu Dhabi.

It appears that breeding colonies of Abu al Abyadh and Umm Amin disperse in winter at least to Khor al Beidah, Murawah and Dhabyiah.

COUNTS AT KHOR AL BEIDAH: Counts over the year include 577 on 22 Jan, 215 on 15 Mar, 207 on 9 Apr, 7 on 22 Jul, 51 on 20 Aug, 96 on 10 Sep, 166 on 24 Sep, 200 on 24 Oct and 388 on 12 Nov. (See histogram below)

10 on Murawah Island 19 Mar, one on Sila peninsula 11 Apr and 54 on Dhabyiah 23 Apr.



BREEDING: 15 were first back on Abu al Abyadh colony on 24 Mar. Nearly 300 pairs nested this year, including young, increased to 696 on 6 Jun, 838 on 13 Jun and peaked at 995 on 23 Jun. Numbers declined from late June to mid September, with only 25 remaining by mid October. Minimum of 186 young counted (S.Aspinall).

A new colony discovered at Umm Amin of 67 birds with 29-33 occupied burrows 3-4 Jun. 42 adults, 8 juveniles present 1 Aug (S.Aspinall).

74 were on Dhabyiah 7 Oct while 500 birds were off Murawah Island on 10 Nov with 346 there 23 Nov.

One flying north off Dibba 17 Jun was well away from any known breeding areas.

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Regular, mostly autumn migrant and winter visitor

SPRING: One was on Das island 6 Feb and 23 Mar. No mainland records.

AUTUMN: Definite passage throughout region 21-27 Sep, all records listed as follows: 2 were on Das Island 21-24 Sep, one at Bateen wood 25 Sep, 2 at Shuweihat 26 Sep, one at Baynunah 27 Sep, one at Eastern lagoon 8 Oct, one at Khor Dubai 16 Oct, 7 at Ruwais 18 Oct, 2 at Khor Al Beidah 2 Nov, 2 at Bateen wood 17 Nov, 2 at Ruwais 19 Nov and one was on Das island 22 Nov.

Fresh tracks noted regularly in the desert until late December.

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*

Evasive breeder in the Emirates and summer (post-breeding) passage migrant. Often turns up from late spring. North African populations of the species regularly disperse northward after breeding and the UAE records might be attributed to the same behaviour among Arabian populations. Record numbers were found in 1993.

SPRING: 2 juveniles found at Halaylah Island 5 Apr was unusual, and indicates very early (post-breeding) dispersal. 2 were at Khor al Beidah 21 Apr, increasing to 20 on 19 May and a record 100 from 26-28 May. 5, including 2 juvs. were on Bu Tinah 6 May.

SUMMER/AUTUMN: 2 juvs. near Sweihan (breeding confirmed there in 1994) 17 May with 13 there 21 May. 49 were at Ruwayah pools 24 May increasing to 71 on 17 Jun, declining to 17 by 12 Aug. Up to 15 were at Khor Dubai 17-25 May.

One on Das island 10 and 27 Jun proves that some venture out into the Gulf. 5 at the Emirates golf course 7 Jun peaked at 16 on 3 Sep, declining to 3 on 7 Oct when last seen. 2 were at Al Fariq 5 Jun with 14 there 8 Aug. 11 at Al Wathba camel track on 29 Jul, peaking at 24 on 3 Aug, declining to 3 on 11 Sep. 4 were near Al Ghusais rubbish dump (Dubai) 10 Aug. 8 were at Towaisa 26 Aug, one at Jebel Dhanna 8 Sep. 22 were at Al Ain camel track 18 Sep decreasing to 12 by 28 Oct. 4 were at Sweihan 13 Oct.

WINTER: 2 were at Baynunah 29 Nov, 2 were at Sweihan 29 Nov & 9 Dec and 2 were at Al Ain camel track 18 Dec.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Regular late spring, early autumn migrant in small numbers.

SPRING: One was on Abu al Abyadh 12 Apr and up to 2 were there 12-14 May.

AUTUMN: Juveniles were at Al Wathba camel track 29 Jul and on Abu al Abyadh 2 Aug. Singles were seen on Das island 2 Sep, Al Wathba 17 Sep, Emirates golf course 18-23 Sep, Abu Dhabi horse race course 2 Oct and Al Ain camel track 18 Sep. 2 were at Al Habab 11 Sep, 3 juv. were at Al Ain camel track 26 Sep-3 Oct, with one remaining to 11 Oct.

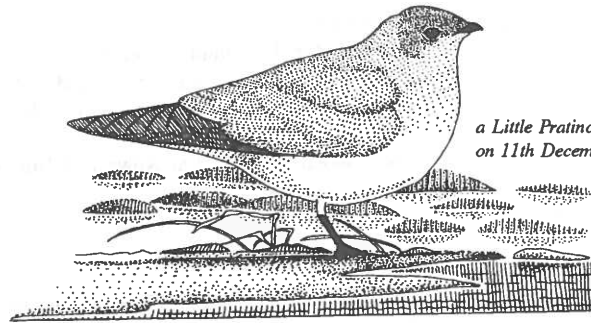
One *Glareola* sp. was seen near Mafraq 8 Aug.

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

Vagrant

A first-winter bird at Al Ain camel track 1-3 Oct (S.Aspinall/M.McGill) and one at Kalba from 29 Dec (C.Richardson/NSR, identified by EBRC) were only the country's 2nd and 3rd records. (See Plate 4).

The Kalba bird remained on Kalba beach for several days into 1994, where it spent much time hawking flies over a turtle carcass.



a Little Pratincole was found at Khor Dubai on 11th December

Little Pratincole *Glareola lactea*

Vagrant

#One at Khor Dubai 11 Dec (H.Virtanen), was the 5th record. The last record was in December 1985 at Zabeel fish ponds.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Migrant and summer visitor. Rare in winter.

First migrants, 3 at Ramtha tip 15 Jan.

BREEDING: Earliest breeding record: pair with 3 newly-hatched chicks Jebel Ali 26 Mar. Maximum of 20 at Ramtha 28 May, with 66 there including young, 7 Jul. 31 were at Emirates golf course 11 Jul, with 40 there 6 Oct. 16 were at Ain al Faydah early July and 22 were there 3 Sep. One still remained at Ramtha 5 Nov.

WINTER: One was at Al Wathba sewage ponds 24 Dec and 2 were at Al Ain sewage works 31 Dec.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor to mudflats and lagoons, few in summer.

Noteworthy flocks include 200+ at Khor Dubai 3 Dec, c.100 at Emirates golf course 27 Sep and up to 70 at Abu Dhabi's Eastern lagoon November to February.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Common breeding resident, becoming abundant in winter due to migrant influx from Central Asia.

Breeding at most sheltered mudflats, inshore islands and some beachheads. Also breeding at Al Ghar lake and Al Wathba, both noteworthy Abu Dhabi inland sites, Chicks common in April, though eggs still found in late May at Khor Dubai.

LARGE COUNTS: 680 were counted at Khor Dubai 26 Jun and 1235 there 22 Aug. Highest counts usually in winter. (Not counted Jan'93, but 3,990 counted in Jan'92). 1650 were at Al Ghar lake 9 Jul, 298 at Khor al Beidah 30 Jul, 650 at Dhabyah 7 Oct, 400+ at Murawah 10 Nov and 220 at Eastern lagoon 20 Dec.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

Very common migrant and winter visitor.

LARGE COUNTS: 1124 at Khor al Beidah 20 Jan, 1422 at Khor Dubai 22 Aug, 420 Dhabyah 7 Oct, 2,200 on Umm al Quwain beach 12 Nov and at least 1000 Khor al Beidah 26 Dec.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Common migrant, though more localised than Lesser Sand Plover. Small numbers in summer.

LARGE COUNTS: 259 at Khor al Beidah 24 Jun and 536 there 30 Jul, 70 at Khor Kalba 8 Oct, 35 Dhabyah 7 Nov and 50 on Umm al Quwain beach 12 Nov.

A juvenile migrant was on Abu al Abyadh on 15 Jun.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*

Scarce migrant. 1993 was a good year for Abu al Abyadh sightings.

9 records, totalling 13 birds recorded (compared to 3 records, of 16 birds in 1992)

SPRING: 3 were on Halaylah Island 5 Apr (C.Richardson/NSR) (see photo in *Emirates Bird Report 17*). One, first seen on Abu al Abyadh 22-30 Apr, was present again 11 May-6 Jun (S.Aspinall *et al*).

AUTUMN: A juvenile was on Abu al Abyadh 4-24 Aug, joined by an adult female 15-16 Aug. Different birds were there 13-14 Sep (*per* S.Aspinall) and 29 Oct (M.McGill). 2 were at Al Ain camel track 16-18 Sep, and 2 others were there 5 Oct (M.McGill). One was at the Eastern lagoon 22 Nov (S.James).

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce migrant, most previous records in late autumn.

2 in the Baynunah area 17 Nov (S.Aspinall), was only the 16th record.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Regular winter visitor, mostly Dubai area.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 10 at the Emirates Golf Club 19-28 Jan and 18 Mar, 83 there 29 Mar declining to 30-40 from 19-22 Apr with one or two still there on 4 May. 2 at Khor Dubai 21 Feb and 53 there 30 Apr. Up to 4 on Abu al Abyadh Feb-Apr.

MAIN SITES OF PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER 1993

Maximum birds/month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Emirates golf course	10	-	83	35	2	35	63	-	119	100
Khor Dubai	-	-	-	-	-	-	74	55	-	-
Ramtha tip	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	10	-	-

AUTUMN/WINTER: Earliest were singles at Khor Dubai 22 Aug and at Das Island, where, numbers increased to 7 on 25 Aug. 35 arrived at their regular site at the golf course from 26 Aug increasing to 63 by 3 Sep and, a record 119 by 5 Nov remaining to end of the year. 74 were at Khor Dubai 25 Sep and 55 there on 23 Oct. 10 were at Ramtha 8 Oct. Smaller numbers (less than 5 each) at Ramtha tip 27 Aug, Al Wathba 17 Sep (SJ,RQ), Abu al Abyadh 17-24 Sep & 8 Oct, Eastern lagoon 8 Oct and Ruwais 11 Nov-24 Dec.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria***Vagrant**

One at Al Wathba sewage ponds 30 Oct-31 Dec (E.Hirschfeld *et al*) was the country's first record. See also page 109.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor.

LARGE COUNTS: 130 at Dhabyiah 26 Feb, 230 at Khor al Beidah 5 Mar (RQ,SJ), 80 at Dhabyiah 23 Apr, 267 at Khor Dubai 22 Aug and 300 on 31 Oct, 350 at Dhabyiah 7 Oct, 60 at Dhabyiah 20 Nov, 300 at Khor Dubai 24 Dec and 100 at Khor al Beidah 26 Dec.

Red-wattled Plover *Hoplopterus indicus*

Resident, mostly in north.

55 at Hamraniyah 20 Jan and 20 at Fujeirah National dairy farm 29 Aug/20 Oct highest counts of year.

Sociable Plover *Chettusia gregaria*

Rare winter visitor.

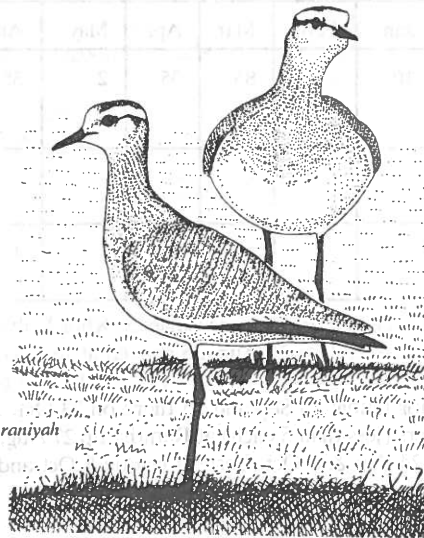
4 at Hamraniyah 2-20 Jan (C.Richardson), was the 7th record.

White-tailed Plover *Chettusia leucura*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor

WINTER/SPRING: Singles at Ramtha tip 15 Jan, at Al Wathba sewage 23 Jan and at Kalba pools 3 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles at Wathba sewage 1-8 & 25 Aug and 9-10 Sep, 8-9 Oct, 28 Oct-4 Nov and on 24 Nov. One was at Ramtha tip 27 Aug, 25 Sep and 2 were there 8 Oct-19 Nov with 7 there 30 Nov increasing to 13 (a record number) on 26 Dec. 2 were on Das island 9 Sep.



a small group of Sociable Plovers at Hamraniyah in January was the year's only record

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Scarce and irregular migrant and winter visitor. 14 birds recorded (compared to only 2 birds in 1992).

AUTUMN/WINTER: Earliest ever record was one at the Emirates Golf Course 20 Sep-6 Oct (C.Richardson). 10 were at Digdaga 2 Dec and 3 were at Al Ain compost plant on 17-18 Dec.

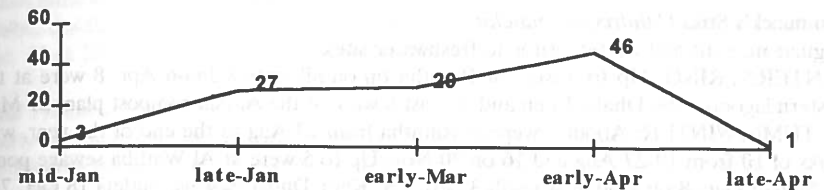
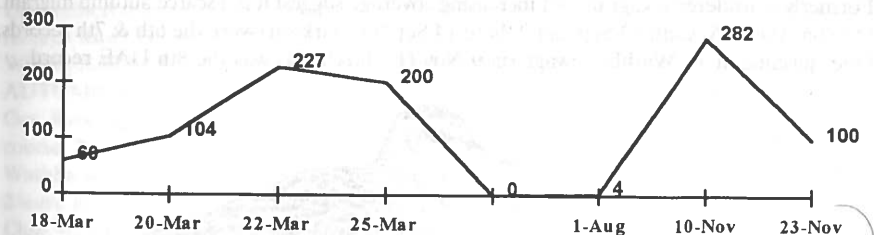
Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*

Formerly considered a vagrant, though increasing number of sightings at Khor al Beidah and Murawah indicate it is a localised and regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

WINTER/SPRING: At Khor al Beidah, 3 on 15 Jan, 21 on 20 Jan, 27 on 22 Jan, 29 on 5 Mar, 46 on 9 Apr with one remaining to 25 Apr.

31 on Abu al Abyadh 11 Mar, was the first record there.

At Murawah Island 60+ on 18 Mar, 104+ on 20 Mar and 227+ on 22 Mar, with some still present to 25 Mar (S.Aspinall). These were the first records from Murawah.

Great Knot at Khor al Beidah 1993**Great Knot at Murawah Island 1993**

AUTUMN/WINTER: At Murawah Island, there were 4+ on 1 Aug, 282 on 9-10 Nov and 80-100 there 22-23 Nov (S.Aspinall).

For more information on the occurrence of Great Knot in the UAE and its perceived status in the Middle East, refer to Aspinall (1993a).

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Vagrant.

3-4 seen on the extensive mudflats at Murawah on 9 Nov and a single, assumed one of previous birds, there 20 Nov (S.Aspinall), was only the 2nd confirmed record for the country.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Migrant and winter visitor. Kalba, Dhabyiah and Umm al Quwain are the strongholds for this species.

WINTER/SPRING: 12 were on Umm al Quwain beach 15 Jan, 16 at Khor al Beidah 5 Mar, 25 at Dhabyiah 23 Apr and 91 there on 3 May. Fewer other sites.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 24+ at Dhabyiah 18 Aug, 27 at Khor Kalba 27-29 Aug, 55 at Dhabyiah 7 Oct, up to 76 Khor Kalba 8-13 Oct, 25 at Balghelam Island 22 Oct, 30+ on Murawah 10 Nov, 34 at Kalba 18 Nov and 20 there 29 Dec. Smaller numbers were also recorded at other sites.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Common migrant and winter visitor, mostly mudflats.

COUNTS: Largest flocks included, 326 at Al Ghar lake 19 Feb, 700 at Khor Dubai 3 Mar, up to 740 at Al Ghar lake 14 Apr-5 May, 390 at Khor Dubai 12 Aug, 1010 at Ramtha 13-19 Aug, c.220 at Eastern lagoon 24 Sep-8 Oct, at least 100 at Ramtha Tip 26 Dec and 90 at Al Ain sewage works 31 Dec.

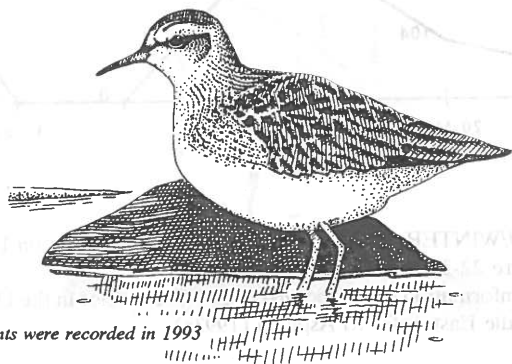
Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Regular migrant and winter visitor to freshwater sites.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 6 were at Ramtha tip on all visits 8 Jan-6 Apr. 8 were at the Eastern lagoon, Abu Dhabi 4 Feb and at least 6 were at the Al Ain compost plant 31 Mar. AUTUMN/WINTER: About 7 were at Ramtha from 13 Aug to the end of the year, with peaks of 10 from 19-27 Aug and 16 on 30 Nov. Up to 5 were at Al Wathba sewage ponds 26 Aug-24 Dec, 8 on Abu al Abyadh 3 Sep, 7 at Khor Dubai (sewage outlet) 18 Oct, 7 at Al Wathba sewage pools 6 Nov, 7 at Eastern lagoon 7 Nov, 5 at Eastern lagoon 22 Nov, a noteworthy 26 at Al Ain compost plant on 17 Dec and 5 at Ajman 26 Dec. Smaller numbers were at other sites.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

Formerly considered a vagrant but increasing coverage suggest it is a scarce autumn migrant. One on Abu al Abyadh 13 Sep and 2 there 14 Sep (G.Clarkson) were the 6th & 7th records. One juvenile at Al Wathba sewage on 9 Nov (E.Hirschfeld) was the 8th UAE record.



at least three Long-toed Stints were recorded in 1993

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Very common migrant, particularly in early autumn. Scarce in winter.

SPRING: 1353 at Al Ghar lake 14 Apr and 236 there 28 Apr, 330 at Dhabyiah 23 Apr.

AUTUMN: Khor Dubai numbers reached 2,880 on 22 Aug.

WINTER COUNTS: 100 Khor al Beidah 20 Jan, 80 at Ajman 26 Dec and 20 at Khor al Beidah 26 Dec.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Common late autumn migrant and winter visitor.

LARGE COUNTS: 470 were at Dhabyiah 26 Feb, 850 at Khor al Beidah 5 Mar and c.500 there 6 Apr, 500 Khor Dubai 24 Dec and 800 at Ajman 26 Dec. No accurate counts made at Khor Dubai, where species winters in thousands.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

Localised migrant (mostly Khor Dubai), sometimes in large numbers, less common in winter.

WINTER/SPRING: 570 at Khor Dubai 21 Feb and 84 there 13 Mar, 20 Eastern lagoon, Abu Dhabi 27 Feb, 14 at Dhabyiah 17 Apr and a peak of 18 on Abu al Abyadh 13 May, with one remaining to 22 May.

SUMMER: 2 were on Abu al Abyadh 14 Jun with 3 on 15 Jun.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded Abu al Abyadh 14 Jul with 17 at the ferry terminal 8 Sep and 33 there 15 Sep. 327 were at Khor Dubai 11 Aug, 58 on 22 Aug and 61 on 22 Sep. Small numbers were seen at numerous other locations, including Sir Bani Yas, Ramtha, Khor Kalba, the Eastern lagoon, the golf club and the Zabeel fish ponds, in September and October. 22 at Dhabyiah 7 Oct, 510 at Khor Dubai 31 Oct and 28 at Khor Dubai 24 Dec.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor, favouring sewage beds.

Al Wathba sewage pools consistently hosted the largest numbers: up to 48 from 12 Feb-8 Mar, 75 on 7 Apr, 103 on 16 Apr, 27 on 28 Apr. Also regular there in autumn, maximum 45 from 9-10 Sep.

Other important sites: 21 were at Khor Kalba 27 Feb, c.45 at Ramtha tip 28 Aug & 5 Nov, 21 at the Emirates golf course 15 Sep and 177 at Ajman on 26 Dec.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor (probably more common than records indicate). All records listed below.

WINTER/SPRING: 2 were at Wathba sewage on 23 Feb.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles were at the Zabeel fish ponds 16 Sep, near Khor Dubai 16 Oct, Ruwais 22 Oct, Al Ain camel track 25 Oct & 1 Nov (2 there 27 Oct), Emirates golf course 29 Oct, Al Ain sewage works 9 Nov, Al Ain drainage ponds 9 & 17 Nov, at Al Wathba sewage ponds 28 Oct-19 Nov, Zabeel fish ponds 24 Dec and Ramtha 29 Dec.

2 were at Wathba 20 Nov-14 Dec with 4 there 30 Dec, up to 4 were at the Emirates Golf Club 3-25 Dec and 4 were at Ramtha Tip 26 Dec.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: Numbers at the Emirates golf course increased from 7 on 19 Jan to over 20 from 22 Feb-13 Mar, peaking at 33 on 8 Mar. 4 remained until 19 Apr. Smaller numbers other sites.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First autumn record 25 Aug. Maximum numbers, c.90 at the Emirates golf course 25 Dec, represents an extraordinary wintering number.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

Scarce migrant.

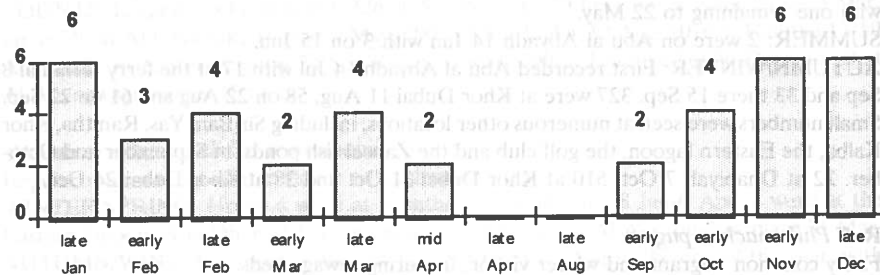
#One was at the Emirates golf course 18-25 Sep (S.Aspinall/C.Richardson) and #3 were there 7 Oct (C.Richardson). (See Plate 2).

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*

Scarce and localised winter visitor and probable passage migrant. Probably overlooked.

WINTER/SPRING: Maximum 6 wintered at the Emirates golf course to April, with last record 26 Apr. One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 23-26 Apr (C.Richardson).

**Pintail Snipe at the
Emirates golf course, Dubai 1993**



AUTUMN/WINTER: An extraordinary flock of 27 were at the Emirates golf course 2 Sep (J.K.Bannon) (not shown on histogram above). Up to 3 birds were present from 10 Sep, 4 from 7 Oct and 6 from 5 Nov to the end of the year. One was at Al Wathba sewage on 9 Sep. Another seen from 14 Oct, increased to 2 from 16 Nov (S.James/E.Hirschfeld) apparently present to the end of the year.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Rare winter visitor.

One was at the Emirates golf club 13 Nov (C.Richardson) and one was on Abu al Abyadh on #15 Nov (M.McGill), 7th and possible 8th records.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Uncommon localised migrant and winter visitor.

33 at Khor Dubai 3 Mar, and 14 on 13 Mar. A peak of 50 were seen there on 24 Dec. Smaller numbers were present at other times.

There were single summer records at Khor Dubai 26 Jun & 12 Jul and 4 were there from 11 Aug, with 17 from 22 Aug-6 Sep, 30 on 23 Oct and 16 on 31 Oct. 2 were at the Zabeel fish ponds 12-23 Sep, with 5 there 19 Sep and one was at Al Wathba 10 Sep.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Very common migrant and winter visitor, some overwintering.

LARGE COUNTS: 1150 at Khor Dubai 3 Mar and 1150 reported at Khor al Beidah 5 Mar. 430 was the year's highest count at Dhabiyah 7 Oct.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Fairly common autumn migrant, scarce at other times.

LARGE COUNTS: 19 were at Khor Kalba 15 Jul. 16 at Khor al Beidah 30 Jul, with 30 there 13 Aug and 20 were there 4 Nov. 7 arrived at the Emirates golf course 12 Aug, increased to 10 on 26 Aug and peaked at 12 on 10 Sep. One remained until 7 Oct. 28 were at the Eastern lagoon 24 Sep while 38 were at the Eastern lagoon 22 Nov.

Also recorded December-June, with small numbers at Al Jazeera Khor, Khor Dubai, Murawah, Dhabiyah, Sir Bani Yas Island, Abu al Abyadh and Ras al Khaimah lagoon mangroves.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor to mudflats and lagoons. Very early return migrant in summer.

HIGH COUNTS: 35 at Al Jazeera Khor 5 Apr, 150 at Khor al Beidah 23 Jul, 59 at Khor Dubai 12 Aug, 85 at Dhabiyah 7 Oct, 91 at Khor al Beidah 26 Dec.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Irregular autumn migrant, occasionally at other times.

SPRING: Single birds on Abu al Abyadh 11 Mar & 17 Apr and Al Wathba sewage 16 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles were at Al Wathba sewage 9 Sep & 14 Oct and 31 Oct, at Ramtha 14 Sep, at Ruwayah 30 Sep and Khor Kalba 8 Oct, Emirates golf course 10 Oct and near Khor Dubai 16 Oct.

2 were at Al Wathba on 24 Oct, at Ramtha 5 Nov and at Dubai sewage treatment plant 23 Oct. Individuals were at Ramtha Tip 12-26 Dec, Emirates golf course 25 Dec and at Ajman sewage pools on 26 Dec.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

LARGE COUNTS: 291 at Khor al Beidah 22 Jan, 110 Eastern lagoon 4 Feb, 220 at Khor Dubai 3 Mar and 120 at Khor al Beidah 5 Mar. 365 were at Khor Dubai 12 Jul and 795 were there 22 Aug.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Regular autumn migrant, usually in small numbers and scarce in spring.

SPRING: 3 were at Al Jazeera Khor 1 Mar, one at Ramtha 4 & 29 Mar, one on Abu al Abyadh 25 Mar and 4 were at Khor al Beidah 2 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Rare July records include one at Ramtha tip 7 Jul and one on Abu al Abyadh 14 Jul. Up to 3 were at Khor al Beidah 27 Aug, 17 Sep and 8 Oct, up to 4 were at Al Wathba sewage ponds 30 Sep to 27 Dec and 9 at Ajman sewage 26 Dec.

Ones and twos also at Al Ain sewage, Ramtha tip, Khor Dubai outfall, Al Ghar lake, Nadd al Sheba golf club, Sir Bani Yas, Fujairah National dairy farm and the Emirates golf course August to December.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

LARGE COUNTS: 9 were at Ramtha tip 7 Feb and 10 were there 10 Aug, 18 at Khor

Dubai 3 Mar, 47 at Dhabyah 1 Oct, 70 on Murawah 9 Oct and c.25 were at Khor al Beidah 6 Apr & 26 Dec.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Fairly common migrant, few in winter.

WINTER/SPRING: Ones & twos at several sites January-early April. 3 were at the Zabeel fish ponds 21 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 2 at Ramtha tip on 7 Jul was first autumn sighting. Fairly common August to mid September, irregular to the end of year. 5 at Ramtha tip 10 Sep & 26 Dec, largest parties.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common migrant, sometimes in winter.

WINTER/SPRING: Regular in small groups of up to 4 together, until the end of April. One on Abu al Abyadh 1-3 May and 5 at Al Ghar lake 5 May were exceptionally late.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 4+ at Ramtha from 30 Jul, with 5 on 10 Aug increasing to 11 on 19 Aug. Common on passage August to mid November, less common to end of the year. Regular at Al Wathba and Ramtha tip, with a peak of 8 at Al Ain compost plant 17 Dec.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor, rarely seen away from mudflats.

INLAND: One at Al Ain drainage pond on 6 May was noteworthy.

LARGE COUNTS: Up to 135 were at Khor al Beidah 20-22 Jan; 80+ at Khor Dubai 14 May, and 78 there 22 Aug. 40 at Khor al Beidah 24 Oct.

Also seen in smaller numbers at Al Jazeerah Khor, Abu al Abyadh, Ramtha tip, Emirates golf course (one on 12 Aug), Umm al Quwain beach and Khor Kalba.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common at freshwater ponds and sheltered breakwaters. All months except June.

Largest congregation was 34 at Eastern lagoon 7 Nov.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Fairly common migrant, coasts and sewage works.

INLAND: One was at Al Ain sewage works 11 Sep.

LARGE COUNTS: 95 were at Khor al Beidah 20 Jan, with 40-50 there during each visit March and April. 121 were at Khor Dubai 22 Aug, 23 at Ramtha 27 Aug, 28 at Khor al Beidah 10 Sep, 25 Dhabyah 7 Oct, 23 at Eastern lagoon 7 Nov and 41 on Umm al Quwain beach 12 Nov.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Regular migrant. Many thousand winter offshore in the Arabian Sea.

SPRING: One was at Ain al Faydah 31 Mar and one was seen from Dibba bay 2 Apr. 11 were at Al Ghar lake 28 Apr, 39 at Al Ghar lake 5 May and one at the Emirates golf course 7 Jun.

AUTUMN: One adult was at Al Wathba sewage and 2 were on Abu al Abyadh 20 Aug. 2 were at the Emirates golf course 2 Sep, increasing to 4 on 10 Sep, with one remaining until 28 Oct. 2 were at the Nadd al Sheba golf course 6 Sep, while one was at Al Wathba sewage 9-10 Sep, 10 on Abu al Abyadh 14 Sep, one at Ain al Faydah 15 Sep, 26 at Al Ghar lake 17 Sep, one at Al Wathba sewage 30 Sep and 18 at Al Ghar lake 8 Oct.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Regular migrant throughout the year off Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, though coasts rarely watched. Most records are from east coast due to an almost complete lack of observers watching Gulf coast, where they do occur regularly north of Abu Dhabi and occasionally further west.

WINTER/SPRING: 7 at Dibba 3 Jan, one at Murawah 20 Mar, one offshore near Qarnayn Island 4 May and 10 at Dibba 30 May.

A total of 17 seen heading north off Dubai coast during total 2 hours of dusk seawatching 1-7 Apr. See *EBR17:56* (Bannon 1993).

AUTUMN/WINTER: One on Abu al Abyadh 15 Aug, 2 at Dibba 29 Aug, 2 at Khor Kalba 29 Aug, 8 & 13 Oct and one there 26 Oct & 13 Dec. 2 were at Umm Al Quwain 2 Nov. Up to 5 reported during short seawatches off east coast at other times, including May, June and July.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Migrant, most common autumn to winter. Similar status to *pomarinus*. All records listed (but certainly under-recorded).

WINTER/SPRING: 2 off Fujeirah 4 Jan, one on Abu al Abyadh 11 & 13 Mar, one near Murawah 20 Mar, 2 around Yasat Islands 1 Apr and one near Kalba 3 Apr. 47 seen heading north off Dubai coast during total of 2 hours seawatching 1-7 Apr. See Bannon (1993). One at Das island 16 Apr and one off Abu Dhabi 8 May.

AUTUMN: One at Dibba 29 Aug and one at Kalba 17 Sep. One adult pale phase Abu al Abyadh 16-29 Oct, one Khor Kalba 26 Oct, one Umm Al Quwain 4 Nov, one west of Abu Dhabi 8 Nov and at least 2 pale phase adults and 4 imm. Abu al Abyadh 14 Nov and one off Abu Dhabi 17 Dec.

Arctic/Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus/pomarinus*

9 heading north off Dubai 4-7 Apr, 2 Khor Kalba 26 Oct, one off Jumeirah beach 27 Oct, one Abu al Abyadh 21 Nov and 5+ at Dibba 8/9 Dec.

ALL SKUA RECORDS IN THE UAE - 1993

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Arctic	2	-	3	51	1	-	-	1	1	2	8	1
'Pom'	7	-	1	17	16	5	5	5	-	5	2	1
skua sp.	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	5

Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*

Breeds on offshore islands. Migrant and resident, though most are only seen along mainland coasts February to October.

4 at Kalba 4 Jan and 2 at Umm al Quwain beach 15 Jan.

Common from March, particularly on east coast. 540 at Kalba 3 Apr and 124 there 23 Jul, representative numbers.

BREEDING: 300+ on Qarnayn Island 5 May, where 215 pairs counted. Most clutches complete and some young, of less than one week, found 8 May.
One East Coast 8 Nov and 2 off Dibba 31 Dec.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

Fairly common winter visitor and spring migrant.

WINTER/SPRING: Flock of 40 at Dibba 26 Feb. Last recorded 1 May.

One west of Abu Dhabi 10 Jun was a rare summer record.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First records, one at Kalba 18 Nov and 3 at Umm al Quwain 24 Nov. 50+ were found on Abu al Abyadh in Nov and 50 were on the beach at UAQ 26 Dec. A first winter bird at Al Wathba sewage ponds 29 Nov was unusual so far inland.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Abundant winter visitor to coasts, harbours, rubbish dumps and inland shallow pools.

LARGE COUNTS: 30,000 were at Al Qusais (Dubai's solid waste dump) 14 Feb and 20,000 were roosting around temporary water reservoirs near Creek Golf Club, Dubai on 8 Mar.

First autumn record Dubai 17 Sep. 3,300 were at Khor Dubai 2 Nov and 3,000 were at Zabeel fish drying area near Fujairah port 29 Dec.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*

Non-breeding species, present most of year. Rarely more than 200 together. Autumn influx from early August.

LARGE COUNTS: 715 on Umm al Quwain beach 2 Mar, 200+ at Dhabyiah 6 Nov and 200 at Murawah 10 Nov.

1992: Very large flock of 2000 reported at Al Jazeerah Khor 9 Dec.

Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus*

Status of this species is obscured by reports of other confusing sub-species of similar appearance in this complex group. Formerly thought to be common in winter, *armenicus* is actually quite scarce and all observers are advised to take great care in identifying them.

#The following reliable reports are listed here for the record:

WINTER/SPRING: One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 9 Mar and one was on Kalba beach with thousands of *cachinnans*-types 3 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One was on Dubai creek 24 Dec, 10 on Umm al Quwain beach 26 Dec and 15 on Dibba beach 28 Dec (J.Dierschke/CR *et al*).

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Fairly common non-breeding visitor, mostly in sheltered lagoons, rarely on the exposed coast. Most regular August-December.

LARGE COUNTS: 77 were at Khor al Beidah (where over 30 is noteworthy) 5 Mar, 26 at Khor Dubai 22 Sep.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

Migrant, present all year round, but usually recorded at less than 5 sites per year.

Normally less than 10 together, but these large counts were reported: 24 at Khor Dubai 3 Mar, 17 on 8 Apr and 25 there 24 Dec. 14 on Abu al Abyadh 14 May and 18 there 29 Oct. 14 were at Murawah Island 10 Nov.

Also seen at Dhabyiah, Bahrani, Abu Dhabi and Khor al Beidah.

9+ were on Abu al Abyadh 5 Mar, with a pair mobbing observers (S.Aspinall/J.K.Bannon)

Swift Tern *Sterna bergii*

Mainly breeding summer visitor, smaller numbers in winter. Regular at roost sites spring to autumn at Umm al Quwain and Dibba where up to 10 were often found together with more numerous Lesser Crested Terns.

LARGE COUNTS: 15 were at Halaylah island on 5 Apr, c.300 at Qarnayn roost 5 May, 25 at Bu Tinah 6 May, 44 were at Umm al Quwain 23 Jul, with 83 there on 13 Aug and 16 on 26 Sep. 10+ were at Dibba 30 Dec was the highest winter count.

Island breeding colonies were not surveyed in 1993.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

Breeding summer visitor, few in winter.

SPRING: One on Abu al Abyadh 11 Mar and 30 there 14 Mar. 30 also on Umm al Quwain beach 14 Mar, first sign of summer influx.

LARGE COUNTS: 1000 at Qarnayn 5 May, 11,000 at Bu Tina shoals 6 May (S.Aspinall), 301 at Umm al Quwain beach roost 18 Jun and 880 there 13 Aug. 311 Abu Dhabi corniche 16 Sep and 350 off Abu Dhabi 8 Nov.

A large count of 120+ on Abu al Abyadh 27 Nov is a high number for winter, when most birds have normally moved away from area.

Ones and twos only in December.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Non-breeder. Fairly common along coasts in winter. Immatures form roosts near the coast in summer.

SPRING COUNTS: 78 at Dibba 28 Feb, up to 250 on Abu al Abyadh 13-14 Mar, 250 on Umm al Quwain beach 14 Mar, 200 at Dibba 2 Apr and 140+ Khor Dubai 14 May.

SUMMER: Noteworthy records include 40-55 at Khor Dubai 24 Jun-18 Aug, c.40 at Umm al Quwain 24 Jun-13 Aug and 37 at Rams 25 Jun.

AUTUMN COUNTS: Influx noted from October. 125 at Khor Kalba 18 Nov.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common migrant May-October, sometimes difficult to separate from White-cheeked Tern in non-breeding plumage. Several reports of birds showing characters of *longipennis* race, noted for its black bill and dark legs. Noteworthy sightings listed below.

SPRING: 2, including one showing features of *longipennis* race, on Halaylah Island 21 May and 21 at Khor Dubai 22 May, included many dark-billed adults. See *Oman Bird News* 14:5-7 (Richardson 1993).

At least 7 on Umm al Quwain beach 28 May. 318 were at Dibba 30 May while only 95 were there 31 May, with 79 along the stretch of coastline from Khor Fakkan-Fujairah on the same day. Up to 144 were roosting on Umm al Quwain beach 11-18 Jun. 134 were at Dibba 17 Jun and 53 were at Khor Kalba 18 Jun. 18 second-summer and 4 third-summer birds at Rams 25 Jun, 65 at Khor Kalba 15 Jul and 16 Khor Midfaq 23 Jul.

AUTUMN: 5 at UAQ beach 13 Aug and 13 there 10 Sep. Up to 550 were at Khor Kalba 27-29 Aug, 79 Abu Dhabi corniche 16 Sep, 24 at Khor Kalba 17 Sep and 105 there 13 Oct, 40 at UAQ beach 26 Sep, c.600 at Khor Kalba 8 Oct, 550 were at Ras Dibba 13 Oct. 2 off Abu Dhabi 8 Nov were last autumn records.

White-checked Tern *Sterna repressa*

Fairly common summer breeding visitor to islands, frequents mainland coasts late March to early November.

WINTER: Unrecorded January-March, except for one at Dibba 3 Jan and 2 there 26 Feb and up to 3 on Abu al Abyadh 20-26 Mar.

SPRING: 122 at on Kalba beach 3 Apr, c.800 at Al Jazeera Khor 5 Apr and 1000+ on Abu al Abyadh 9 Apr. 200+ each were on Bu Tinah and Qarnayn Islands 5-6 May. 550 on Umm al Quwain beach 11-18 Jun.

BREEDING: 272 pairs on Abu al Abyadh 30 May, hatching from 13 Jun and fledging from end of July to mid August. c.100 pairs on Umm Amim and 10 pairs Qasar Selahah.

AUTUMN: 268 on Khor Kalba beach 29 Aug, 250 on UQA beach 26 Sep, 200 at Dibba 20 Oct and c.2000 Abu al Abyadh 29 Oct. Hundreds seen on Delma, Murawah, Ras Ghumais and Sir Bani Yas in September.

WINTER: Up to 10 were seen on Das island 12/19 Nov.

Unidentified Common/White-checked Tern

600 at Umm al Quwain 29 Aug; 8000+ at Bahrani Island 8 Nov and 4000 at Khor Kalba 26 Oct, mostly White-checks.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*

Summer breeding visitor, pelagic and generally far offshore.

Earliest sightings, 5+ offshore Sir Bani Yas 27 Mar and 25+ seen on way to Yasat Islands 30 Mar. Up to 2000+ between Kafai and Ghaghah 9-10 Apr (Aspinall 1994). c.250 were on North Yasat 14 Apr, indicating fairly early arrival on breeding grounds.

Seen regularly from coast May to October.

BREEDING: 500-800 pairs nesting on Qarnayn Island 7 May, no eggs yet. 2000 pairs on Umm Amim 3-4 Jun and 500 pairs Qasar Salahah 3-4 Jun.

289 were off Dibba 17 Jun with 1200 there on 20 Oct. Several other reports of smaller numbers during period.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Exact status unknown, though it appears to be a spring migrant and non-breeding summer visitor.

2 probably this species, Khor Dubai 14 May. 20 on Umm al Quwain beach 11 Jun and 4 there 18 Jun. 26 were at Khor Kalba 18 Jun, one was at Umm al Quwain 24 Jun and one was at Rams 25 Jun.

Saunders' Little Tern *Sterna saundersi*

Summer breeding visitor, nests mostly on inshore islands and shoals. In spring rarely seen before late February.

LARGE COUNTS: 47 at Khor al Beidah 5 Mar, 35 at Al Jazeera Khor 5 Mar, 50 at Al Jazeera Khor 6 Apr, 200 at Ghaghah 7 Apr, c.55 at Ramtha 7 Jul-25 Sep (where numbers peaked at 130 on 10 Sep). 797 at Dhahiyah 7 Oct and 2800 there 6 Nov (but only 50 there 20 Nov) and 450 west of Abu Dhabi 8 Nov.

BREEDING RECORDS: Present from late February. 50+ pairs Abu al Abyadh 11-13 Mar, with at least 3 pairs on eggs 21-22 Apr with fledging from 30 May. Some unhatched on 13 Jun.

10+ pairs Murawah, nests with eggs on Yasat 30 Mar, and found breeding at Ras Ghanada.

WINTER: One was at Al Jazeera Khor 2 Jan, 2 were at Khor al Beidah 20 Jan, 2 were on

Das island 5 Feb. Singles at Ramtha and Dibba in December.

1992: 13 were at Khor al Beidah 6 Dec, 20 at Al Jazeera Khor 9 Dec and 4 at Ramtha Tip 11-12 Dec.

Unidentified Little/Saunders' Tern

600 small terns were seen offshore Ras Dibba 13 Oct, believed mostly Saunders'.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Migrant and winter visitor, locally common, eg Ramtha tip.

WINTER/SPRING: 24 were at Ramtha tip 8-15 Jan, 5 on 2 Mar increasing to 27 on 6 Apr.

SUMMER: Single birds were at Ramtha 11-18 Jun & 7 Jul and at the Zabeel fish ponds 12 Jun. 4 were at the Dubai creek golf course 14 Jul.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Light passage from mid August, to end of the year, with highest counts of up to 7 at the Zabeel fish ponds 31 Aug-21 Sep and 16 at Ramtha 10 Sep. Ones and twos also recorded at Khor Dubai, Abu al Abyadh, Ruwais, Al Wathba and Ain al Faiyadah.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Vagrant.

One in breeding plumage seen on Kalba beach 8 Apr (R. Qusted) and one winter-plumaged adult near Dhadnah 14 Oct (E.Hirschfeld), were the 1st & 2nd records for the country. See also page 107.

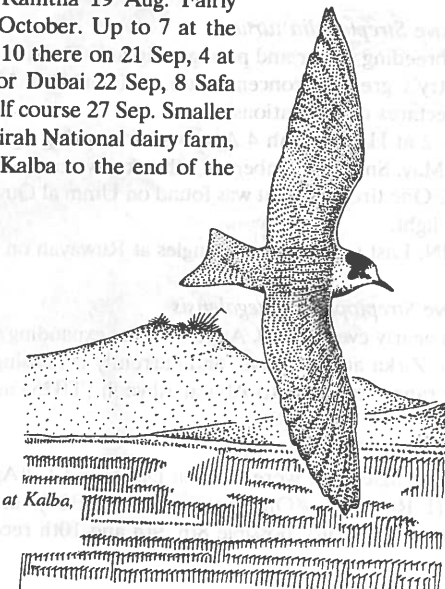
White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Fairly common autumn migrant (though less common than Whiskered) and localised at other times.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 4 at Ramtha 8-15 Jan, 3 on 2 Mar, 8 on 6 Mar and up to 7 from 6-30 Apr.

SUMMER: One was at Ramtha 7 Jul.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One was at Ramtha 19 Aug. Fairly common from late August to early October. Up to 7 at the Zabeel fish ponds 5 Sep-1 Oct, with 10 there on 21 Sep, 4 at Al Wathba sewage 17 Sep, 6 at Khor Dubai 22 Sep, 8 Safa park 24 Sep and 3 at the Emirates golf course 27 Sep. Smaller numbers at Al Wathba, Ruwais, Fujeirah National dairy farm, Khor Dubai, Ramtha tip and Khor Kalba to the end of the year.



a Black Tern in breeding plumage was reported at Kalba, then another, in winter plumage occurred on the East Coast near Dhadnah on 14 October

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*

Very elusive resident of mountains and adjacent gravel plains.

c.150 came to drink at Wadi Bih dam after dusk on 4 Apr.

Heard coming to drink at freshwater spring at Dhayah mangroves 1 Mar.

Several records in adjacent Oman territory (see separate Oman list at end).

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*

Fairly common resident of sandy areas, seldom seen in the desert though regular at known drinking places.

Since 1987 the highest flocks recorded at favourite drinking pools has rarely exceeded 50 birds. 1993 was truly a record year for the species.

At Ruwayah pools, 30 on 19 Feb, 80 on 23 Feb, 180 on 16 Mar, c.80 on 30 Mar, 34 on 17 Aug and 60 on 29 Oct. Smaller numbers also seen there May, June, July.

Flocks of up to 15 regular Ras Ghanada in May and August. 2 were at the Emirates golf course 22 Feb and 10 Sep; up to 125 were at pools near Jebel Ali village 26/29 Mar. 27 were inland from Ghantoot 23 Aug and 90 were in the same area 3 Sep. Up to 150 were found drinking at a sewage outflow near Khor Dubai 15-18 Oct.

283, the highest flock on record, were at Al Wathba sewage 17 Sep. Up to 75 came to drink at nearby Wathba camel track 1 Oct and 19 Nov.

Also reported at Ruwais, Sweihan, Al Ain, Baynunah and Khor Kalba, where groups of up to 20 birds were seen October-December.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Vagrant.

#One in Jebel Ali hotel grounds on 20 Mar (R.A.Richardson), would be the 4th record.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common and spreading.

Extending range to Das island, with singles seen 27-28 Mar & 8 Oct.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Summer breeding visitor and passage migrant. The rich cultivated area of Hamraniyah holds the country's greatest concentration, estimated at 10 pairs/100 hectares (encompassing c.1,500 hectares of cultivations).

SPRING: 2 at Hamraniyah 4 Apr, was first spring sighting. 59 were there on 16 Apr, with 88 on 21 May. Smaller numbers at other known breeding sites including Abu al Abyadh and Ruwayah. One tired migrant was found on Umm al Quwain beach 6 Apr. Otherwise passage generally light.

AUTUMN: Last sightings were singles at Ruwayah on 15 Sep and at Das Island on 18 Sep.

Palm Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Common nearly everywhere. Appears to be expanding its population on the offshore islands of Delma, Zirka and Arzanah, and currently colonising Das Island.

Breeding range extended to Abu al Abyadh (TB25) and Sila (RB25), first noted in 1993.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Vagrant. #Single birds were seen on Das Island 1-2 Apr (male) (L.Reaney/M.Woods) and 29 Apr (L.Reaney). #One was at Bab (TB24), in western desert, 1 May (A.Rollo/-G.Clarkson/S.Aspinall), possible 8th, 9th and 10th records.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Locally common, becoming increasingly widespread.

6 at Al Habab (VB27) 21 Jan and 10 there 19 Jun and one at Bidiyah, on East Coast 28 Feb, indicate range expansion. Common on Abu al Abyadh, Delma and Ruwais, indicating further expansion of known range.

Signs of migration via Das Island: 2 there in March, up to 6 there in April, one there throughout June, one on 8 Aug, 3 from 25 Aug-8 Sep, one on 5 Sep, one 11/12 Sep, one 23 Sep-12 Oct and 2 from Nov to the end of the year. But no signs of nesting there. 300 were counted at Bateen wood/Mushref park on 12 Oct.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Spring and autumn migrant. Calling birds holding territory, with possible summer breeding population on the mountain plateaux of the Ras al Jebel (Jennings 1992). More studies needed in the area in February and March to clinch a first breeding record for Arabia.

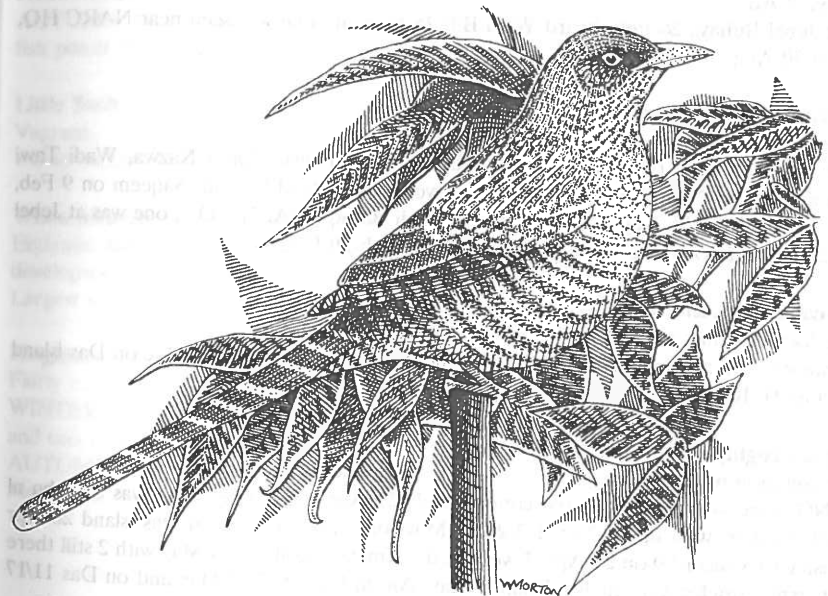
SPRING: One very early migrant was at Dibba 28 Feb and seen heading for the mountains, therefore could have been about to nest locally. Brown-phase (hepatic) birds were at the Zabeel fish ponds 10 Apr and on Abu al Abyadh 18-20 Apr. Other individuals were on Abu al Abyadh 24 Mar and at the Emirates golf course 19 Apr.

AUTUMN: Single birds recorded 4 Sep to 9 Oct. One late bird was at the Emirates golf course 1 Nov.

Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*

Vagrant. Previous records of single birds March 1977 and February 1988.

A female at the Emirates golf course 13 Nov (C.Richardson), was the 3rd record.



a female Indian Koel was very elusive at the Emirates golf course

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Rather scarce resident (and migrant?)

A pair raised 4 young at Nakhili (inland Dubai), reported only a week old in mid June (J.Platt).

Single birds were at Dhabyah 19 Jan (P.Hellyer), Abu Dhabi East Road 12 May and again 16 Dec (P.Hellyer), near cultural roundabout, Sharjah 5 Sep (S.Turner), at Al Wathba sewage ponds 14 Nov (E.Hirschfeld) and on Das island 17-23 Nov (L.Reaney/M.Wood).

This last record suggests some movement, local or otherwise as there are no resident pairs on Das.

Bruce's Scops Owl *Otus brucei*

Scarcely seen, though probably common resident in ghaf tree areas, with some seasonal movements.

ALL RECORDS: One was heard in Wadi Bih 2 Apr (R.A.Richardson). There was at least one pair in garden north of Al Kharran, RAK where 3 seen 18 Jun while 6 (incl. several recently fledged young) were counted on 30 Jul (E.Hirschfeld *et al*).

One found dead at roadside at Hamraniyah 20 Aug (S.Aspinall/C.Richardson). One was found at Emirates Golf course 20 Nov, possibly on migration (C.Richardson).

'scops' owls

One scops-type owl landed on lawn at Jumeirah school during Dubai Natural History Group evening meeting on 7 Feb (C.Richardson).

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

Resident rocky outcrops and some older ghaf groves. Few sites known.

BREEDING: Pair seen at Qarn Nazwa throughout year, with 3 downy young first seen at nest hole 8 Apr.

One at Jebel Buhays 26 Feb, heard Wadi Bih 25 Mar and one was seen near NARC HQ, Sweihan 30 Aug.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Common resident.

Seen more than once (assumed at nest sites) at Jebel Faiyah, Qarn Nazwa, Wadi Tawi Yaeen and inland Ghantoot-Sweihan. A pair were seen inland Ummus Saqeen on 9 Feb, one was at Towaisa 26 Aug, one was seen in Wadi Baraq (WA27) 1 Oct, one was at Jebel Hafit 28 Nov and one was in Wadi Uyaynah, Tayibah 29 Dec.

Short-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Scarce localised migrant and winter visitor.

One was on Abu al Abyadh 27 Feb, with 2 there 3-5 Mar (S.Aspinall). One on Das island 26-27 Oct (L.Reaney).

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Fairly common migrant.

SPRING: One was seen at Dubai country club 27 Apr and 5 May. One was on Abu al Abyadh 28 Apr, with up to 2 on 1-3 & 11 May, one while 3 were on Das island 28 Apr increasing to a record 9 on 29 Apr. 3 were at the Emirates golf club 4 May with 2 still there 5 May, while singles were at Bu Tinah 6 May, Ain al Faydah 5/12 May and on Das 11/17 May. 3 nightjar road-kills reported near Awir in mid-May.

AUTUMN: Single birds were seen at the Zabeel fish ponds 10 Sep, on Abu al Abyadh 15 Sep, on Das island 16 Sep, at Al Ain Intercon hotel grounds 2 Oct, at Ummus Saqeen 8 Oct, in Al Wathba wood 8 Oct, Bateen wood 8 Oct, Al Ain zoo 11 Oct and Al Wathba sewage 31 Oct. 3 were at Al Ain club 6 Nov.

Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius*

Rare migrant.

#7 were over Al Wathba fields 28 Apr (*Tribulus* 3:2:22 per C.Richardson) and one was at Ras al Akhdar, Abu Dhabi island on 18 Oct (E.Hirschfeld).

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Common spring migrant, scarce at other times.

SPRING: First noted from 25 Feb, with light passage in March, increasing April to early May. c.30 at Zabeel fish ponds from 8-24 Apr. Late noteworthy record, 20 at Ain al Faydah 20 May.

AUTUMN: Uncommon in autumn, but following were identified to species: One at Emirates golf course 23 Sep and 7 at Zabeel fish ponds 28 Sep, with 5 there 7 Oct and an exceptional 40 there on 30 Oct. No other autumn records.

Note: This species is often confused with *A.pallidus*, which is scarce July-September.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Common (winter) breeding visitor, locally abundant in winter and spring.

NEW BREEDING SITES: Breeding reported Abu al Abyadh 23 May, with 4 fledglings seen 6 Jun. Also breeding at Shuweihat 15 Apr and Ruwais mosque 5 Nov.

c.400 at Dubai museum colony 21 Feb. 64 Abu Dhabi corniche 2 Mar probably breeding nearby. Last summer records, c.80 at Zabeel fish ponds 5 Jul and 2 there 14 Jul. 3 at Hamraniyah 20 Aug were unseasonal.

AUTUMN: First autumn records were one at Emirates golf course 8 Oct, then 5 at Zabeel fish ponds 30 Oct and at least 200 were there on 24 Dec.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Vagrant.

#One on Das island 28 May (M.Wood), would be the 7th record.

White-collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris*

Endemic sub-species resident at Khor Kalba. Habitat under threat from encroaching development, human disturbance and vehicles on the khor shoreline.

Largest numbers reported: 16 on 27 Feb, 8 on 18 Mar, 10 on 3 Apr and 6 on 18 Jun.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Fairly common winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: Last spring records on Abu al Abyadh with up to 2 present 9-16 Apr, and one remaining to 28 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One in Wadi Ghayl ravine on 23 Aug was one of earliest ever records. Most from September onwards. At least 8 seen at Khor Kalba most visits in December.

White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Vagrant.

One overwintering bird, remained at Ramtha tip until last recorded on 7 Feb (C.Richardson) (first reported by J.Hart on 28 August 1992 and accepted as the 2nd record).

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

Very common resident, especially in northern Emirates.

4 on Das Island 26 Mar, was unusual. 51 in fields around RAK airport area 16 Apr, indicates how common they can be in suitable habitat.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

Very common autumn migrant in north, small numbers breed. Fewer in spring, except on East Coast.

SPRING: 7 at Khor Kalba on 15 Mar, ones & twos on Murawah 17-19 Mar, and one on Das Is. 20 Mar, were earliest spring records. Passage increased pace from April with records of up to 14 birds together at sites including Kalba, Al Habab and Al Jazeera Khor. Continuous stream of migrants (mostly ones and twos) on Das Island, until 12 Jun.

BREEDING: 8 at Al Habab 19 Jun, 6 nest holes identified on 2 Jul with 14 (pairs?) there 8 Jul nesting at 2 locations 1 km apart.

First fledglings 15 Jul, 4 adults, 4 juveniles at Rugheilat farm, Fujairah and 1 ad., 1 juv. at Kalba.

AUTUMN: First signs of dispersal/migration, one at Bateen wood 18 Aug. Becoming abundant from late August: 20 at Zabeel fish ponds 24 Aug, up to 67 at Al Habab 26 Aug-1 Sep, 104 Fujairah National dairy Farm 26-29 Aug, 64 Marbad 27 Aug. 150 were at Zabeel fish ponds from 31 Aug peaking at an amazing 200 at dusk on 3 Sep and 93 still there 5 Oct. Steady passage from September to October, with largest flocks at the key sites of Al Habab, Khor Kalba and the Zabeel fish ponds. Up to 21 in Bateen wood area until mid October, 50 at Khor Kalba 14 Oct and 52 at Samaha township (Dubai-Abu Dhabi road) 15 Oct.

Latest records included up to 25 at Al Wathba sewage 3-7 Nov, 10+ Al Wathba camel track 8 Nov and 7 on Das island 9 Nov. One remained at Zabeel fish ponds until 10 Nov and 2 at Ruwais on 13 Nov.

#One bird seen on Abu al Abyadh on 5 Dec was the first ever December record.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Regular migrant, with small numbers breeding in Ras al Khaimah agricultural areas.

SPRING: Regular on Das Island from 18 Mar until 1 May with maximum of 19 on 11 Apr. Maximum numbers, 14 in Safa park 13 Apr, 12 at Thumayriyah 15 Apr, 15 at Idhn 16 Apr, and 24 at Al Wathba 16 Apr.

BREEDING: 4 at nest holes near Digdaga 4 Apr, still there 26 May and 3 at nest holes at Hamraniyah 28 May, with 6 seen there 18 Jun.

AUTUMN: First autumn record, one at Das 19 Aug, 24 Bateen wood 18 Aug, 10 at Wadi Ghayl and 19 at Fujairah National dairy farm 29 Aug. Common, though localised September to early October. Up to 26 Bateen wood 1-5 Sep and 36 there 9 Sep with small numbers remaining to 10 Oct, c.70 at Jebel Ali village and c.20 at Zabeel fish ponds 3 Sep, 63 Das island 6 Sep, 8 at Wadi Baraq 1 Oct and 3 at Ain al Faydah 21 Oct. 4 reported at Al Hadmiya 2 Nov were very late.

In previous years all migrants have departed almost precisely by 21 October, but late birds were recorded to mid November in Abu Dhabi 1977, on Das Island to mid November 1991 and at the Emirates golf course until mid December 1992.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

Regular migrant in varying numbers annually, with a few pairs breeding around the cultivations of Digdaga and Hamraniyah annually.

SPRING: First recorded 30 Mar on Das Is., individuals at several sites in May. 3 on Abu al Abyadh 30 Apr-1 May, 5 on 2 May and a noteworthy 15 on 3 May, with one remaining to 11 May.

BREEDING: 3 seen between Digdaga and Khatt 26 May and one at Hamraniyah 18 Jun, suggests breeding again this year.

AUTUMN: One on Das Island from 8-11 Jul and from 27 Jul-9 Aug. A first-autumn juvenile was on Abu al Abyadh 28 Jul. 2 at Al Habab 26 Aug-1 Sep and ones & twos at several sites until mid October. 4 at Sweihan 13 Sep. A late bird was at Al Wathba camel track 17 Nov.

Indian Roller *Coracias bengalensis*

Common breeding resident in north, with some movements detected.

LARGE FLOCKS: 150 at Hamraniyah 20 Jan, 73 Fujairah National dairy farm on 22 Jul and 168 there 26 Aug.

One on Das island 30 Oct-12 Dec, following appearances there in April & October 1992. One at Bateen wood 19 Apr, first Abu Dhabi record since October 1991. Interesting movements for such a sedentary species.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Common migrant, some resident.

BREEDING: Calling first noted at Hamraniyah 20 Jan. 7 at Al Habab 19 Jun, suggests good breeding population in area. Also recorded in early July, where breeding likely at Zabeel fish ponds, Safa park, Ramtha tip and Emirates golf course. Reported breeding in Al Ain area.

SPRING: Passage recorded 26 Jan-6 Apr, with mostly residents present after that date.

AUTUMN: Passage recorded 11 Jul (Das Island) to 10 Dec (Abu Dhabi).

LARGE COUNTS: 11 on Das Is. 5 Feb, 12 at the Emirates golf course 2 Sep, 12 at Nakhili (inland Dubai) 9 Sep and 8 at Bateen wood 28 Oct.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Fairly common migrant and scarce winter visitor, though probably under-recorded. 17 birds reported in 1993, compared to 20 in 1992.

ALL RECORDS: Single birds on Khalidiyah spit (Ladies beach) 2 Jan, in Zabeel garden 26 Jan, Das Is. 24-27 Mar, Jebel Ali area 29 Mar, Yasat Islands 31 Mar-1 Apr, Bateen wood 7 Apr, Al Wathba 16 Apr, Das Is. 16 Apr, Emirates golf course 3 Sep, Bateen wood 21 Sep & 2 Oct, at Jebel Ali hotel 8 Oct, near Mushref palace gardens, Abu Dhabi 15 Oct and Emirates golf course 22 Oct. One feeding under a thorn tree in mountains at Marbad 28 Dec, was an unusual record.

Black-crowned Finch Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

Common breeder in suitable dune scrub habitat. Wanders in winter and difficult to find.

Winter flocks of 20-30 seen at Jebel Faiyah 1 Jan, Qarn Nazwa 19 Feb, Khor al Beidah on 22 Feb and Idhn on 28 Feb. 2 pairs north of Sila'a 14 Apr, is an extension of their known breeding range. Reported breeding near Bateen airport again this year, now colonised Abu Dhabi island since 1991. Up to 5 were on Das Island 9-19 May. c.100 were counted on Siniyah Island 20 May and at Ruwayah pools 24 May. Most common after breeding at drinking pools: Over 100 at Ruwayah 12 Aug, 173 at Emirates golf course 11 Jul, 60 at Al Wathba 17 Sep and 100+ at Sweihan camel track 13 Oct.

Bar-tailed Desert Lark *Ammomanes cincturus*

Vagrant, probably breeding occasionally in south and west desert areas. One reported north of Khumayis (on Abu Dhabi-Dubai border north of Sweihan) regularly from mid April to at least 19 Aug (S.Aspinall/P.Osborne).

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*

Resident of stony hillsides and wadis. 32 near Masafi 10 Mar largest count. 3+ seen on Sila peninsula and Ras Ghumais 22 Oct, extension of range. Up to 10 at Jebel Dhanna 27-29 Oct, isolated population.

Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*

Resident, few movements recorded. One on Das Island 10 & 16 Apr, was unusual for a sedentary species outside its normal range.

12 at the Emirates golf course 25 Jun, highest count. BREEDING: One pair bred on Abu al Abyadh 24 May, confirms range extension.

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*

Rare winter visitor. About 20 birds recorded (compared to just 5 in 1992). 3 at Al Wathba 3 Feb and 7 there 12 Feb (S.James/C.Richardson). At least 4 flew over Khor al Beidah 2 Mar (NSR tour), 2 were at Al Ain camel track 1 Nov (M.McGill), while another 2 were at Al Wathba camel track 2 Dec with 5 there 28 Dec (S.James).

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Common migrant, rare in winter. Spring territorial display, Umm al Quwain coastline and Al Ain camel track. Further evidence of breeding needed.

SPRING: One at Al Wathba camel track 3 Feb, first spring record. Common mid Feb to early Apr. Largest flocks, 45 at Al Wathba 12 Feb with up to 60 there 8-16 Mar, 26 at Khor al Beidah 22 Feb and 80 on Halaylah Island 5 Apr. Flocks on Abu al Abyadh from 9-31 Mar, peaking at 50+ on 12 Mar. One on Abu al Abyadh 22 Apr, last record 24 Apr Das Island.

AUTUMN: First autumn record 20 Aug. Steady passage until late October, few to mid November. (Scarce in Dubai and north, only ones & twos reported Sep, rare in Oct). Peak numbers, 55 at Al Wathba 17 Sep, 75 there 5 Nov with 42 reported there 30 Dec. 50+ at Sweihan 6 Oct. Singles were at Sweihan 9 Dec and at Al Ain camel track 30 Dec. Last migrant on Das Island 19 Nov. Reported north of Khor al Beidah in mid December, awaits confirmation.

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens*

Uncommon migrant, localised in winter, breeds locally on scrubby coastal saltflats in north. WINTER/SPRING: 65 at Khor al Beidah 22 Jan, 2 on Das Island 23-29 Mar and 2 on Abu al Abyadh 28 Apr were the only spring records.

BREEDING: A pair carrying food, presumably for young, on Siniyah Island, Umm al Quwain 20 May, highest breeding evidence for 20 years (Richardson 1993a).

AUTUMN: 7 at Ras Ghanada on 18 Sep. 2 at Al Wathba camel track 27 Oct and 13 at Al Ain camel track 28-29 Oct. Single birds were at Abu Dhabi race course 28 Oct, on Das Island 16-19 Nov and on Abu Dhabi race course 28 Nov and 8 Dec. Reported north of Khor al Beidah in mid December, may be resident.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Abundant resident in area mostly north of Abu Dhabi to Al Ain road. Single birds seen on Das Island 21 Feb and 18 Apr and individuals on Abu al Abyadh seen Mar-Jun and Sep-Oct, are further range extensions to the islands. At least 2 pairs bred near Bateen airport lagoon 19 Mar, now confirmed on Abu Dhabi island since 1991 (P.Hellyer). LARGE COUNTS: 110 were at the Emirates golf course 7 Jun, 100+ were at Sweihan fodder fields and at least 100 were at Al Ain camel track 30 Dec.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Fairly common winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: Last recorded, one on Abu al Abyadh 9 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One on Abu al Abyadh 12 Sep, was a very early migrant. One was at Ain al Faydah 8 Oct. Otherwise present from 23 Oct. Up to 100 Al Habab 25 Dec and 47 at Al Wathba 28 Dec. Also reported at Ruwais and Emirates golf club.

Small Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Formerly believed vagrant, but seems to be a scarce migrant.

SPRING: 5 at Al Wathba camel track 8 Mar (S.James), 2 at Abu Dhabi racecourse 18 Mar (S.James), up to 2 Abu al Abyadh 26/27 Mar (S.Aspinall/D.Paynter) and one there 15-18 Apr (S.Aspinall).

AUTUMN: One was at Al Wathba camel track 24 Oct with 2 there 27-29 Oct and one from 5 Nov-2 Dec (E.Hirschfeld/S.James/R.Quested).

#2 probably this species were at Khor Dubai 17 Jan (J.K.Bannon), one Abu al Abyadh 10 Sep (M.McGill) and up to 2 on Das Island 12-16 Dec (L.Reaney).

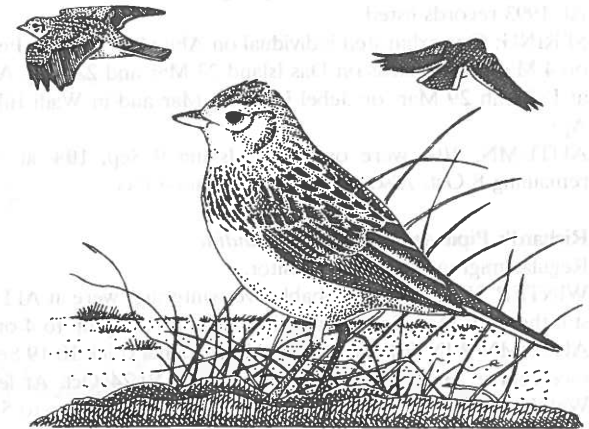
Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Regular and common passage migrant, rare in winter and summer.

WINTER: c.20 Al Wathba camel track 23 Jan and 8 at Al Wathba sewage 24 Dec.

SPRING: Light passage from early March. 2 at Hamraniyah 21 May, were late.

AUTUMN: Recorded from 19 Aug at Ramtha tip. Very common in September, with peak numbers of 66 at Nadd al Sheba golf course 6 Sep and over 50 at Ramtha 17 Sep. An individual at Al Wathba was last seen 8 Nov.



Small Skylarks appear to be a regular occurrence at Al Wathba and other Abu Dhabi sites from late October to mid April

Pale Crag Martin *Hirundo obsoleta*

Common resident in hills and mountains, starting to colonise areas nearer the Arabian Gulf coast, including beneath ledges and overhangs on buildings.

The following island reports were exceptional: One at Murawah 19 Mar, 2 on Abu al Abyadh 7 Mar and 5 there 8 Mar, decreasing to 2 on 11 Mar. At least one was flying around telecom HQ in Dubai city centre June and July. One was at Ramtha lagoons 5 Nov and there were several reports from Sweihan, 60 km from the mountains.

Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Rare spring migrant.

#One was on Das Island 25-28 Mar (L.Reaney).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common migrant, occasional in both winter and summer.

WINTER: c.10 Al Wathba camel track 23 Jan.

SPRING: Recorded on Das Island from 2 Feb and on mainland (Ramtha tip) from 7 Feb 2 at Hamraniyah 21 May and up to 2 at Ramtha tip until 13 Jun were late.

AUTUMN: Recorded from 26 Jun with one at Ain al Faydah 1 Jul. 5 were at Ramtha 3 Jul. c.300 were at Al Ain camel track 4 Oct and 300 were at Sweihan 6 Oct. 170 at Al Wathba 8 Oct.

WINTER: Up to 4 at Ruwais 25 Nov with 3 remaining until 19 Dec at least. 26 at Al Wathba camel track 30 Dec.

One *H.r.savignii* claimed Al Wathba camel track 17 Nov (most likely *H.r.tyleri*, the Siberian subspecies which is indistinguishable in the field from *savignii*, but nevertheless an interesting record - Eds.). Other *tyleri* at Al Wathba 7 Apr, 7 Nov and 3 there 2 Dec.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

Uncommon spring migrant. Rarely recorded in autumn.

17 at Hamraniyah fields 1 Mar. Singles on Abu al Abyadh 3-5 & 27 Mar, 2 there 16 Mar and one there 9 Jun. One was at Thumayriyah 15 Apr.

10+ were on Delma Island 9 Sep.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Uncommon, most occurring in spring.

All 1993 records listed.

SPRING: One exhausted individual on Abu al Abyadh 24 Feb, 2 at Al Wathba camel track on 4 Mar. Single birds on Das Island 23 Mar and 22 Aug, Abu al Abyadh 23 & 26 Mar, at Fujeirah 29 Mar, on Jebel Hafit 31 Mar and in Wadi Bih 4 Apr. 2 at Ain al Faydah Apr.

AUTUMN: 10+ were on Delma Island 9 Sep, 10+ at Al Wathba 14 Sep, with one remaining 8 Oct. Also reported at Al Ain 8 Oct.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Regular migrant and winter visitor.

WINTER SPRING: 7 (probably overwintering) were at Al Habab 21 Jan and up to 4 were still there 29 Mar. Several at other sites including up to 4 on Abu al Abyadh 2-11 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles at Al Ain camel track 18-19 Sep & 19 Oct and at Abu Dhabi race course 23-25 Sep and up to 2 there 10-24 Oct. At least 2 were at the massive Al Wathba fields from 1-8 Oct, 27 Oct & 5-19 Nov and up to 5 were there 23 Dec to the end

of the year. One was in Mushref gardens 10 Oct and individuals were seen on Abu al Abyadh throughout October. 2 were at Ruwais 19 Oct, 2 at Sweihan 1 Nov and 5 were there 5 Dec. 2 were in Safa park 25 Oct, up to 6 were at Al Habab 8 Oct to end of year (peaking at 10 on 28 Oct) and one was at Al Ain camel track 30 Dec.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

Vagrant, probably overlooked previously, though 1993 must have been exceptional.

Up to 3 were at Abu Dhabi horse race course 12-Oct-6 Nov (S.James *et al*), One was in Mushref Palace garden 18-19 Oct (S.James), 1st-3rd UAE records. 3 at Al Wathba camel track 4-19 Nov (E.Hirschfeld/S.James) was the 4th record.

#Single birds reported at Abu Dhabi horse track 23-28 Sep (SJ) and at the Emirates golf course on 22 Oct (CR), were not seen in sufficient detail for acceptance, but remain on record. (See also *The Blyth's Pipit Story*, page 110).

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

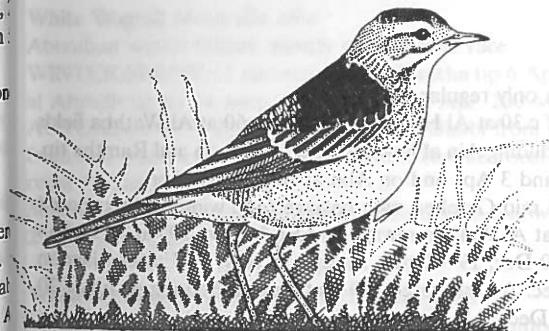
WINTER/SPRING: Daily on Abu al Abyadh to mid April, with peak of 30+ on 26 Mar. Last recorded Das Island 24 Apr. Regular and numerous at other sites.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Early records, one adult Abu al Abyadh 1 Aug and 14-23 Aug and one on Das Island 27 Aug. Generally scarce until mid September. Peak numbers of 17 at Al Habab 14 Oct, 40 there 29 Oct and 60 there 25 Dec, 35 at Wathba camel track 27 Oct and 42 there 28 Dec.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

Frustratingly elusive resident of the mountains, some dispersing to coastal plains in winter when it can be just as elusive. All records listed.

BREEDING: 2 in song and carrying food for young at Masafi 25 Feb while one was there 15 Mar and 2 on 29 Mar (J.K.Bannon/C.Richardson). 2 were in song at Jebel Faiyah 1 Apr (NSR tour) and 2 were seen near Wadi Bih dam 20 Jun (J.K.Bannon/C.Richardson). 4 were at Wadi Baraq 1 Oct (S.James), one was at Khor Kalba 18 Nov (M.McGill) and one in Masafi wadi 30 Dec (NSR tour). Individuals were in song at Uyaynah, near Tayibah plain 30 Dec and at Dhadnah 31 Dec (S.Aspinall).



pinned down at last, Blyth's Pipit may not be so rare in the Emirates after all

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

Vagrant, mostly late autumn.

Single birds were at Al Wathba camel track 1 Oct (E.Hirschfeld, R.Quested), in Safa Park #14 Oct (J.K.Bannon) and in Bateen wood 17-20 Oct (E.Hirschfeld, S.James), 10th-12th UAE records.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Common spring & autumn migrant, occasionally in winter in south.

SPRING: Recorded from 8 Mar-26 Apr.

AUTUMN: First recorded 4 Sep at the Emirates golf course, last recorded in Dubai on 5 Nov, and in Abu Dhabi 2 remained in Mushref palace gardens until 25 Nov. Numbers peaked at 10 in Bateen wood 28 Oct.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Scarce winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: Up to 3 at Al Habab until at least 3 Mar with up to 16 recorded at Al Wathba (lagoons and camel track fields) until 14 Mar (SJ,RQ).

AUTUMN/WINTER: One at Al Habab 14 Oct. One on Murawah Island 10 Nov. Recorded from 17 Nov in Abu Dhabi, with a peak of 18 at horse race course on 28 Nov, then it was seen regularly at Al Wathba with a maximum there of 20 on 30 Dec. Common at Ruwais from 24 Nov, with 50+ there 19 Dec. Numbers at Al Habab peaked at 20 on 25 Dec, while one was on Das island 26 Nov-10 Dec and up to 4 were at the Emirates golf course 3-7 Dec.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Fairly common migrant (mostly in spring), localised in winter when it usually favours grassy fields.

WINTER/SPRING: 4+ on Abu al Abyadh from 10 Mar, rising to 10 on 26 Mar. 10-20 daily on Yasat Island 31 Mar-10 Apr. Small numbers on passage from late March at several sites including Emirates golf course, Jebel Ali and Al Habab. c.30 at Al Wathba 7 Apr and 100 on Abu al Abyadh 15 Apr declining to 20 on 21 Apr, and last seen 3 May. Recorded at Al Wathba fields until 1 May.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded Al Wathba camel track 8 Oct, at Ruwais 20 Oct and at Al Habab from 28 Oct, with maximum of 5 together. Ones and twos at other sites to end of year with 4 at Kalba (road central reservation) 29 Dec and several heard at Al Ain camel track 30 Dec.

LARGE COUNTS: Estimated 75 at Al Wathba camel track 27 Oct declined to 19 by 30 Dec.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Fairly common winter visitor, though only regular at a few sites.

WINTER/SPRING: Peak numbers of c.30 at Al Habab 21 Jan and c.60 at Al Wathba fields 3 Feb. Smaller numbers elsewhere including Ain al Faydah, Abu al Abyadh and Ramtha tip. Single birds last recorded on Das Island 3 Apr and on Abu al Abyadh 15 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded mid October, with passage (and winter influx) noted until at least 22 Nov. 51 birds ringed at Al Wathba sewage 15 Oct-31 Dec, 100 at Al Habab 25 Dec and 50 Al Ain camel track 30 Dec, 19 Wathba sewage 21 Nov, 97 Eastern lagoon 22 Nov and up to 131 there 10-22 Dec. An estimated 300+ at Ruwais housing complex 20 Dec and 102 at Al Wathba fields 28 Dec.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Common passage migrant, in several races.

SPRING: One on Das island 8 Feb was earliest spring migrant. Light passage continued to early May.

AUTUMN: One juvenile on Abu al Abyadh 2-3 Aug, 16/18 Aug then 4 on 25 Aug, earliest records. 2 were at Ramtha tip 19 Aug. Passage was virtually over by late October with ones and twos only in November. Maximum flock, 36 Al Wathba camel track 8 Oct.

WINTER: One was at the Emirates golf course 7 Dec, a male of race *feldegg* was at Ramtha Tip 17 Dec and a blue-headed was at Al Ain race track 23 Dec.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

Fairly common migrant and localised winter visitor.

WINTER/SPRING: 3 seen most visits to Ramtha tip from Jan-Mar, with 4 there 15 Jan and 2 (possibly migrants) there 6 Apr. 2 at Dubai Creek golf club 26 Jan. One was at Kalba 27 Feb and at Dhayah 1 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Earliest individuals were at Ramtha tip from 13-27 Aug, the Zabeel fish ponds 14-16 Aug, Abu al Abyadh 16-18 Aug, at Al Wathba sewage 25 Aug and at Al Habab 26 Aug. Steady passage Sep-Nov.

3 first-winter *citreola* race at Al Wathba sewage 30 Sep where a total of 18 were ringed 15 Oct-31 Dec (with at least 35 different individuals present throughout these months, several remaining unringed - E.Hirschfeld). Maximum 7 were there 24 Oct.

Noteworthy reports include up to 5 at Eastern lagoon 5-7 Nov with 3 there 20 Dec, 2 at Al Ain compost plant 17-31 Dec, 6+ at Al Ain camel track 20 Dec, 3 at Ramtha Tip 26 Dec with individuals at other sites.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Uncommon migrant, occasionally wintering. Autumn passage in 1993 lighter than usual.

WINTER/SPRING: One at Bateen wood 18 Feb, first spring migrant. 3 were at Fujeirah National 26 Feb, 2 at Jebel Ali 29 Mar and 4 at Emirates golf course 29 Mar, with individuals at several other sites during the period. Up to 3 at Das Island 30 Mar-20 Apr and one on Qarnayn Island 9 May were latest records.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One at Das Island 11 Sep was earliest record. Single birds at various locations to late October, with late birds at Mushref palace gardens until 6 Nov, at Al Wathba sewage 3 Nov and on Abu al Abyadh 14 Nov. 2 were at Al Ain camel track 8 Oct. Up to 4 on Das island 1-30 Nov, were very late migrants.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Abundant winter visitor, mostly of nominate race.

WINTER/SPRING: Last recorded at Ramtha tip 6 Apr and on Das Island 17 Apr. On Abu al Abyadh up to 24 were present until 23 Apr. 200 were on Abu al Abyadh 11 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded in Abu Dhabi from 30 Sep, otherwise most birds arrived from first week in October. 200 were at Ruwais roost 14 Nov. 327 were at Eastern lagoon roost 10 Dec.

M.a.personata ("Masked Wagtail") recorded as follows: 2 at Al Ain camel track 5 Oct and 2 on Abu al Abyadh 15 Nov.

White-checked Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys*

Locally common in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, with numbers now colonising cultivations inland and some other areas.

NEW BREEDING SITE: One pair bred on Das island, with first young fledging in June, further 3 broods totalling at least 10 young.
Reported at Sila (April), Abu al Abyadh, Delma Island (September) and Sweihan Park (well-established population).

Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Common in the mountains, wadis and cultivations of the adjacent plains.
Unusual, perhaps introduced isolated population in Abu Dhabi is now up to 5 birds in the Bateen wood/Mushref park area, present throughout the spring, although only 3 birds were there in autumn.
Reported on Ghanada Island (UB26) 6 Mar and Remah guest house woodlands.

bulbul sp.

One, with features of Common Bulbul was North Yasat Island 14 Apr (P.Hellyer), not identified to species.

Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus*

Irregular and uncommon migrant, totally absent some years. 1993 was better than average.
SPRING: Up to 4 on Abu al Abyadh 25 Feb-2 Mar, seen every evening at roosting site (S.Aspinall). 2 were on Das 26 Apr (M.Wood)
AUTUMN: 14 were at the Emirates golf course 1 Nov with one there 16 Nov (C.Richardson), one male was found at Al Wathba sewage 7 Nov (E.Hirschfeld) and 2 were on Das island 27 Nov (M.Wood/L.Reaney).

Rufous Bush Chat *Cercotrichas galactotes*

Fairly common migrant and summer breeder to bushy areas and cultivations.
SPRING: One on Murawah Island 25 Mar and seen from 26 Mar in Dubai and Das Island. Last seen on Das Island 6 May and on Abu al Abyadh 12 May.
BREEDING: Apparently bred at the Intercontinental Hotel, Al Ain, where adults seen feeding young throughout the summer. Also present at other sites in Al Ain. Recorded as common in Baynunah in June. Recorded in Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi throughout the summer, assumed breeding there again.
AUTUMN: Scarce in autumn, most records may refer to local breeding population. Migrants (or dispersal) recorded at Al Wathba camel track from 29 Jul until last record at Bateen wood 12 Nov. Maximum 7 in Bateen wood/Mushref gardens area 16 Sep.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Scarce winter visitor, possibly overlooked. 6 reported in 1993 (though none in 1992).
SPRING: Single birds were seen on Abu al Abyadh 28 Feb and 12 Mar (S.Aspinall/McGill).
AUTUMN: One was seen on Das Island 6-7 Nov, thereafter 2 until 30 Nov, with one remaining until 12 Dec (L.Reaney/M.Wood). One was on Murawah Island 23 Nov (S.Aspinall) and at the Zabeel fish ponds 12-24 Dec (C.Richardson).

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

Very scarce migrant, probably overlooked and thus under-recorded.
SPRING: One was on Das Island 28 Apr (L.Reaney).
AUTUMN: One adult was in Bateen wood 5 Sep (E.Hirschfeld) and another was reported there 2 & 9 Sep (S.James), believed to be a different bird.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Fairly common migrant, most frequent in spring, with late birds often in song, though no nesting has yet been recorded in the country.
SPRING: Several in Bateen wood from 12 Mar, with 2 from 17-24 Apr and 4 there 1 May. 2 were at Al Wathba 16 Apr, up to 3 on Das Island 26-27 Mar. 2 at the Zabeel fish ponds 28 Mar and 4 there 17 Apr, 2 at Hamriyah sewage dump 16 Apr and up to 5 on Abu al Abyadh 22-25 Apr. Single birds also recorded during the period. Last seen at Qarnayn Island 10 May and in Bateen wood on 13 May.
AUTUMN: Singles were on Das island 4 Sep and in Bateen wood 12-21 Sep and 8-16 Oct. One at Jebel Ali hotel grounds 1 Dec, was unusual in winter.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Common migrant and fairly widespread, but overlooked, winter visitor. EH achieved much useful trapping and ringing in autumn at Al Wathba. See NARC ringing scheme summary on page 92.
WINTER PEAKS: Common at Ramtha tip with a maximum of 5 there 8 Jan. 3 at Al Wathba prison sewage 12 Feb, 4 at Safa park 10 Mar, up to 3 wintering at Zabeel fish ponds until 28 Mar when males in full song. Last trickle of birds in April seen at Ramtha on 6th, Zabeel fish ponds on 10th and at Jebel Ali on 15th. Last recorded on Das Island 16 Apr.
AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded on Das Island from 4 Oct. 49 birds ringed Al Wathba sewage ponds 15 Oct-31 Dec, 30 of which established winter territories in this small area (about 3 hectares), giving an indication of how overlooked this species can be. Otherwise widely reported in wet overgrown sites including Ruwais, Murawah Island and Ramtha.

White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*

Regular, though rather scarce spring migrant, with short and sporadic passage. 1993 was a better than average year for sightings. Rarely recorded in autumn. All records listed for interest. 17 birds recorded, compared to 16 in 1992.
SPRING: Single birds seen on Das Island 25-27 Mar, 14-16 Apr & 29-30 Apr, on Abu al Abyadh 25 Mar, at Zabeel fish ponds 26 Mar, female at Masafi 29 Mar, at Jebel Faiyah 1 Apr, male on Ghaghah 6 Apr, Mushrif park 8 Apr, at the Emirates golf course 15 Apr, male on Abu al Abyadh 18 Apr and one female there 26-30 Apr. 2 were at Al Wathba 16 Apr, one male was in Dubai garden 26 Apr and one was at Bu Hasa 1 May. Generally males & females in equal numbers.
AUTUMN: A female was at the Emirates golf course 27 Sep-10 Oct.

Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus*

Rare migrant, very irregular. Last reported, two birds November 1992.
A female was on Abu al Abyadh 13 Apr (S.Aspinall). Another female was on Das Island #27 Apr and a male was there #5-9 Dec (both L.Reaney), 15-17th records.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor. Red-bellied eastern race *P.o.phoenicuroides* regular.
WINTER/SPRING: Scarce on mainland after late Feb. Males were recorded at Zabeel fish ponds 19 Mar and Jebel Ali 26 Mar. A male was on Murawah Island 21-26 Mar. Last recorded 18 Apr on Das Island.
WINTER: One at Baynunah 20 Oct. Present Dubai and Abu Dhabi from 22 Oct.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Migrant, often abundant during several weeks in spring, but virtually absent in autumn. Occasionally birds do occur in winter. Eastern race *P.p.samamisisus* is regular in early March.

SPRING: First recorded Das Island 4 Feb. Very common from mid March, with peak of 19 at Emirates golf course 26 Mar. Last recorded in Dubai 3 May and Abu al Abyadh 6 May.

AUTUMN: Male seen at Emirates golf course 27 Sep, female at Zabeel fish ponds 23 Oct, were the only Dubai records. Female Murawah Island 22 Nov and another at Jebel Ali 1 Dec. More on Das Island where it was last seen 29 Nov. A female was at the Zabeel fish ponds 24 Dec.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant, usually seen singly. 12 birds recorded, compared to only 8 in 1992. (102 were seen in spring 1991, a result of oilfield fires creating poor visibility in north-western Gulf, so pushing the birds on to a more easterly track).

SPRING: Singles recorded on Abu al Abyadh 24-26 Mar with 2 from 30 Mar-1 Apr, one on Das Island 27-28 Mar, 4/6 Apr, 29 Apr and 11 May. Individuals were also on Abu al Abyadh 13-16 Apr and 27 Apr. One was at the Emirates golf course 15 Apr.

AUTUMN: Individuals seen in Abu Dhabi 1 Oct and Emirates golf course 7 Oct.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Fairly common migrant and winter visitor, with several subspecies occurring, including a high proportion of *S.t.maura* and other Eastern races.

WINTER/SPRING: Rather rare this winter (no records in Dubai in February) but singles were on Abu al Abyadh 25/28 Feb. Several in March, including 3 at Emirates golf club 13 Mar and 2 there on 26 Mar. Birds showing features of *armenica/variegata* were at Hamraniyah 1 Mar, the Emirates golf course, Al Habab and Al Wathba 26-29 Mar.

Individuals at Al Habab 29 Mar, Das Island 30 Mar and Yasat Island 31 Mar, were last spring records.

AUTUMN/WINTER: A very early bird was at Al Wathba fields 10 Sep and 'Siberian' types were on Abu al Abyadh 24 Sep and at Al Habab 8 Oct. Otherwise passage was evident from mid October. Maximum 6 on Abu al Abyadh 28 Oct and 5 at the Emirates golf course 25 Dec. One bird showing characteristics of *S.t.rubicola/hibernans* (Europe and Asia Minor) was at Al Habab 25 Dec.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

The commonest migrant wheatear in the UAE. Abundant in autumn and widespread in winter.

WINTER/SPRING: 2 at the Emirates golf course 28 Jan, oddly one was in song. Migrants passed through from late Feb, to early April. Latest birds were 6 on Abu al Abyadh 21-22 Apr and 2 on Das Is. 24 Apr.

SUMMER: One was on Das Island 19 Jun.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One on Das Island from 27 Jul. was earliest record. 7 were at

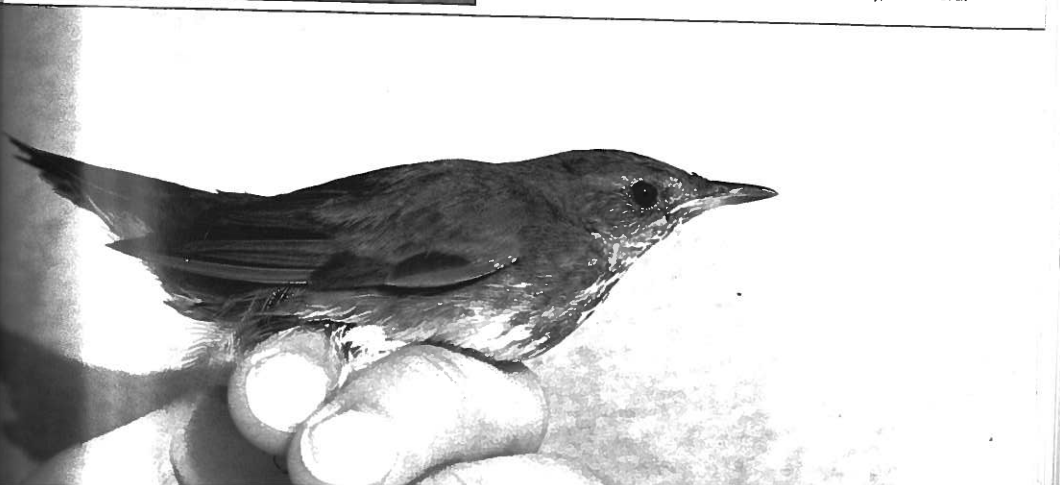


Plate 1. Top left, Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* at Khor Kalba 31st December 1993 (S.Aspinall)
 Plate 2. Left, Great Snipe *Gallinago media* at the Emirates golf course 20th September 1993 (C.Richardson)
 Plate 3. Top right, Little Pratincole *Glareola lactia* at Nadd al Sheba 25th January 1994 (C.Richardson), 6th record.
 Plate 4. Above, Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni* at the Al Ain camel track early October 1993 (F.Launay), 2nd record.
 Plate 5. Below, Crab Plovers *Dromas ardeola* at Abu al Abyadh colony spring 1993 (S.Aspinall)





Plate 6. Opposite, Bridled Terns *Sterna anaethetus* at Jazirat Naitah, 13th June 1994 (C.Richardson)
Plate 7 & 8. Top, Blyth's Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus dumetorum* at Murawah 24th August 1994 (J.Lontkowski), 3rd record. See page 113.
Plate 9. Left, Common Crane *Grus grus* at Al Ain camel track 9th January 1994 (C.Richardson), 5th record.
Plate 10. Above, White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus* with young Sooty Gull at Kalba 9th May 1994 (S.Aspinal), 1st record.
Plate 11. Below, River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* at Murawah Island 29th August 1994 (J.Lontkowski), 1st record.



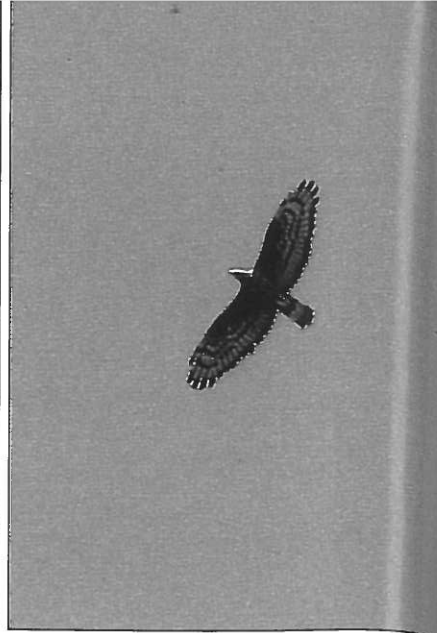


Plate 12.
Top left, male Pied Stonechat *Saxicola caprata* at the Emirates golf course 6th May 1994 (C.Richardson), 1st record.
Plate 13.
Above, Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* at Hamraniyah 16th December 1992 (M.Saarinen), 1st record for the UAE and Arabia.
Plate 14.
Left, Two Bewick's Swans *Cygnus bewickii* at Nadd al Sheba, Dubai 26th January 1994 (S.Aspinal), 1st record.
Plate 15.
Below, Lesser Crested Terns *Sterna bengalensis* at Jazt. Muhaiymat 15th June 1994 (C.Richardson)



SPRING: First reported on Das Island 5 Feb, with steady passage from late Feb to late March. Becoming scarce in April, except on Abu al Abyadh where at least 2 birds remained until 22 Apr, last seen 3 May. 10 there on 16 Apr was noteworthy.

AUTUMN: One on Abu al Abyadh 23-25 Aug was very early. The next was at Al Ain camel track 4-8 Oct, matching typical arrival time of previous years. One was at the Emirates golf course 6 Oct and 2 were there 28 Oct. Reported in Abu Dhabi area 8-22 Oct and on inshore islands in good numbers 9-22 Oct.

WINTER: One was at Al Habab 25 Dec. (Only sixth December record since 1987).

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

As usual, very common in spring. Less common in autumn occurring mostly along south and west Gulf coast. Rare in Dubai area and the north in autumn.

SPRING: First recorded on Das Island 4 Feb.

Obvious fall on 25 Feb, when 10 seen in small area of desert near Jebel Faiyah and others seen that day 300 km to the south-west, on Murawah and Abu al Abyadh islands.

Common from mid-March, often up to 6 seen together, becoming scarce on mainland after first week in April. Last seen on Das Island 18 Apr and on Abu al Abyadh 28 Apr. Peaks of 18 on Abu al Abyadh 1 Mar, 25 from 12-14 Mar and 25 on 26 Mar.

AUTUMN: One early bird was on Das Island 3 Sep. Much more regular in south and west: up to 3 birds each on Delma Island and Thumayriyah from 9-26 Sep, one at Al Habab 8 Oct and up to 5 on Abu al Abyadh 10-11 Oct. 6 were at Ruwais 27 Oct, with up to 4 most days to early Nov. Others included up to 5 in Abu Dhabi race course area until 28 Oct and 3 at Al Habab 14 Oct. Individuals last seen at race course 6 Nov, at Sila 14 Nov and at Al Habab 16 Nov. One was at Dhadnah, East Coast 6 Dec.

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*

Normally uncommon. 1993 was a good year for the species with 39 birds recorded (compared to 18 in 1992). Autumn reports are particularly rare due to identification difficulties.

SPRING: One on Abu al Abyadh 2-5 Mar appeared to be *hispanica/pleschanka* hybrid. Single males on Abu al Abyadh 11 Mar the Emirates golf course 13 Mar, Umm al Quwain beach head 14 Mar and Masafi wadi 15 Mar, and a female at Al Jazeera Khor 14 Mar. Up to 4 were on Abu al Abyadh most days 12-26 Mar. 4 were found in the Bateen wood-/Mushref gardens area of Abu Dhabi 16 Mar, with one remaining to 18 Mar. Singles were on Das Island 26-30 Mar and 3 Apr and at Sir Bani Yas Up 26 Mar. 2 were in the Jebel Ali area 26-29 Mar and one was at the Zabeel fish ponds 26 Mar. A noteworthy 9 were on Yasat Islands 31 Mar, declining to 2 by 2 Apr. Singles were still arriving on Abu al Abyadh until 14 Apr.

AUTUMN: One was at Delma 8 Sep and a male was at Ras al Akhdar, Abu Dhabi 5 Oct and one was on an island west of Abu Dhabi 8 Nov.

#One reported at Khor Kalba 15 Dec.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Fairly common winter visitor, few on passage.

WINTER/SPRING: Late passage birds noted at Halaylah Island 5 Apr, UAQ beach head 6 Apr and Abu al Abyadh 22 Apr. Last recorded Das Island 17 Apr. Peak of 6 on Abu al Abyadh 1 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded Abu al Abyadh 12 Sep, increasing to 3 on 23 Sep and one at Marbad (near Masafi) 17 Sep. Fairly widespread on passage in non-desert locations

from October to early November. 18 on coast west of Mirfa 22 Oct, and 20-40 in Baynunah area until end of year (85% males recorded). 18 were at Al Wathba camel track 5 Nov and 5 at Kalba 29 Dec. At least 3 were wintering on Abu al Abyadh.

Finsch's Wheatear *Oenanthe finschii*

Scarce spring migrant. 1993 was a good year, with these 3 birds almost matching the total of only 4 reported 1987-92.

One male was at Abu Dhabi race course 14-16 Mar (S.James) and one male was at the Emirates golf course 18 Mar (C.Richardson). One was at Al Wathba 28 Mar (J.K.Bannon).

Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna*

Fairly common winter visitor, mostly confined to mountains and wadis. All records refer to pale *Oxchrysopygia* race.

WINTER/SPRING: At least 3 wintering at Qarn Nazwa, seen 23 Feb. 8 at Jebel Faiyah 25 Feb. Last recorded Das Island 30 Mar.

Very rarely reported after March - #one on Abu al Abyadh 14 Jun (M.McGill) was first June report.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One near Madam 17 Sep, then several migrants seen west of Abu al Abyadh from 24 Sep and up to 3 on Sir Bani Yas 29-30 Sep. 6 Wadi Baraq 1 Oct, then fairly common to the end of the year in suitable habitat. One on Balghelam island 22 Oct, one Abu Dhabi race course 23 Oct, one Al Wathba camel track 24 Oct, one at Khor Kalba 18 Nov, one at Al Wathba sewage 2 Dec and 2 in desert inland from Ghantoot (Dubai-Abu Dhabi road) 11 Dec. 4 were at Qarn Nazwa 29 Oct.

Eastern Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe picata*

Localised winter visitor, usually shy and often confused with Hume's Wheatear.

WINTER/SPRING: One at Qarn Nazwa 5 Jan and 19 Feb, assumed same wintering individual. One male at Idhn rocky outcrop 20 Jan. One possible on Abu al Abyadh 26 Feb.

AUTUMN/WINTER: One was reported in Ras al Khaimah area 24 Oct. The reliable wintering site at Qarn Nazwa was occupied by one bird from 29 Oct. One was at Masafi wadi 18 Nov-30 Dec while one, probably wintering, was at Ramtha Tip 30 Dec (P.Adhemar). One was near Fujairah National dairy farm 30 Dec.

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*

Virtually unknown in Northern Emirates, more regular in autumn and winter in south-west (and on islands).

Up to 2 were on Das Island 4-6 Feb (M.Wood). One was at Baynunah (trackers' camp) 28 Oct-12 Nov and one was at a second Baynunah site 13 Dec (S.Aspinall). A male was on Abu al Abyadh 29 Oct, recorded into 1994 (M.McGill).

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*

Small resident population on Jebel Hafit, no other resident sites known. Also a scarce migrant or winter visitor.

Recorded Jebel Hafit January to December. 2 males and up to 3 females seen there 1 Jun and up to 6 birds there in December. Singles were on Das Island 4-5 Feb and 29-30 Mar with 2 there on 6 Feb. 1 male and 1 female were found in Wadi Bih 26 Mar. A female was on Sir Bani Yas 30 Sep. A male was at Jebel Dhanna 26 Oct.

Hume's Wheatear *Oenanthe alboniger*

Fairly common resident in the mountains, virtually never seen away from this habitat. Heard in song in Wadi Bih 3 Jan, with first young noted 3 Apr at Wadi Shih. At least 8 seen in Wadi Bih 20 Jun and 8 on Jebel Hafit 31 Dec. One well away from range was claimed on Sir Bani Yas 30 Sep (S.Aspinall).

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

Common spring, rare in autumn. Seen in a variety of habitats. About 50 birds recorded in 1993.

SPRING: A male on Abu al Abyadh 23 Feb and a female on Jebel Faiyah 25 Feb, were first records. Several late Feb, then scarce until late March. Records include up to 3 on Das Island 26-30 Mar, with 2 there 16-18 Apr, 4 there 17 Apr and 3 on 29 Apr. 3 in Wadi Shih 3 Apr, 3 males at Al Wathba 16 Apr and up to 6 on Abu al Abyadh 10-22 Apr, with 10 there 21 Apr. Other single birds recorded March and April. Latest bird was a female at Bateen wood 10 May.

AUTUMN: 1-2 Das Island 19-31 Aug, a female on Abu al Abyadh 8 Oct and a male there 16 Oct. One female was at the Emirates golf course 22 Oct.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

Scarce winter visitor to mountains and outcrops, usually less than 5 records per year. 1993 was better than average, due to better coverage.

SPRING: A male was at Qarn Nazwa 23 Feb and singles were on Abu al Abyadh 28 Feb and 2-3 Mar and in Abu Dhabi 2 & 4 Mar. Singles on Das Island 6 & 10 Apr, then 2 on 17 Apr was latest spring sighting.

AUTUMN: First record was one female on Das Island 24 Sep. One was at Ain al Faydah 8 Oct, one female was at Dibba rubbish dump 20 Oct, then few other reports until singles were seen in desert inland from Ghantoot 11 Dec, in Wadi Shih 29 Dec, Masafi wadi 30 Dec and on Jebel Hafit 31 Dec.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelus*

Fairly common winter visitor, especially in north.

WINTER/SPRING: 4 regularly seen at Emirates golf course in January, then up to 7 in late February. Ones & twos at other sites until last sighting of 2 on Abu al Abyadh 27 Mar.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Very early bird was on Das Island 21-23 Aug (MW), first ever August record and 8 weeks before migration of this species usually occurs.

First mainland sighting at Jebel Ali hotel 28 Oct. A maximum of 13 were at the EGC on 3 Dec, while 10+ were at Ruwais 12 Dec, with 20+ there 20 Dec.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

#One in Ain al Faydah gardens 25 Feb (C.Pilcher), would be only the 5th record.

Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*

Elusive resident of mountains and wadis, apparently more common at higher altitudes (over 500 metres).

One was in Wadi Tawi Yaeen 4 Apr. 2 were seen in Wadi Bih 20 Jun, with at least 10 found in small plateau area at 800 metres on Ras al Khaimah-Dibba mountain road 21 Jun. A pair were in Wadi Ghayl 27 & 29 Aug. Up to 4 in Masafi wadi 8-13 Oct and 18 Nov. 2 opposite Sandy Beach Motel (Dhadnah) 7 Dec and heard in hills at Uyaynah 29-30 Dec. Very few others reported in 1993.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

One seen and heard at Ruwais reedbed on 21-25 Oct (S.Aspinall), was the first record for the country.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Rather scarce migrant, all occurring in spring. (No autumn records since September 1991). All records: Singles were on Abu al Abyadh 26 Mar, 16 Apr and 30 Apr, in Al Habab fodder field on 29 Mar and at Al Wathba 16 Apr.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Rare spring migrant, 1993 was a typical year.

One was at Hamraniyah 14 Mar (S.Aspinall/D.Mitchell/C.Richardson) and one was in Bateen wood 17 Apr (S.James).

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

Vagrant. #One on Abu al Abyadh 17-18 May (S.Aspinall), would be the 6th UAE record.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Fairly common migrant, extended migration period, though most in late spring. 1993 was a poor year for this species.

SPRING: Singles on Abu al Abyadh 26 Mar, the Emirates golf course 18 May, Das Island 18 May, 1 Jun and 8-9 Jun.

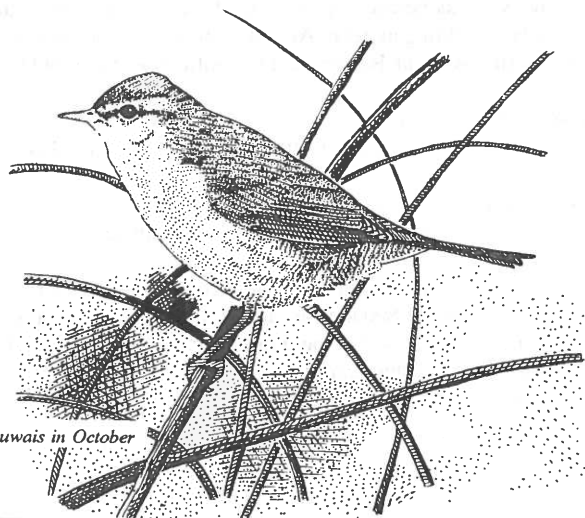
AUTUMN: Individuals were on Abu al Abyadh 23 Aug and at Al Wathba sewage 10 Sep.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very common late spring migrant (abundant during a period of only a few days), although comparatively absent in autumn. Early spring records often confused with Reed Warbler.

SPRING: First reported at Zabeel fish ponds 28 Apr and Abu al Abyadh from 30 Apr, with passage continuing on Das Island to 6 Jun and Qarnayn Island to 9 May. Up to 300 most days 7-12 May on Abu al Abyadh and 92 at Emirates golf club 18 May. Seen in Bateen wood 1 May-4 Jun.

AUTUMN: Only autumn records were singles in Bateen wood 5 & 10 Sep (E.Hirschfeld) and 12 & 28 Nov (S.James).



a Cetti's Warbler was heard singing at Ruwais in October

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common spring and (less common) autumn migrant. Visiting summer breeder in at least 3 known reedbed sites. Usually overlooked unless in song.

SPRING: Single birds recorded on Das Island 26 Mar-12 Apr (good indication of passage timings). One on Abu al Abyadh 30 Apr. Reported several other locations during passage.

BREEDING: Birds in song at Ramtha reeds from 2 Mar, with several pairs singing at Zabeel reed beds from 5 Mar where several were heard on each visit until late May. 6, including juveniles found in Zabeel reeds on 9 Jun and a pair with 2 young were at Ain al Faydah reeds 1 Jul (C.Richardson/M.West). One was singing in reeds at western lagoon, Abu Dhabi late May (E.Hirschfeld).

AUTUMN: First seen Abu al Abyadh 8 Aug. Otherwise small numbers were recorded late August to late October, at several locations including Bateen wood, Zabeel and Ruwais where a male was still singing on 14 Nov.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Fairly common around overgrown ponds and in mangroves, where many are resident. Also dispersive and migratory, usually in reedbeds outside breeding season.

SPRING: One or two in Bateen wood 27 Feb and 10/11 May. Several at Zabeel fish ponds January to April, although no other nesting behaviour noted there. Singles at the Emirates golf course 9 Feb-29 Mar.

BREEDING: Healthy breeding activity noted at a number of known nest sites including Khor Kalba, Siniyah Island, Abu al Abyadh, Ras al Khaimah mangroves. 3 calling in mangroves at Sheleala 21 May and at Bel Ghelam on 17 Jun.

AUTUMN: One at Zabeel reeds 5 Sep and one at Jebel Dhanna 8 Sep, becoming more common on passage (or dispersal) from late October. 2 birds present at Al Wathba sewage 21 Nov - 31 Dec and reported regularly at Ruwais reed beds to the end of year.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Uncommon migrant, formerly confused with *A.stentoreus*. 1993 was an average year for this species with 9 birds reported, compared to 11 in 1992.

SPRING: One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 18 Feb.

AUTUMN: One was on Abu al Abyadh 12 Sep. 2 were at Al Wathba sewage 13 Sep with one there 8 Oct and 24 Oct-5 Dec (when it was ringed). Single birds were also at Wathba camel track 1 Oct, Bateen wood 1 & 20 Oct and Murawah Island 10 Nov.

Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*

Fairly common spring and autumn migrant, with many breeding locally. Few apparently winter at some sites.

SPRING: One at Digdaga 14 Mar. Common on passage from late March to April. Breeding in Bateen wood, where maximum 18 birds recorded 1 May.

AUTUMN: Singles on Abu al Abyadh 23 Aug and at Emirates golf course 26 Aug, earliest records, then fairly widespread until mid October. One at Ruwais 25 Oct. Maximum of 27 were in Bateen wood/Mushref gardens area 16 Sep. One was singing at Khor Kalba 26 Oct.

NOTEWORTHY WINTER RECORDS: At least 5 were at Khor Kalba 4 Jan, with a remarkable 20 there 27 Feb and 5 on 15 Mar. Recorded regularly throughout the winter (possibly resident) at Bateen wood with maximum of 13 on 12 Nov and 2 on 27 Dec. One was at Ras Al Khaimah 17 Dec and 3 were singing at Khor Kalba 29 Dec.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*

Fairly scarce (and overlooked) spring migrant. Rare in autumn. Generally low numbers reported in 1993 were about normal. Only breeds in mangroves at Khor Kalba where *H.c.rama* is suspected, and perhaps not annually.

All records as follows:

SPRING: At least 2 were singing at Khor Kalba 15 Mar and 5 were there 1 Apr. One was on Abu al Abyadh 24 Mar.

None recorded during thorough searches of Khor Kalba mangroves Jun-Aug.

AUTUMN: One resembling the nominate subspecies was at Khor Kalba 14 Oct (E.Hirschfeld).

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*

Locally common migrant, sometimes even in summer months (though not reported nesting in Arabia).

SPRING: 2 (singing) in Masafi wadi 15 Mar, one on Das Island 18, 20, 26 & 30 Mar. Commonly reported from late March to late April, mostly in wadis and dry areas. 2 were in full song on Tayibah plain 4 Apr. 4 were on Das Island 28-29 Apr, and singles were on Abu al Abyadh 3 May, Ain al Faydah 6 May and at Khor al Beidah 19 May. Also reported at Bateen wood, Al Wathba and Kafai Island.

AUTUMN: 2 in Bateen wood 4 Aug was earliest record. One was in Bateen wood 17 Aug and up to 2 were on Das 23-31 Aug. Several reported early to mid September. Singles at the Emirates golf course 7 Oct and in Bateen wood 11 Oct, were rather late.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Vagrant.

One was found at Jebel Ali village green 3 Sep (J.K.Bannon/C.Richardson), 7th UAE record. Last recorded April 1991. Previous records all months February-May and September.

Menetries' Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*

Common spring migrant, scarce in autumn and winter.

WINTER: One was at Al Jazeera Khor 2 Jan.

SPRING: Passage noted from 18 Feb, up to 5 present at several sites, with 8 at Al Wathba 14 Mar and up to 6 on Abu al Abyadh 2-5 Apr. Scarce after March though recorded until 21 Apr on Das Island and 4 were on Abu al Abyadh 26 Apr.

AUTUMN: Scarce, ones & twos on passage in October, 6 at Al Wathba 5 Nov and 2 at Murawah Is. 10 Nov.

WINTER: 2 at Ruwais 12-20 Dec, 3 at Al Jazeera Khor dunes 27 Dec and 2 at Wadi Tawi Yaen 28 Dec.

Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*

Common on passage and in winter, confined to desert and gravel scrub.

WINTER/SPRING: Wintering until March, passage peaking first week of March, with migrants recorded at Emirates golf course 18 Mar, Zabeel fish ponds and at Al Ain 27 Mar. 20 on Abu al Abyadh 2 Mar. Latest records were one at Al Jazeera Khor 5 Apr, 3 at Umm al Quwain beach 6 Apr and one on Ghaghah Island 8 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: Recorded from 25 Aug on Das Island, which is very early. One was on Delma Island 9 Sep and 2 were at Ras Ghanada 18 Sep. Few from early Oct, with passage and winter influx picking up pace from mid October.

Orphee Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*

Fairly common passage migrant (rare in autumn), few overwintering.

WINTER/SPRING: One was at the Zabeel fish ponds 8 Jan and one was at Al Jazeera Khor 1 Mar. Singles were at Murawah Island 25 Mar and in Masafi wadi 1 Apr and another was in full song on 4 Apr. Last recorded on Das Island 23 Apr. Other records not listed.

AUTUMN: One first-winter was on Abu al Abyadh 22 Oct and one was at Al Wathba 5 Nov.

WINTER: Singles were at Bateen wood 7 Dec, Jebel Ali hotel grounds 24 Dec, Al Jazeera Khor 27 Dec and on Dibba plain 28 Dec.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Regular late spring migrant, though never common. 12 recorded, compared to 9 in 1992. Rare in autumn.

SPRING: Singles at Ghaghah Island 6 Apr, Abu al Abyadh 14 Apr and at the Emirates golf course 19 Apr. 4 on Das Island 29-30 Apr, 2 on Abu al Abyadh 3 May and one at Al Wathba 5 May.

AUTUMN: Singles were in Bateen wood 20 & 29 Oct.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Common passage migrant, sometimes in winter, though none recorded this year. A number of sub-species are represented including *blythi* (Siberian Lesser Whitethroat), and most pose identification difficulties.

SPRING: 2 were in song 19 & 23 Feb at Qarn Nazwa and single birds were found in wadis and acacias in February until main passage commenced in early March, when subsong was again heard. Becoming scarce after early April. Recorded in Bateen wood and Abu al Abyadh 12 Mar-13 May.

AUTUMN: First recorded on Das Island 21 Aug, though main passage was from early October. Last seen in Abu Dhabi 20 Nov and Ruwais 25 Nov.

Desert Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia minula*

Mainly a winter visitor, common and widespread in *prosopeis* and acacia trees in deserts and mountains.

WINTER/SPRING: Last individuals recorded in Bateen wood 7 Apr, on Das Island 17 Apr and on Abu al Abyadh 18 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded Das Island from 2 Sep. One at Dibba on 17 Sep was first mainland record. Maximum 15 at Dibba at dusk on 8 Oct, 13 at Bateen wood 20 Oct and 14 there on 5 Nov.

Hume's Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia althaea*

Scarce migrant, mostly in spring.

Single birds were at the Zabeel fish ponds 25 & 28 Mar (C.Richardson) and at Balghelam Island 22 Oct (E.Hirschfeld)

#Single birds at Yasat Island 1 & 4-5 Apr and Ghaghah and Kafai Islands 10 Apr possibly this species.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Common spring and scarce autumn migrant. 1993 numbers were below average.

SPRING: One very early bird was in Zabeel garden 8 Feb and one was on Abu al Abyadh 25 Feb. Singles on Abu al Abyadh 25 Mar and at the Emirates golf course and on Das

Island both on 26 Mar, heralded first signs of general passage. Last seen in Abu Dhabi 7 May and on Qarnayn Island 9 May.

AUTUMN: Recorded from 22 Aug-3 Dec on Das Island. Otherwise small numbers on mainland in September and October.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Irregular migrant, sometimes common and usually in small parties.

SPRING: First recorded 16 Mar, last seen 10 May. 5 at Emirates golf course 19 Apr.

AUTUMN: One was at Qarn Nazwa 3 Nov and one was on Das Island 7 Dec, both females and only autumn/winter records.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Vagrant.

One, of subspecies *nitidus*, (Green Warbler) in Bateen wood 17 Apr (S.James/R.Quested), was the first UAE record.

#One *trochiloides* was reported on Das island 9 Nov-7 Dec (L.Reaney).

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Rare winter visitor, rarely reported on the mainland, though possibly overlooked. Most records have been in isolated locations like Das Island. Some reported reliably as *humei* sub-species, and probably all are of this race.

One was on Das 1 Oct (L.Reaney) and one showing characteristics of *humei* sub-species (greyer with buffish eyestripe and wingbars) was found at the Emirates golf course 25 Dec (where it was recorded well into 1994).

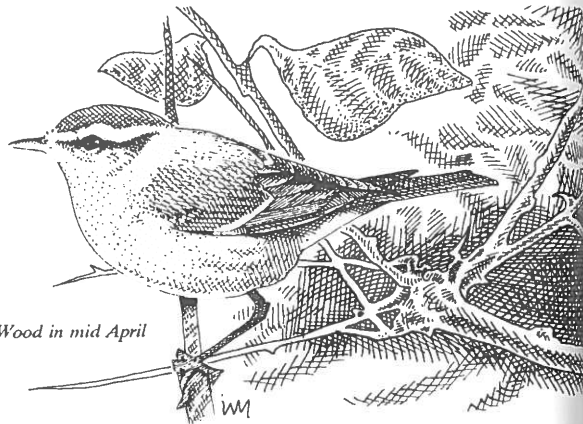
Plain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus neyelctus*

Fairly common winter visitor to dry mountain wadis and acacia plains. Rare on passage.

SPRING: One was singing continuously in Wadi Tayibah 28 Feb (NSR tour).

AUTUMN/WINTER: Singles were seen presumably on passage, at Balghelam island 22 Oct (E.Hirschfeld) and in Bateen wood 26 Oct (S.James).

Others in winter habitat found in a wadi east of Al Ain 21 Nov & 17 Dec, hills near Dhadnah 7 Dec, at Marbad 28 Dec, in Wadi Ghayl 29 Dec and at Masafi 30 Dec.



a Green Warbler was found at Bateen Wood in mid April

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

One of the commonest wintering warblers, generally only in gardens, cultivations and other irrigated areas. Sings freely from mid winter to end of spring passage.

WINTER/SPRING: 52 counted in Emirates golf course 13 Mar, 50 on Abu al Abyadh 26-27 Mar and over 100 at the Zabeel fish ponds 28 Mar. Not seen after 28 Apr.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First autumn sighting 14 Oct. 35 at Ras al Akhdar 1 Nov.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Fairly common migrant, mostly in late spring.

SPRING: 10 on 24 Mar Murawah Island, first sign of passage (though generally scarce until early April) present to 21 May. 17 in Bateen wood 1 May and 40+ on Abu al Abyadh 3 May.

AUTUMN: Ones and twos recorded 14 Aug to late September, with singles on Abu al Abyadh until 22 Oct.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Common late spring and early autumn migrant.

SPRING: Recorded from 29 Mar on Das Island until 21 May in Abu Dhabi.

AUTUMN: Recorded 23 Aug-28 Oct, with one remaining at the Emirates golf course until 5 Nov.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Rather scarce late autumn migrant, rarely in winter and spring.

SPRING: Singles were reported on Das Island 11-20 Feb and 28 Mar.

AUTUMN: Individuals were seen in Jebel Ali hotel grounds 8 Oct, on Das Island 7 Nov, Ras Al Akhdar 10-11 Nov and Murawah Island 10 Nov. Up to 2 were on Das Island 18-19 Nov.

Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*

Irregular spring migrant, sometimes common in late March but almost totally absent in 1993, compared to a record 26 birds in spring 1992.

One was on Das Island 26 Mar (M.Wood) and one female was at Hamriyah sewage dump (Sharjah) on 16 Apr (C.Richardson).

Arabian Babbler *Turdoides squamiceps*

Sedentary, becoming rather uncommon through habitat destruction. Favours scrubby bushes and low cover in desert areas.

16+ seen south of Sweihan (Saih al Selem) 16 Oct, is an extension of known range.

Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*

Common, sometimes abundant resident. Localised, or seasonally absent when it moves locally in response to food availability. Usually favours *Calotropis* (Sodom's Apple) bushes.

Maximum together, 17 in Bateen wood/Mushref palace gardens area 14 Oct and 20 on dunes at Al Jazeera Khor.

One at Ruwais 14-20 Dec is a dramatic westward extension of known range.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant. Usually very skulking until it breaks cover, so possibly under-recorded.

SPRING: One was at the Emirates golf club 14 Apr and up to 4 were there 13-18 May. Single birds were in Bateen wood 24 Apr, Al Wathba 28 Apr, Qarnayn Island 9 May, south of Jebel Ali 14 May and on Das Island 2-21 May, with 2 there 13 May.

AUTUMN: Individuals were reported on Abu al Abyadh 25 Aug, Ain al Faydah 3 Sep and in Bateen wood 3 Sep. Several 6 Sep-8 Oct, with a maximum of 10 at Emirates golf course 13 Sep and 15 at Das Island on 16 Sep. One was on Abu al Abyadh 11 Oct and one at Mushref Palace gardens 18 Nov.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

Common migrant and winter visitor.

SPRING: Good passage mid March to April, with peak of 9 at the Emirates golf course 26 Mar. 11 were on Abu al Abyadh 22 Apr. Scarce after early May. Last recorded on Abu al Abyadh 6 May and on Das Island 4 Jun.

AUTUMN/WINTER: First recorded Abu al Abyadh 13 Aug and on Das Island 26 Aug. Steady passage in September, peaking late Oct - early Nov. Up to 8 at the Emirates golf course 26 Nov-8 Dec. Also found wintering at Khor Kalba, Ramtha and Wathba sewage.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Common late spring migrant. Relatively uncommon in autumn.

SPRING: First 26 Mar on Das Island and on Abu al Abyadh 13 Apr. Last seen on mainland at Hamraniyah 21 May and on Das Island 2 Jun. Ones and twos at most suitable sites throughout the country during period.

AUTUMN: Recorded in Abu Dhabi area 1 Sep, 12 Sep and 11-22 Oct. Singles were on Murawah 15 Sep and on Abu al Abyadh 30 Sep. Not seen in Dubai and the northern Emirates.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

Rather uncommon migrant, mostly in spring. Oddly, this year most records were in autumn. It was rather scarce in 1993, with most migrants turning up on the islands.

SPRING: First on Das Island was one on 30 Mar, with 3 on 10 Apr and up to 3 from late April until 9 May, with one there on 18 May. On Abu al Abyadh island there were up to 3 from 27 Apr-1 May.

None were reported on the mainland in spring.

AUTUMN: Singles on Das Island 22 & 26 Aug and at Al Wathba camel track 9 Sep. 3 were on Das Island 11 Sep, with individuals there 13, 16 & 19 Sep. One was in Bateen wood 16 Sep and one was at Al Ain camel track 8 Oct.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Common resident in north (*L.e.aucheri* occurs), fewer in south and west. Also a regular passage migrant and winter visitor from Central Asia. Sub-species *pallidirostris* is regular winter visitor.

MIGRANTS: Single *pallidirostris* seen at Al Wathba on 12 Feb and at Al Habab 1-9 Sep. 2 were at Al Ain camel track 4 Oct, 2 at Al Habab each visit 14 Oct-25 Dec, one was at Emirates golf course 22 Oct and one was at Al Jazeerah Khor 27 Dec. Abundant in Baynunah area Oct-Dec, many of *pallidirostris* race.

BREEDING: Male in song from 15 Jan at Emirates golf course, with 5 juveniles present 8 Mar. Recently fledged juveniles recorded Al Ain zoo 29 Mar.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

Commonest migrant shrike in spring. Passage commences earlier than other shrikes.

SPRING: Recorded on Das Island from 6 Feb, with most mainland sightings from late February to early April, peaking in late March. 2 were in song 4 Apr on Tayibah plain. Last sightings on Abu al Abyadh and at Al Wathba both 16 Apr.

AUTUMN: Singles on Abu al Abyadh 13 & 17 Aug, on Das Island 22-30 Aug and on Delma Island 8 & 10 Sep (2 different birds). None on mainland.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*

Usually fairly common spring migrant, though almost absent in spring 1993 and present in autumn. One bird has wintered in Abu Dhabi in recent years.

WINTER/SPRING: One wintered in Mushref palace garden until 12 Mar. One was seen near Dibba-Masafi road 31 Mar-1 Apr.

AUTUMN: Individuals were on Abu al Abyadh 13 Aug, Dhafra beach (Jebel Dhanna) 8 Sep, Das Island 24-28 Sep and 8 Oct, at Ras al Akhdar 5 Oct and at least 1 juvenile was in Mushref palace garden 10-14 Nov. A male wintered in Mushref Palace gardens from 8 Oct-31 Dec and into 1994.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Common resident on East Coast and north of Ras al Khaimah. An unwelcome coloniser to Dubai and spreading in greater numbers to Abu Dhabi and other Gulf cities.

2 were seen briefly on Das Island 30 Apr, showing that even offshore islands are not safe from its spread. 2 were on Delma Island 8-10 Sep, reportedly 'at home' there, and 2 were seen at Jebel Dhanna (which is the port for the ferry to Delma) 8 Nov.

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*

Rather localised, differing from neighbouring states where it is widespread. No large flocks reported in 1993 (compared to 1992, when groups of up to 75 found in late summer). Unaccountably scarce at Sila and other western areas, including Baynunah.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Irregular winter visitor, usually localised. Several pairs breed at Hamraniyah, although not seen there in winter months.

WINTER/SPRING: 6 at Ramtha tip 2 Mar and one in Abu Dhabi 4 Mar were only spring records.

BREEDING: 4 were in song at Hamraniyah 4 Apr, while one was carrying food on 5 Apr and 4 were doing same on 16 Apr. On 28 May, 8 adults and 15 juveniles were seen in same field, adding further evidence that this species might be breeding regularly in the UAE (the only known site in Arabia). One was still there 18 Jun.

Up to 30, including 17 juveniles in Zabeel palace grounds 6-9 Sep (J.Platt/C.Richardson). This date is exceptionally early for migrants, which usually occur from November.

AUTUMN/WINTER: 2 on Das Island 19-22 Aug, was one of earliest ever records. 10 at Ruwais 10 Nov, increasing to 20 on 16 Nov and 65 at roost there 20 Dec. 7 were at the Zabeel Zabeel fish ponds 10 Nov, 3 at Mushref Palace gardens 12 Nov, 4 at the Eastern lagoon 12 Nov, 3 on Abu al Abyadh 15 Nov, one Mushref palace gardens 17 Nov, one in Al Wathba area 19-21 Nov and 11 at Bateen, Abu Dhabi 14 Dec.

Pied Mynah *Sturnus contra*

A locally resident, feral species.

Up to 4 were seen in Abu Dhabi (Bateen wood, Eastern lagoon) in March, April, May and November. At least one pair resident Ramtha tip and up to 5 seen on most visits to the Zabeel fish ponds (with 10 there 7 Sep). One was in Safa Park 28 Mar.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Usually regular in late summer, early autumn. Occasionally at other times and not every year. Rarely seen in breeding plumage.

AUTUMN ONLY: Up to 3 were on Das Island 7-9 Aug and one or two were present there most days 9-17 Sep, with 4 there 12 Sep. Up to 4, including 2 juveniles Abu al Abyadh from mid September with 2 first-winter birds there 13 Oct, one staying until 16 Oct. One was seen feeding with mynah flocks at Hamraniyah 27 Dec.

Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis*

Common in most towns and spreading. Generally a noisy pest.

One at Bidiyah mosque 28 Feb, one on Abu al Abyadh 18 Jun and 2 there 14 Jul are extensions of its known range.

Maximum 200 at Ramtha tip 10 Aug and 300 Eastern lagoon 11 Sep.

Bank Mynah *Acridotheres ginginianus*

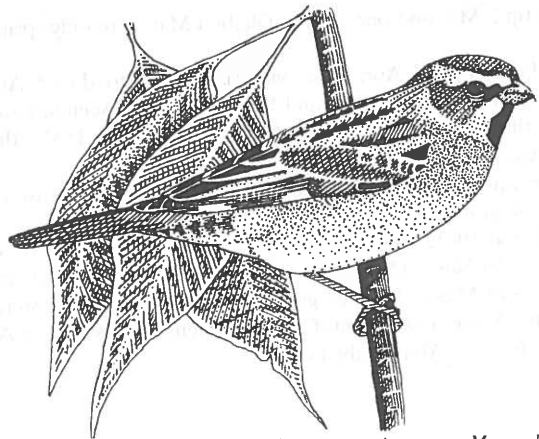
Locally common. Rarely seen away from Dubai, Abu Dhabi or fields south of Ras al Khaimah.

35 at Zabeel fish ponds 5 Feb and 107 there 7 Sep. At least 60 at nest holes in old well at Hamraniyah from 14 Mar throughout spring. Up to 90 seen in Hamraniyah most visits to the area. Over 50 most days in November at Eastern lagoon, Abu Dhabi with a maximum of 120 there 12 Nov.

Dead Sea Sparrow *Passer moabiticus*

Vagrant.

Male in song in mangroves on Murawah Island 21-22 Mar (possibly from 20 Mar) - attributed to race *moabiticus* on plumage (S.Aspinall) - 2nd UAE record.



a Dead Sea Sparrow was in song on Murawah Island in late March

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Ubiquitous.

900 in Bateen wood/Mushref palace area 25 Sep and 500 at Al Ain camel track on 30 Dec, gives some idea of numbers present.

Extending range: noted colonising Murawah Island over summer 1993, bred successfully Ras Ghumais and 21 found sheltering in shade of vehicle in Baynunah desert 21 Oct.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Very scarce winter visitor. Small population may be resident at Hamraniyah, where nesting activity has been regular since 1991.

6 were at Hamraniyah 20 Jan, then 50+ were in nesting colony, at least 33 males counted, with *P.domesticus* 1-14 Mar (J.K.Bannon/CR/SA). Up to 10 young were seen there 4-5 Apr, though not found on later dates.

Pale Rock Sparrow *Petronia brachydactyla*

Regular passage migrant, though variable numbers annually. Sometimes in massive flocks in spring. Only isolated records in autumn. Small numbers breed in remote mountain areas.

WINTER/SPRING: 2 on Abu al Abyadh 2 Mar and 7 near Masafi on 10 Mar, were first spring records of year. Peak numbers included up to 500 in Hamraniyah fields 14 Mar-4 Apr with 30 still there 16 Apr. An extraordinary 1,000 (estimated) were in fodder fields at Al Oha, north of Al Ain on 16 Mar (CR/D.Mitchell) and up to 70 were at Jebel Faiyah 1-9 Apr. Several other reports not listed here.

Latest records were 2 on Das Island 29 Apr and one at Abu Dhabi race course 1 May.

BREEDING: Reports of breeding behaviour, including several parties in full song in Masafi and Marbad hills on 15 Mar.

3 adults feeding 6 young were found in Wadi Ghayl ravine 20-29 Aug (C.Richardson/S.Aspinall), an extension of breeding range. (This is only the second known UAE breeding site).

AUTUMN/WINTER: The only autumn records were 12 in Wadi Baraq 1 Oct and one at Khor Kalba 14 Oct.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis*

Fairly common summer visitor, nesting in older trees near cultivations and in foothills. Less common on passage.

MIGRANTS (in unsuitable habitat): Single birds were on Das Island 28 Mar, at Zabeel fish ponds 13 Apr, in Bateen wood 5 May and finally on Das Island 1-11 Jun.

SPRING/SUMMER (in breeding habitat): 12 were in Al Ain zoo grounds 29 Mar and 3 males were seen nearby at Ain al Faydah 31 Mar, 30 were in area Dibba-Masafi 31 Mar and 30 were at Mileihah 1 Apr.

Regularly found at Kalba, Mushrif Park (Dubai), Hamraniyah, Al Habab and foothills between Buraimi and Madam from April to July.

AUTUMN: Passage noted on Das Island from 16 Aug-10 Oct, with a peak of 14 there 13 Sep.

Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*

Widespread breeding resident.

Seen gathering nest material from 10 Jan at Emirates golf course, nest-building at Dhafra beach 8 Sep, and 2 in nest at Zabeel fish ponds 16 Sep, indicating long nesting season.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Rare winter visitor.

#Up to 5 Das island 11 Nov-12 Dec (L.Reaney), #one at Al Wathba camel track 19 Nov (R.Quested) and one at Abu Dhabi race track 28 Nov (S.James), only 13-15th UAE records.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor, influxes usually occurring when casuarina seed-cones are ripe. Record numbers from November 1993.

Singles were at the Emirates golf course 3 & 5 Nov, and one was killed there by an Isabelline Shrike 16 Nov. Up to 7 were at the golf course 20-29 Nov, with a flock of 21 there 25 Dec. 13 were on Das Island 9 Nov decreasing to 2 by 26 Nov. 2 were at Al Wathba sewage ponds 4 Nov and one was there 22 Nov. 10+ were at Ruwais 27 Nov, with only one seen regularly 14-20 Dec. 3 were in grounds of Ras al Khaimah hotel on 27 Dec.

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*

Very elusive species, regularly found in Omani enclaves around Al Ain (see page XX). Probably resident, though its true status remains a mystery as it appears to be nomadic and constantly moves in search of regular drinking water.

BREEDING: 1 male, 1 female and 2 recently fledged young were found on Jebel Hafit 1 Jun (M.McGill). 1 male and 3 female were there 20 Nov (M.McGill).

OTHER: 1 male on Das Island 25 Oct (M.Wood), was unusual.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Rather scarce migrant, mostly in autumn, though females possibly overlooked. No spring records in 1993.

AUTUMN: Single birds were reported at Dhafra beach 8 Sep, Al Wathba sewage 9 Sep, 15 & 24 Oct and 3 Nov, at Emirates golf course 7 & 27 Oct and at Jebel Ali hotel 9 Oct.

There were several on Das island including up to 2 from 14-24 Sep, increasing to 5 on 26 Sep, then up to 3 from 28 Sep-8 Oct. There were singles on the island 12 Oct, 9-12 Nov and 4-7 Dec (This was a first ever December record).

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea*

A rare migrant, most previous records in spring. Observers note that all birds appear to have characteristics of *semenowi* (which breeds in south-western Iran).

One, probable immature male, was at Murawah 25-26 Mar (S.Aspinnall), #one male was at Al Ain zoo 29 Mar (D.Paynter) and #one male was on Das Island 30 Sep (L.Reaney), (only 2nd ever autumn record). 9-11th UAE records.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Regular in spring, less regular in autumn and usually in small parties.

SPRING: First spring record was of one at the Emirates golf course 18 Mar and one on Das Island 24 Mar. Most appeared from April, with groups of up to 8 reported from Jebel Ali, Abu al Abyadh, Kafai Island, Ghaghah Island, Das Island, Al Wathba and Abu al Abyadh from 14-22 Apr. Up to 25 were on Abu al Abyadh 15-18 Apr. 7 on Das Island 29 Apr and 2 on Abu al Abyadh until 1 May, were latest records.

AUTUMN: 2 were on Das Island 3-6 Oct, up to 2 at Al Wathba sewage 8-14 Oct, one Abu Dhabi racecourse 14 Oct, up to 4 on Abu al Abyadh 14-15 Oct and 2 at Ruwais sewage 21-22 Oct. Not reported in Dubai and northern Emirates in autumn.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Vagrant

Single birds were at the Jebel Ali Hotel 25 Oct (M.Kappanen/A.Topp) and on Das Island #7-26 Nov (L.Reaney/M.Wood), 6th & 7th UAE records.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Vagrant, last reliably recorded in the UAE in November 1978.

One was at Al Wathba camel track 19 Nov (S.James/R.Quested), 4th UAE record.

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*

Uncommon migrant, mostly in autumn. 1993 was an average year for the species.

SPRING: 2 were at Hamriyah, Sharjah 16 Apr, female Abu al Abyadh 25-27 Apr and a male was on Das Island 29 Apr.

AUTUMN: One male was on Das Island 1 Aug and a juvenile was on Abu al Abyadh 2-4 Aug. 3 were on Das 26-27 Aug. One female was at the Emirates golf course 3 Sep and another was on Das 11-13 & 24 Sep with a total of 3 there 17 Sep. One was at Abu Dhabi race course 21 Sep.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

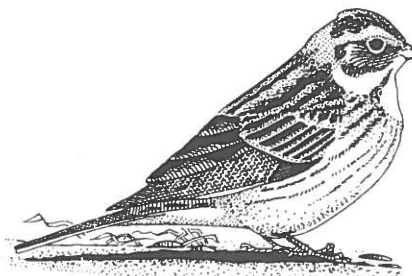
Irregular winter visitor. Several courting pairs attracted by suitable habitat at Hamraniyah and Al Ain, good news for a species which does not otherwise breed in Arabia (Richardson 1993c).

BREEDING: Up to 3 singing males reported at Hamraniyah fields 22 Jan and 1-2 Mar, with 3, including a mating pair seen at same location 28 Feb.

At Al Ain camel race track fields 7 were there from 3 Nov, thereafter at least 15 birds wintering and in song from 23 Dec, perhaps earlier (M.McGill).

AUTUMN/WINTER: One each was at Sweihan 6 Oct and at Al Wathba camel track 5 Nov. Individuals were on Das island 18 Nov, Ruwais 20-26 Nov and at Abu Dhabi racecourse 8 Dec.

Species not detailed above, but also recorded in 1993: Sand Partridge, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Red-vented Bulbul, Graceful Warbler, House Bunting.



a Little Bunting was found by some visiting birders from Finland at Jebel Ali in October

BIRDS RECORDED IN OMAN TERRITORY (enclaves accessible from the UAE)
All records subject to acceptance by Oman Bird Records Committee.

Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*
340 counted from boat *en route* Dibba to Umm al Fayarrin 26 Feb.

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*
One seen Wadi Bih - Wadi Khabb Shamsi 5 Nov (J.Hollingworth/D.Robinson)

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgus tracheliotus*
2 were at 'hanging gardens' (Jebel Qatar) on 30 Sep and 2 east of Wadi Agran 4 Dec.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*
One was east of Buraimi 1 Aug.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
One Wadi Qhafi 7 May.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus*
A pair were above Wadi Khabb Shamsi (WA28) 20/21 Jun (CR/JKB) and one was in Musandam region 2 Jun (SJ)

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*
One in Wadi Agran mid-late Nov.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
11 were seen on a boat trip from Dibba (Oman) to Umm al Fayarrin island on 26 Feb, including 7 at Lima rock (a known nest site) and a pair on Umm al Fayarrin.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
One Sih Huwayyah 30 Apr.

Barbary Falcon *Falco peregrinoides*
One on Umm al Fayarrin 26 Feb (CR/JKB/K.Handke)
4, including 2 juveniles, were at 'hanging gardens' ravine, Jebel Qatar 2 Jun, with one there 17 Jun, 30 Sep and 17 Dec (CR)

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*
15 in Wadi Khabb Shamsi 19 Oct (CR). 28 Wadi Bih to Wadi Khabb Shamsi 5 Nov (JHo, DR),

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus*
An exceptional flock of 29 were seen inside the Oman (Musandam) border at Dibba-Baya plain on 28 Dec (NSR group/CR)

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*
Pair with three chicks 'Musandam mountains' 2 Jun (SJ)
At least 30 at 1,000m on Ras al Jebel (RAK to Dibba road) after sunset 20 Jun and at least 10 heard at night 21 Jun (CR/JKB).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
One very early migrant was at Dibba-Bayah 28 Feb (CR)

Bruce's Scops Owl *Otus brucei*
One was in a Ghaf tree in Wadi Sumayni 1 Apr (CR/NSR group)

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*
One 'Musandam mountains' 2 Jun (SJ).

Little Owl *Athene noctua*
A pair were at 1,000 metres on Ras al Jebel, Musandam 20 Jun (CR/JKB).

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*
c.800 around breeding colony at Lima rock, Musandam, 26 Feb (CR)

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *merops superciliosus*
One late bird at Khutwa 12 Nov (MJ)

White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*
One male Wadi Bih 2 Apr (RAR),

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*
2 were in Sih Huwayyah 16 Mar (CR/DM)

Finsch's Wheatear *Oenanthe finschii*
A male (and a possible unconfirmed female) was in Sih Huwayyah ('fossil valley') 16 Mar (C.Richardson/D.Mitchell), confirmed 2nd record for Oman.

Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrma*
One Buraimi 26 Jul (RR), very unseasonal.

Eastern Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe picata*
One was at Jebel Rawdah quarry 17 Sep and 5 Nov (SA).
2 males and a female were on Dibba plain 8 Oct (CR)

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*
One male near Wadi Qhafi 15 Jan (R.Read) and another was in Wadi Agran, east of Al Ain 17 Dec (CR)

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*
Females were on Umm al Fayarrin island 26 Feb and at Dibba-Bayah 28 Feb.

Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*
Up to 3 together seen regularly at 'hanging gardens' (Jebel Qatar) most visits throughout the year.

Plain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus neglectus*
At least 2 were at Abulle (near Mahdah) 24 Feb (CR *et al*), 5 'hanging gardens' 17 Dec (SA/CR)

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githaginea*
6 in Sih Huwayyah 25 Feb (CR) and song heard in Wadi Sharm 25 Feb. Flocks of up to 13 at Jebel Qatar escarpment 13 & 30/31 May (R.Read), with up to 25 seen there 2 & 17 Jun (CR/RAR), 30 there 1 Jul and one on 17 Dec.

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea*

2 with features of *semenowi* subspecies at Abulle, Wilayat of Mahdah, 30 March 1993 (E, Moeller/C. Richardson), was the 1st record for Oman (OBRC).

ESCAPES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber*

One juvenile at Sir Bani Yas Island 30 Sep-1 Oct.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

7 Ain al Faydah 5 Apr, 70 Al Ain zoo during the year, several of these free-flying.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Rapidly increasing population at Sir Bani Yas (due to introductions?) from 35 on 27 Apr to a massive 300 on 1 Oct. After (unknown) number released on Murawah Island in spring, 22 present 22 Nov. 3+ free-flying on Bel Ghelam island 22 Oct. 2 on Das Island 9-10 Feb. 2 at drainage pit, Al Ain 2 Jun and 2 at nearby Ain Al Faydah 30 Dec, (probably same individuals)

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*

Large numbers resident on Abu al Abyadh and present on Dhabiyah in August. One at Al Habab 13 Mar and 7 Jul, origin unknown.

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus*

Abundant and breeding on Abu al Abyadh.

Yellow-necked Spurrow *Francolinus leucoscepus*

Established and breeding on Abu al Abyadh.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

3 still on Abu al Abyadh 24-26 Mar.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*

1 Safa park 4 Nov. Groups of up to 5, Abu Dhabi city throughout the year.

Peach-faced Lovebird *Agapornis roseicollis*

Resident for two years near Dubai Zoo.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Regularly recorded in Abu Dhabi in the Bateen wood/Mushref park area with up to 5 individuals. Presumably breeds.

Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis*

4 on Das island from 9 Jun until the end of the year.

Golden-breasted Starling *Cosmosparus regius*

One near Abu Dhabi Intercon Hotel 21 Sep (B. Hunter).

Cut-throat Amadina *Amadina fasciata*

2 males 1 female Khor Kalba 14 Dec'1992

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

3 males seen near Dubai zoo. Several other unlisted reports suggest this species may now be breeding ferally throughout Jumeirah area of Dubai.

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*

2 Safa park 25 Oct, 1 EGC 27 Oct, 6 Safa Park 16 Dec, in song in Zabeel reeds 28 Aug.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

Male and female Bateen wood 14 Aug, 2 Safa park 31 Oct, pair Holiday International Hotel grounds, Sharjah, 18 Dec.

Black-headed Munia *Lonchura malacca*

Seen at Zabeel Palace 28 Apr (DM) and one Jumairah beach park 3 Nov.

Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*

Up to 8 resident Safa park reeds, seen at least Apr and Nov.

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WATERFOWL COUNTS 1987-94 AT KHOR DUBAI

	12 Sep'87	25 Jan'92	22 Aug'93	14 Jan'94	9 Sep'94
Great Cormorant		363		63	
Grey Heron	NC (Not Counted)		21	109	209
Great White Egret	NC	36	4	21	1
Wes.Reef Heron	NC	10	4	33	32
Spoonbill	3	10	6	29	8
Greater Flamingo	960	860	45	844	44
Mallard	NC	152		716	
Garganey			7		
Osprey	NC	1	1	1	1
Oystercatcher	74	100+	60	124	120
Black-winged Stilt	6				
Pac.Golden Plover	40	10	1	51	
Grey Plover	556	1000+	267	730	420
Ringed Plover	263	500+	39	494	c.300
Kentish Plover	365	3990	1235	1700	c.1000
Lesser Sandplover	NC	3000+	1422	350	c.200
Greater Sandplover		500+	10		
<i>Unid. Charadrius</i>	676			2000	2095
Black-tailed Godwit		102	17	50	21
Bar-tailed Godwit	1243	1000+	284	1500	410
Whimbrel					1
Curlew	101	350	9	3	53
Redshank	334	1000+	795	1175	710
Greenshank	43	6	1		13
Green Sandpiper			4		
Terek Sandpiper	10	45	78	118	9
Turnstone	30	82	121	43	98
Red-necked Phalarope					1
Little Stint	798	500+	110	537	>173
Dunlin	117	4700	NC	3200	NC
Curlew Sandpiper	1505	2	2880	270	NC
<i>Unidentified Calidris</i>			1000		3000
B.-billed Sandpiper	926	570	58	76	84
Ruff	5	8	1		2
Slender-billed Gull	100	185	52	172	264
Gull-billed Tern	10	5	17	10	10
Caspian Tern	5	39	8	17	16
Saunders' Tern					2
Sandwich Tern			19	12	33
TOTALS	8,170	19,126	8,576	14,450	9,328

First/last dates of common Migrants 1993

Full details of all the following migrants can be found in the Checklist pages 18-85.

WINTER VISITORS

	Departure (1993)	Arrival (1993)
Black-necked Grebe	Apr 6, Ramtha lagoon	Sep 8, Al Ghar lake
Great Cormorant	Mar 28, Zabeel ponds	Oct 9, Murawah Is.
Cattle Egret	May 1, Abu al Abyadh	Oct 20, Abu Dhabi city
Wigeon	Mar 8, Zabeel ponds	Oct 23, Zabeel ponds
Gadwall	Mar 8, Emirates golf course	Nov 14, Ruwais
Pintail	Apr 24, Zabeel ponds	Oct 23, Zabeel ponds
Shoveler	Mar 6, Ramtha lagoons	Sep 9, Ramtha lagoons
Pochard	Mar 4, Al Ghar lake	Nov 1, Emirates golf course
Marsh Harrier	May 6, Bu Tina shoals	Sep 9 (location unknown)
Montagu's Harrier	May 21, Hamraniyah	Sep 9, Al Habab
Pallid Harrier	Apr 28, Al Wathba fields	Sep 7 (location unknown)
Sparrowhawk	Apr 3, Wadi Shih	Sep 2 (location unknown)
Spotted Eagle	May 28, Hamraniyah	Oct 28, Al Ain
Coot	Feb 21, Zabeel ponds	Oct 27, Zabeel
Stone Curlew	Mar 23, Das Island	Sep 21, Das Island
Pacific Golden Plover	Apr 30, Khor Dubai	Aug 22, Khor Dubai
White-tailed Plover	Apr 3, Kalba pools	Aug 1, Al Wathba sewage
Temminck's Stint	Apr 6, Ramtha tip	Aug 13, Ramtha
Common Snipe	Apr 19, Emirates golf course	Aug 25, Emirates golf course
Green Sandpiper	Mar 21, Zabeel ponds	Jul 7, Ramtha tip
Wood Sandpiper	May 5, Al Ghar lake	Jul 30, Ramtha tip
Red-necked Phalarope	Jun 7, Emirates golf course	Aug 20, Al Wathba/Abu al Abyadh
Kingfisher	Apr 28, Abu al Abyadh	Aug 23, Wadi Ghayl
Short-toed Lark	Apr 24, Das Island	Aug 20 (location unknown)
Skylark	Mar 9, Abu al Abyadh	Sep 12, Abu al Abyadh
Richard's Pipit	Mar 29, Al Habab	Sep 18, Al Ain camel track
Tawny Pipit	Apr 24, Das Island	Aug 1, Abu al Abyadh
Meadow Pipit	Mar 14, Al Wathba	Oct 14, Al Habab
Red-throated Pipit	May 3, Abu al Abyadh	Oct 8, Al Wathba
Water Pipit	Apr 15, Abu al Abyadh	Oct 15, Al Wathba sewage
Citrine Wagtail	Apr 6, Ramtha tip	Aug 13, Ramtha tip
Grey Wagtail	May 9, Qarnayn Island	Sep 11, Das Island
White Wagtail	Apr 23, Abu al Abyadh	Sep 30, Abu Dhabi city
Bluethroat	Apr 16, Das Island	Oct 4, Das Island
Black Redstart	Apr 18, Das Island	Oct 20, Baynunah
Stonechat	Mar 31, Yasat Island	Sep 10, Al Wathba fields
Isabelline Wheatear	Apr 24, Das Island	Jul 27, Das Island
Desert Wheatear	Apr 17, Das Island	Sep 12, Abu al Abyadh
Red-tailed Wheatear	Mar 30, Das Island	Sep 17, Madam plain
Eastern Pied Wheatear	Feb 26, Abu al Abyadh	Oct 24, Ras al Khaimah
Blue Rock Thrush	Apr 17, Das Island	Sep 24, Das Island
Song Thrush	Mar 27, Abu al Abyadh	Oct 28, Jebel Ali hotel
Desert Warbler	Apr 8, Ghaghah Island	Aug 25, Das Island
Desert Lesser Whitethroat	Apr 18, Abu al Abyadh	Sep 2, Das Island
Chiffchaff	Apr 28 (location unknown)	Oct 14 (location unknown)
Isabelline Shrike	Jun 4, Das Island	Aug 13, Abu al Abyadh

SPRING MIGRANTS

	<i>First reported</i>	<i>Last reported</i>
Garganey	Feb 12, location unknown	Apr 8, location unknown
Lesser Kestrel	Feb 26, Dibba	May 6, Bu Tinah
Cuckoo	Feb 28, Dibba	Apr 19, Emirates golf course
European Nightjar	Apr 27, Dubai	May 17, Das Island
Common Swift	Feb 25, location unknown	May 20, Ain al Faydah
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Mar 15, Khor Kalba	Jun 12, Das Island
European Bee-eater	Mar 18, Das Island	Apr 16, Al Wathba
European Roller	Mar 30, Das Island	May 11, Abu al Abyadh
Hoopoe	Jan 26	Apr 6
House Martin	Feb 24, Abu al Abyadh	Apr 5, Ain al Faydah
Tree Pipit	Mar 8	Apr 26
Rufous Bush Chat	Mar 25, Murawah Island	May 12, Abu al Abyadh
Nightingale	Mar 12, Bateen wood	May 13, Bateen wood
White-throated Robin	Mar 25, Abu al Abyadh/Das	May 1, Bu Hasa
Redstart	Feb 4, Das Is.	May 6, Abu al Abyadh
Whinchat	Mar 24, Abu al Abyadh	May 11, Das Is.
Northern Wheatear	Jan 15, Emirates golf course	May 3, Abu al Abyadh
Pied Wheatear	Feb 4, Das Island	Apr 28, Abu al Abyadh
Black-eared Wheatear	Mar 11, Abu al Abyadh	Apr 14, Abu al Abyadh
Rock Thrush	Feb 23, Abu al Abyadh	May 10, Bateen Wood
Sedge Warbler	Mar 26, Abu al Abyadh	Jun 9, Das Island
Marsh Warbler	Apr 28, Zabeel ponds	Jun 6, Das Island
Reed Warbler (passage birds)	Mar 26, Das Island	Apr 30, Abu al Abyadh
Upcher's Warbler	Mar 15, Masafi	May 19, Khor al Beidah
Barred Warbler	Apr 6, Ghaghah Island	May 5, Al Wathba
Common Whitethroat	Feb 8, Zabeel garden	May 9, Qarmayn Island
Blackcap	Mar 16	May 10
Willow Warbler	Mar 24, Murawah Island	May 21, Murawah
Spotted Flycatcher	Mar 29, Das Island	May 21, Abu Dhabi
Golden Oriole	Apr 14, Emirates golf club	May 13, Das Island
Red-backed Shrike	Mar 26, Das Island	Jun 2, Das Island
Woodchat Shrike	Feb 6, Das Island	Apr 16, Al Wathba/Abu al Abyadh
Pale Rock Sparrow	Mar 2, Abu al Abyadh	May 1, Abu Dhabi race course
Ortolan Bunting	Mar 18, Emirates golf course	May 1, Abu al Abyadh

AUTUMN MIGRANTS

	<i>First seen</i>	<i>Last seen</i>
Hobby	Sep 10, Das Island	Oct 9, Jebel Ali hotel
Collared Pratincole	Jul 29, Al Wathba	Oct 11, Al Ain camel track
Red-necked Phalarope	Aug 20 Al Wathba/Abyadh	Oct 8, Al Ghar lake
European Nightjar	Sep 10, Zabeel ponds	Nov 6, Al Ain
European Bee-eater	Aug 19, Das Island	Nov 2, Al Hamdiya
European Roller	Jul 8, Das Island	Nov 17, Al Wathba
Short-toed Lark	Aug 20	Nov 19, Das Island
Sand Martin	Aug 19, Ramtha tip	Nov 8, Al Wathba
Tree Pipit	Sep 4, Emirates golf course	Nov 25, Abu Dhabi
Grey Wagtail	Sep 11, Das Island	Nov 30, Das Island

Northern Wheatear	Aug 23, Abu al Abyadh	Oct 28, Emirates golf course
Upcher's Warbler	Aug 4, Bateen wood	Oct 11, Bateen wood
Spotted Flycatcher	Aug 23	Nov 5
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Oct 8, Jebel Ali hotel	Nov 19, Das Island
Golden Oriole	Aug 25, Abu al Abyadh	Nov 18, Mushref palace gardens
Lesser Grey Shrike	Aug 22, Das Island	Oct 8, Al Ain camel track
Rose-coloured Starling	Aug 7, Das Island	Oct 16, Abu al Abyadh
Common Rosefinch	Sep 8, Jebel Dhanna	Nov 3, Al Wathba
Black-headed Bunting	Aug 1, Das Island	Sep 24, Das Island

SUMMER VISITORS

	<i>Earliest arrival</i>	<i>Latest departure</i>
Little Ringed Plover	Jan 15, Ramtha tip	Nov 5, Ramtha
Bridled Tern	Mar 27, Sir Bani Yas Island	Oct 20, Dibba
Turtle Dove	Apr 4, Hamraniyah	Sep 18, Das Island
Rufous Bush Chat	Mar 25, Murawah Island	Nov 12, Bateen Wood
Yellow-throated Sparrow	Mar 28, Das Island	Oct 10, Das Island

Recent decisions by the Committee

Here follows some assessments made by the EBRC on 1992/4 reports. 1993 reports are listed in full in the *Systematic List*:

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*. One at Ramtha lagoon from 31 January 1994 (C.Richardson) was accepted.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus bewickii*. Two at Nadd al Shiba golf course, Dubai for several weeks from 25 January 1994 (four reported by club staff from mid December 1993) (C.Richardson) were accepted as the 1st record. (See Plate 14).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. Four near Eastern Lagoon, Abu Dhabi from 5 November 1993 to late January 1994 (E.Hirschfeld/S.James/R.Quested *et al*) was accepted as the 5th record.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. One over Hamraniyah fields, Ras al Khaimah 16 December 1992 (M.Saarinen, T.Tuomenoja) was accepted as the 1st record. (See Plate 13).

Merlin *Falco columbarius*. One (probable female) at Wathba prison sewage site on 13 January 1994 was accepted as the 5th record (E.Hirschfeld).

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*. A male was seen at the top of Jebel Hafit 27 March 1994 (M.A.Hardwick/J.R.Binstead *et al*)

Common Crane *Grus grus*. One at Fujeirah Dairy Farm, Dibba 8 February 1994 (E.Hirschfeld) was the 6th record.

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*. A single bird present on Kalba beach from 29 December 1993 (NSR) was identified as this species on 4 January 1994 (E.Hirschfeld), and confirmed from photographs as the 3rd record.

Little Pratincole *Glareola lactea*. One at the Nadd al Shiba golf course for several days from 25 January 1994 (C.Richardson) was accepted as the 6th record. (See Plate 3).

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*. One on Murawah Island 10 September 1994 (M.Skakuj), was accepted as the 1st record.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*. One at Dhabiya 9 September 1994 (E.Hirschfeld) was accepted as the 1st record.

White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus* One adult at Khor Kalba 9 May 1994 (S.Aspinall/C.Gladwin), was accepted as the 1st record. (See Plate 10).

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. One seen off Kalba beach 29-30 January 1994 was accepted as the 3rd record (S.James).

Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris* Two off Ras Dibba from 14 September 1994 (E.Hirschfeld) was accepted as the 1st record.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*. One at the Zabeel fish ponds on 2 January 1994 (J.Dierschke/C.Richardson *et al*) was accepted as the 5th record.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* 2 over Hamraniyah fields on 3 March 1994 (C.Richardson/V.Dierschke/W.Waanders) were accepted as the 7th record.

Small Skylark *Alauda orientalis* One at Al Ain Camel race track on 1 February 1994 was accepted (S.James). 3 at Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba (Wam farm) on 4 January 1994 were accepted (E.Hirschfeld). 2 at Al Wathba camel track 24 March 1994 were accepted (E.Hirschfeld).

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewski* 5 at Al Wathba camel race track 13 February 1994 (E.Hirschfeld/S.James) was accepted as the 5th record. 2 at Al Wathba camel race track on 29 March 1994 were accepted (Mark Hardwick *et al*) - presumed same birds as seen on 13 February 1994 by EH/SJ, 5th record. 3 at Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba (Wam farm) 27 March 1994 (E.Hirschfeld) were accepted as the 6th record.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*. One at the Emirates golf course 8 May 1994 (C.Richardson) was accepted as the 12th record.

Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus*. One male on Khalidiyah spit 14-18 February 1994 (E.Hirschfeld) was accepted as the 15th record.

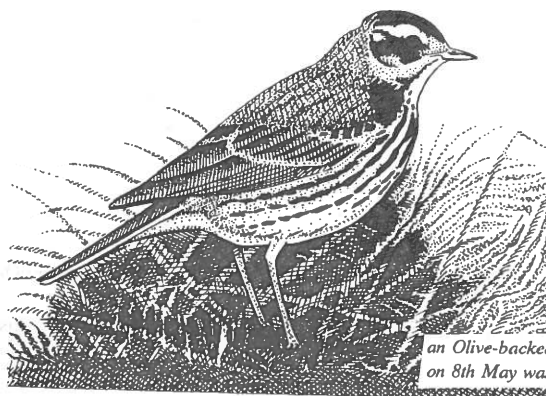
Pied Stonechat *Saxicola caprata* A male at the Emirates golf course 6 May 1994 (C.Richardson) was accepted as the 1st record. (See Plate 12).

Finsch's Wheatear *Oenanthe finschii* One male at Al Wathba camel race track 25 March 1994 (C.Richardson/J.K.Bannon/P.Edwardes) was accepted.

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* One at Murawah Island 29 August 1994 (T.Stawarczyk) was accepted as the 1st record. (See Plate 11).

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon* One at Ain al Faydah reed bed on 2 February 1994 (S.James) was accepted as the 6th record.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* One caught, ringed and photographed at Zabeel water treatment plant on 5 May 1994 (E.Hirschfeld/C.Richardson) was accepted as the 1st UAE record.



An Olive-backed Pipit at the Emirates golf course on 8th May was a very rare spring record

New species reported 1990-1994

Since publication of the definitive checklist for the country in *The Birds of the United Arab Emirates* (Richardson 1990) a total of 33 new species have been added to the UAE checklist. However following review by the EBRC, 4 species have been removed from the list. A revised *Checklist of the Birds of the UAE* is currently under preparation, detailing all changes.

The new species recorded and accepted by the records committee up to November 1994 are as follows:

Species	First seen
Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	2 at Nadd al Sheba from 25.1.94 (C.Richardson)
Crested Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	One RAK 16.12.92 (M.Saarinen/T.Tuomenoja)
Little Crane <i>Porzana parva</i>	One Safa Park, Dubai from 2.10.90 (M.Pitt)
White-breasted Waterhen <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	One Ramtha tip from 12.11.92 (C.Richardson)
Oriental Pratincole <i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	One Emirates golf course 23.11.92 (C.Richardson)
Kittlitz's Plover <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	One Murawah Island 10.9.94 (M.Skakuj)
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	One Al Wathba from 30.10.93 (E.Hirschfeld)
Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	One Dhabiyah 9.9.94 (E.Hirschfeld <i>et al</i>)
Long-toed Stint <i>Calidris subminuta</i>	One Ramtha tip 14.9.90 (M.Pitt)
White-eyed Gull <i>Larus leucophthalmus</i>	One Khor Kalba 9.5.94 (S.Aspinall)
Sabine's Gull <i>Larus sabini</i>	One Ramtha tip 24.6.91 (S.Turner/C.Richardson)
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	One Kalba beach 8.4.93 (R.Quested)
Lesser Noddy <i>Anous tenuirostris</i>	Two Ras Dibba from 14.9.94 (E.Hirschfeld <i>et al</i>)
Black-bellied Sandgrouse <i>Pterocles orientalis</i>	6 at Abu al Abyadh 9.2.92 (R.P. Morris)
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	2 at Emirates GC 22.8.92 (A.Forsten/T.Nurminen)
White-breasted Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	2 at Ramtha tip 30.11.90 (W.R.P. Bourne)
Grey-headed Kingfisher <i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	One Asab from 14.4.90 (L.Reaney)
Bar-tailed Desert Lark <i>Ammomanes cincturus</i>	8 Ruwais area from 29.10.91 (S.Baha El Din)
Small Skylark <i>Alauda gulgula</i>	8 Ruwais area 18.11.91 (S.Baha El Din)
Blyth's Pipit <i>Anthus godlewski</i>	One Abu Dhabi from 12.10.93 (S.James)
Black Bush Robin <i>Cercotrichas podobe</i>	One Emirates golf course 15.4.92 (C.Richardson)
Pied Stonechat <i>Saxicola caprata</i>	One Emirates golf course 6.5.94 (C.Richardson)
Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	One Ruwais reedbeds from 21.10.93 (S.Aspinall)
River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	One Murawah Island 29.8.94 (T.Stawarczyk <i>et al</i>)
Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	One Zabeel fish ponds 5.5.94 (E.Hirschfeld)
Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilides</i>	One Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 17.4.93 (S.James)
Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>	One Emirates golf course 19.10.92 (C.Richardson)
Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	One Safa park, Dubai 19.10.90 (M.Pitt)
Wattled Starling <i>Creatophora cineracea</i>	One Zabeel, Dubai 22.1.92 (C.Richardson)
Dead Sea Sparrow <i>Passer moabiticus</i>	4 on Das Island 21.1.92 (L.Reaney)
White-capped Bunting <i>Emberiza stewarti</i>	2 Emirates GC 5.11.92 (C.Richardson/J.K. Bannon)
Red-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza bruniceps</i>	One Asab 14.4.91 (L.Reaney)

As of November 1994, the UAE list stands at 389 wild species, plus 11 feral breeding species.

Teal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desert Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meadow Pipit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	4	4	4	10	14	2	5	7	9	9	7	
	15 Oct	28 Oct	30 Oct	31 Oct	3 Nov	4 Nov	7 Nov	9 Nov	14 Nov	17 Nov	18 Nov	

	21 Nov	24 Nov	25 Nov	30 Nov	2 Dec	5 Dec	13 Dec	14 Dec	23 Dec	24 Dec	30 Dec	Totals
Water Pipit	1	2	6	11	3	4	4	3	0	0	0	51
Bluethroat	2	5	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	49
Citrine Wagtail	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	18
Ménétie's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Isabelline Shrike	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Swallow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Great Reed Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Clamorous Rd. Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Song Thrush	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Richard's Pipit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Blue-ch. Bee-eater	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Common Snipe	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Jack Snipe	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Redshank	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Temminck's Stint	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Black-winged Stilt	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teal	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Desert Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Meadow Pipit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	3	7	10	20	6	6	10	5	1	5	3	153

Table 1. Total numbers of ringed species October-December 1993

Discussion

The following is based on a short-term ringing study which produced a limited sample of data. It is intended to publish full details in the future, although in some cases only after several years of ringing. This section should be treated with some caution, and references to it should make clear that these findings are preliminary. A large amount of information relating to biometrics has been gathered and will be compiled at a later stage to facilitate identifications of species and subspecies in the future.

The most common ringed species was Water Pipit with a total of 51 individuals. About 10 of them showed measurements distinct for the subspecies *coutellii* of western Asia,

but a number of birds with much longer bill and tarsus measurements were also recorded. The subspecies *blakistoni* was certainly not trapped (having distinctly short tarsus measurements) while a few *spinoletta* could have been trapped (there is much overlap with *coutellii*). Water Pipit is a common winter visitor to the UAE and, judging from the surprisingly few retraps, was either still on migration in November/December or is not faithful to the same wintering site throughout the winter. It is not so easy to age Water Pipits as for Bluethroats and Citrine Wagtails but 21% were considered to be adults and 79% juveniles (n=48). The average fat scale for Water Pipit throughout the period was 1.2 (n=50).

More Bluethroats were caught than expected. Biometric data show that Bluethroats of the subspecies *pallidogularis* occurred. Only seven birds had measurements that could be assigned to one subspecies only, and they were all *pallidogularis*. No pure *svecica*, *volgae* or *magna* were found although eight birds showed characters which could fit in to these subspecies. There is a possibility that also *cyaneacula* occurs (perhaps rather unlikely though with reference to its' westerly distribution), but this should be resolved when the birds moult into the easily recognisable spring plumage. Six birds (all females) showed 1-2 mm shorter wings than any subspecies mentioned in Svensson (1992) and could possibly belong to an unmeasured population of *pallidogularis* or an eastern subspecies. Over half of the Bluethroats were retrapped, indicating that the site is used both as a permanent wintering area and as a staging post for migrating Bluethroats.

67% of all Bluethroats were first winter birds and 33% adults. Females dominated among young birds with 58% compared to 42% for first-winter males (n=33) while males dominated slightly among adults: 56% compared to 44% (n=16). The figures for retrapped, presumably wintering, birds showed 66% young birds and 34% adult birds (n=27) staying in the area with 50% males and 50% females among first-winter birds (n=18) and 56% males and 44% females among adult birds (n=9). It is interesting to note that there does not seem to be any difference in the number of (presumably experienced) adult and (presumably inexperienced) juvenile birds that take up winter territories at Al Wathba and that the ratio male/female is roughly the same among adult and juvenile categories. Please note though that the sample sizes are too small yet for reliable conclusions to be drawn.

Citrine Wagtails were the third most common species, appearing in surprisingly large numbers (Table 1.) It had been previously thought, based on field observations, that the same individuals would spend days or weeks at a certain site in the UAE. The ringing however showed that most Citrine Wagtails obviously pass through very rapidly, as there was only one retrap. Both the subspecies *werae* and *citreola* were recorded and all ringed Citrine Wagtails were juveniles. In addition to biometric data, notes on plumage were taken for most Citrine Wagtails in order to see how body moult from juvenile to adult plumage proceeds during the winter. Noteworthy were the high average fat scores for migrant Citrine Wagtails (3.2, n=17) compared to Bluethroats and Water Pipits (see above), supporting that these birds were preparing to continue their migration after only a brief stop at Al Wathba.

Although waders were not targeted, small numbers were trapped (Table 1). Most were trapped in the morning before the sunlight became too strong, as they supposedly could not detect the nets then.

Several rare birds were recorded at the ringing site during the autumn. Most noteworthy of these were the UAE's first Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (see page XX), the country's sixth Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*, Siskin *Carduelis spinus*, a male Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* and several Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*.

Postscript

The water supply at Al Wathba was suddenly cut off in mid December and by early February 1994 the site had been destroyed, apparently to give way for a road. This is especially unfortunate as the studies of the wintering population of Bluethroats could have proved very interesting. There are presently no known sites in Abu Dhabi holding wintering Bluethroats which are suitable for mist-netting. Additional sites for migrant passerines on Abu Dhabi island and possibly also on other Gulf islands were utilised in February to May 1994. In spring Marsh Warblers were targeted, as major studies of their migration are underway on three continents and information from Abu Dhabi could prove useful in understanding their migration strategies. Tern and gull chicks were ringed during the summer and a major wader ringing exercise took place from August to October.

References

Svensson, L. 1992. *Identification guide to European passerines*. Stockholm.

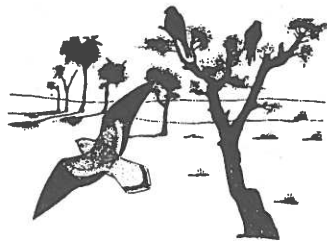
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SPRING MIGRATION OF LESSER KESTREL *Falco naumanni* THROUGH THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND NORTHERN OMAN IN 1994.

Simon Aspinall

Summary

Without any adjustment for turnover, a minimum of 350-450 Lesser Kestrels passed northwards through the United Arab Emirates and Northern Oman in late March and April 1994.



INTRODUCTION

Following the fortuitous discovery of a passage of Lesser Kestrels along the west side of the Hajar Mountains in spring 1993 (EBR17:47-48) an increased effort was made in March/April 1994 to try and establish the timing and true scale of this movement through the United Arab Emirates. Many observers were primed to keep a sharp look-out skyward from the last week of March until mid-April. Sites where Lesser Kestrels have been seen in previous years were visited on several occasions and some semblance of coordination was achieved throughout the northern UAE. Apart from the pre-determined stations, several observers explored elsewhere or made opportunistic observations in other areas. This included the Omani Musandam for three days in April. Only on one occasion was a flock actually seen on the move migrating northward (as described below). Otherwise all records were of individuals and flocks feeding in fixed localities (fodder fields & acacia savannah). The extra observer effort this year revealed greater numbers than in any previous year and also showed birds probably staying longer than is usual in particularly good feeding places. There was no way to assess any turnover that may have occurred.

COUNTS

Involved were a minimum of around 350 individuals (total of coordinated counts plus numbers from more southerly sites when post-dating observations from further north) and a maximum of nearly 450 (summing the peak count at each site). The latter would assume no birds were seen at a second site. Clearly then the total must lie between these two figures. As stated above there has been no assessment of any turnover which may occur (nor is it easy to see how this may be done). Almost certainly new arrivals replace recently departed birds and they would be expected to find and be seen in the same suitable sites. For example at Al Madam regular observation produced widely varying counts which probably indicates a turnover to occur. However after leaving one site the flocks might easily find the next suitable site to the north. All counts are given in the table below. The true number of Lesser Kestrels using this flyway remains uncertain but hopefully there will be sufficient interest to repeat the count next year. The point of entry of Lesser Kestrels into the UAE also remains obscure. This may be in the Al Ain/Buraimi area after following the mountains through Oman, or elsewhere after crossing the desert on a broad front. Passage also occurs along the Batinah coast of Oman, east of the mountains; the 150+ at Sohar being strangely later than the date when most birds had already passed through the UAE.

TIMING OF THE PASSAGE

Excluding odd winter records of single birds in the UAE the first spring arrivals were noted on 3rd March at Digdaga/Hamraniya (1-3 birds). Thereafter no new observations were made until 17th March when there were 4 at the Fujairah National dairy farm, near Dibba and 2 at Hamraniya. A single bird was at Al Ain on 20th March but in the last ten days of the month and into early April birds were seen in eight sites (see Table). There was a build up at Digdaga from 27 on 29th March to a peak of 109 on 7th April with 75 (? of the same birds) five days later. One fodder field 11 km north of Al Madam held 39 birds on 25th March and 36 on 7th April but a maximum of only 14 in between these dates. This suggests there is a turnover of birds in at least some of the sites. In the Musandam two *Acacia/Zizyphus* savannah woodland sites, namely A'Najd and Wadi Halaa Rawdah, held peaks of 22 and 76 on 10th and 11th April respectively. Unfortunately no observations were made here before the 10th. or after the 12th April.

The migration in spring 1994 closely matched that of 1993 when flocks were seen in the last few days of March and first week of April, although observations then were opportunistic compared to this year.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Weather

The weather was fine throughout the period of the spring migration with variable wind strength and direction (light to fresh, backing between NW & SE).

Prey and foraging method

In the Musandam and perhaps also in UAE a few Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* were caught up with this movement, although some may have been resident pairs breeding in the mountains. Interestingly these birds foraged in exactly the same manner as the Lesser

Kestrels. This was by hovering at no more than 10 metres above the ground and dropping onto prey (catching it with either the feet or beak), perching on low Hammada bushes (less than 1 metre) and doing likewise or even standing on the ground and running forward to grab prey with the beak. Several prey items were taken, none being specifically identified but included *orthoptera* and the adults or larvae of other insects. The abundance of invertebrate prey may mean Kestrels just join in the bonanza, but the apparent lack of potential diurnal vertebrate prey, particularly small rodents, may result in a typically lesser kestrel feeding strategy being adopted and also go part way to explaining the small size of their local breeding population. At Digdaga/Hamraniya at least part of the prey was formed by the larvae of *Convolvulus Hawk-moth Agrius convolvuli*, whereas at Al Madam the Migratory Locust *Locusta migratoria* appeared the most important item (Richardson pers.comm.). The latter were also seen taken by birds at Al Ain camel track (as they were here by Pallid Harriers *Circus macrourus* in the 1993/94 winter and by White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* in autumn 1993).

DATE/SITE	FUJ. DAIRY FARM	AL AIN	AL MADAM	DIGDAGA	SCHWAIB	AL WATHBA	SWEIHAN	DAS ISLAND	AL HABAB	BIDA ZAYED	BIDIYAH	ABU DHABI	KHASAB	RAWDAH	SOHAR	A' NAJD
1994	UAE												Oman			
3-4 Mar				1 or 3												
17-Mar	4			2												
20-Mar		1														
22-Mar	10															
24-Mar					5 or 6	1										
25-Mar			39													
27-Mar	20						1									
29-Mar			0	27			1									
30-Mar			11										1			
31-Mar	25										2					
01-Apr			12	50												
04-Apr		1														
05-Apr			14													
07-Apr			36	109			7									
9-11 Apr												1				
10-Apr	14		34													22
11-Apr														76		5 or 6
12-Apr				75												
12-Apr			22	40												4 or 5
14-Apr										4				150+		
14-Apr																
15-Apr									1							
19-Apr			3	7												

Table 1. Spring 1994 records of Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* in the UAE and northern Oman.

Active migration

The single observation of migrating birds, referred to earlier, was made at Wadi Halaah Rawdah ('the Rawdah bowl' at 25 51N. 56 16E) in the Musandam and is worth describing more fully. This site is a wide and extremely flat gravel wadi bed carpeted with wild flowers (*Vicoa pentanema*), grasses and mature Acacia trees giving a savanna or parkland aspect. There is a small amount of low intensity agriculture and stock grazing. The wadi has an exit to the west at a confluence with another river course coming down from the north and is surrounded by high mountains rising very abruptly and steeply. It is the next suitable feeding site for Lesser Kestrels north of Dibba. The area must look extremely inviting for overflying migrants as would Khawr A' Najd near Khasab. If birds descend into Rawdah to feed they then have the prospect of climbing back up to 7000' (2134m) in order to continue northwards. At 0800h on 11th April 1994 a flock of 76 Lesser Kestrels were feeding on and over the savanna at Rawdah but at 0855h a single group of 64 birds suddenly ceased feeding and began spiralling upward without flapping and drifted away in a north-westerly direction. The flock was invisible to the naked eye within two minutes and could only be located and followed with binoculars for a further minute or so. By then they already appeared to be clear of the highest tops. If they can rise to this altitude so easily, even though they may not need to over the plains west of the mountains for example, this may explain why so few actively migrating flocks are recorded. Furthermore, although there is only anecdotal evidence to date, migration may take place at night. In the Musandam the birds roosted communally on telegraph poles overnight but a nocturnal movement might seem especially likely to occur over desert areas (to avoid the high daytime temperatures even if sacrificing better thermals) rather than the mountains.

Identification of female Lesser Kestrels

When it was noticed that one or more Kestrels were associating with the 'lessers' more careful observation was made of the various distinguishing fieldmarks generally ascribed to the females of each. The paler underwing of lessers was unremarkable and certainly not diagnostic on its own. In fact with birds in Europe this has always seemed a good clue but perhaps more easterly populations have a greater degree of spotting on the underwing; even though the species is monotypic some variation is likely across its wide world range. The pale claws were conclusive when close enough to be seen and the wedge-shaped tail with its extended central tail feathers seemed to hold good.

One further feature was the prominent square grey rump on most of the female Lesser Kestrel. Although some female Kestrels and immature males can have this it is never so clearcut or extensive as it was on these birds. Other fieldmarks were the plainer face of lesser with a greyer, certainly less rufous, cast and possibly more 'pinched' appearance and less frenetic and shorter-lived bouts of hovering.

Further records of Lesser Kestrels from Oman in spring would be most welcomed by the author.

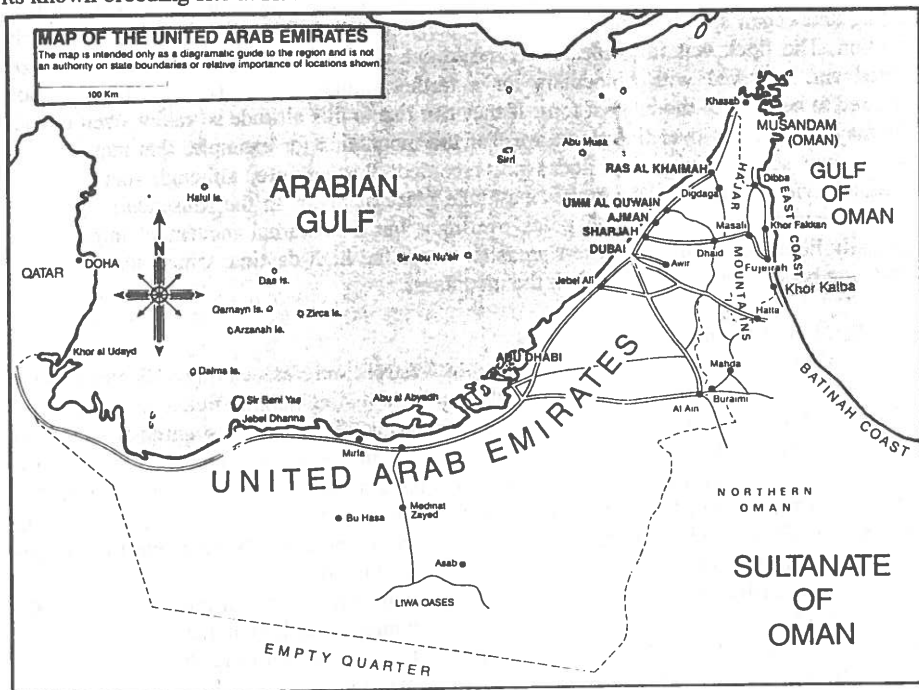
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ON THE STATUS OF BOOTED WARBLER *Hippolais caligata* IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Erik Hirschfeld

Introduction

One of the few known breeding sites of Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata rama* (also known as Syke's Booted Warbler) on the Arabian peninsula is at Khor Kalba on the East Coast of the United Arab Emirates in the Sharjah Dependency of Kalba (Richardson 1990). Its occurrence in Kalba has been known since 1971 (F. E. Warr *in litt.*) but, apart from mention in bird reports, very little has been published on it. This short paper summarises the occurrence of the species in the UAE and contains some observations from its known breeding site at Kalba.



A map of the United Arab Emirates - note the location of Khor Kalba and the Batinah coast

Identification and taxonomy

Booted Warbler is generally considered to consist of two sub-species: the more northern nominate *caligata* and the southern *rama*, the latter often Syke's Booted Warbler. Some authors award them specific status while others currently treat them as subspecies (eg Svensson 1992). There is even a mention in Dement'ev & Gladkov (1954) of suspected hybridising between *rama* and the race of Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida elaeica* in the overlap zone of their occurrence (Osborn 1993).

The two sub-species differ markedly in structure and, less markedly, in song with *rama* being morphologically more similar to Olivaceous Warbler than to Booted. My own few observations from Pakistan suggest that there might be differences in wintering habitat as well. During a trip in 1988 we saw the nominate subspecies in desert or semi-desert, often clinging to the lower parts of small bushes or trees, while *rama* occurred high up in the canopy in more well-wooded areas, often close to canals. A migrant bird could of course turn up in any kind of habitat and the cited observations were based on no more than 5 individuals. Roberts (1992) does not distinguish between the sub-species' habitat preferences but confirms that all favour thick cover, near water.

The songs, although structurally similar, differ quite markedly from one another. Nominate Booted Warbler sings with a liquid, warbling song while the song of *rama* is more rasping and approaches Olivaceous Warbler in quality. The length and variation of the song is however much greater for *rama*. For good recordings of the nominate subspecies see Mild (1987).

Much has recently been discussed on the field identification of Booted Warblers, especially after the vagrant records of a presumed Syke's Booted Warbler in the Shetlands and another in Sweden in autumn 1993 (Osborn 1993) highlighted the unclear taxonomy of Booted Warblers among European birders. Neither of these two records have been accepted by the respective national Rarities Committees yet. Apparently, it is very difficult to separate even handheld *rama* from Olivaceous Warbler. I shall not repeat here what has already been published on identification features (see instead Svensson (1992) and Osborn (1993)), but can only add that the mention of Booted Warblers having darker feet, contrasting with paler legs than Olivaceous Warblers (Hollom *et al.* 1988) is a good character to distinguish *rama* Booted Warblers in the UAE from the locally breeding subspecies (probably *pallida* (Hirschfeld *in prep.*)) and migrant subspecies (*elaica*) of Olivaceous Warblers. I have checked this character on fifteen Booted Warblers of the subspecies *rama* and one of the subspecies *caligata* in the field and c.25 Olivaceous Warblers in the hand and c.75 in the field and it has always been consistent.

Distribution

The subspecies *rama* breeds from south central Asia to western Sinkiang while the nominate *caligata* breeds from eastern-most Europe to Sinkiang in the east. The two subspecies meet in a secondary hybridization zone in south central Siberia, Mongolia and China and this population is sometimes described as *annectens* (Cramp *et al.* 1992). The subspecies *caligata* winters in the northern part of peninsular India and *rama* is said to winter in Arabia (Cramp 1992, but see below) and India to Sri Lanka (Williamson 1976). It is quite widespread in Iran, breeding adjacent to the coast only in the northern Gulf delta region (Birds of Iran, 1973), where it arrives from early April and departs from early September. Breeding takes place from mid May to early July sometimes in colonies (Hüe & Etchécopar 1970).

In Arabia the species has only been confirmed breeding in Khor Kalba on the East Coast of the Emirates (see map). Gallagher & Woodcock (1980) mention breeding Booted Warblers in the Batinah, north coastal Oman, based on singing birds in mangroves at Shinas and Liwa creeks in 1977 and 1980 (M. Gallagher *pers. comm*) but there are no definite records indicating breeding since then (J. Eriksen and M. Gallagher *pers. comm.*).

Olivaceous Warbler *H. pallida* is a locally common breeder in some wooded parks in the UAE and is sometimes recorded in winter, at least in Abu Dhabi.

Occurrence in the United Arab Emirates

Because of the great similarity in structure between nominate and *rama* Booted Warblers and the lack of mention of this in field guides, the species have apparently been misidentified even at the breeding site in Khor Kalba. Reports of singing Olivaceous Warblers at Khor Kalba in December and January are in fact more likely to have been early arriving Syke's Booted Warblers on their breeding grounds. This author knows of at least one case of experienced and well-travelled European bird-watchers having been uncertain over the identity of singing March *Hippolais* in Kalba. This adds to the difficulty of interpreting the status of the species in the UAE, and the following paragraphs are based on my own interpretations of UAE records and those supplied by Mrs. F. E. Warr (*pers. comm.*)

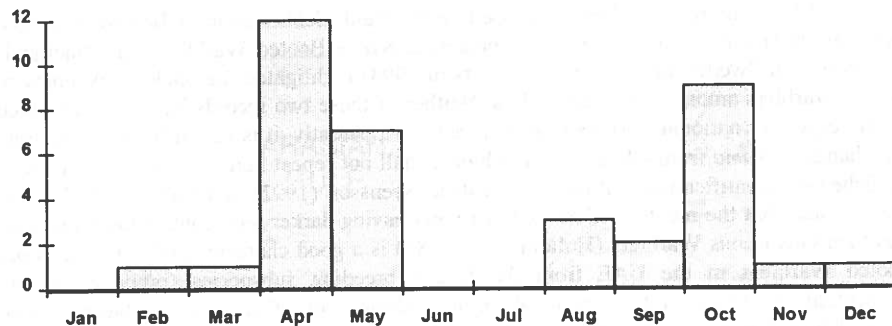


Figure 1. All records of Booted Warblers in the UAE (excluding Khor Kalba) 1987-1993.

Figure 1. shows the monthly distribution of all records claimed as certain by observers from outside Khor Kalba. The main passage months are obviously April and May in spring and October in autumn with few records in other months.

At Khor Kalba the species has been reliably recorded from February to June, with one record each in October (of a bird showing characters of nominate *caligata*, personal observation), November and December (of unknown subspecies).

There are previous records of singing "Olivaceous Warblers" in mangroves in Abu Dhabi (S. James *pers. comm.*), and with the observation of a group of 5 singing Booted Warblers in fairly young mangroves at the Police Club, Abu Dhabi, in April 1994 (R.J. Hornby *pers. comm.*) the possibility arises that these reports actually could refer to Syke's Booted Warblers on migration rather than to Olivaceous Warblers. Another interesting observation, although indicated as uncertain as to the species, is of c.50 in Sharjah in May 1973 (M. Gallagher *pers. comm.*).

The Khor Kalba population

Booted Warblers have been recorded at Khor Kalba between the 21st February and 4th December and song from these birds has been recorded from 21st February to 14th June. Other indications of breeding were one feeding a young bird on 29th April 1991 (*Emirates*

Bird Report: 15) and a male and a female carrying nesting material on 2nd May 1994 (personal observation). Observer coverage at Kalba is quite irregular however, with most birders visiting the site from March to April and October to November, but this author's searches for Booted Warblers there in June, July and August 1993 were completely fruitless. They are then either skulking silently in the mangroves or absent from the site.

In spring 1994 I studied the Khor Kalba Booted Warblers in more detail. What makes the Kalba birds unique are that they occur in mangroves, unlike anywhere else in the world. Cramp *et al.* (1992) do not mention this habitat for the species, but perhaps other southern populations of *rama* (in for example the under-watched coast of Baluchistan from where the species has not been recorded breeding yet) regularly breed in this kind of habitat. In Kalba they preferred the northern-most part of the mangroves which consist of rather young trees (c.3 metres tall and estimated at c.20 years of age) but have also occasionally been found in the older, more mature trees in the northern end (S. Aspinall *pers. comm.*).

During late March 1994 six males held territories in the mangroves and the same males were present in their territories on a visit in early May the same year. Only one male was accompanied by, what was presumed to be, a female in March, while all six were observed in pairs with silent birds accompanying them in May. Each territory had a radius of c.30 meters, but no chases between males were observed when they ventured into each other's territories. The singing would take place from the top of a bush where the male was easily visible and singing birds were remarkably tame, allowing approaches down to 10 meters.

The only breeding activity, apart from holding territories, that was observed was in May 1994 when a male and a silent bird (presumed to be a female) were seen carrying nest material and (seemingly) looking for a nesting site at low level in some 50 cm high mangrove bushes on the creek side of the mangroves. They were however never seen to deposit the nest material anywhere, possibly because the observer inadvertently placed a loudspeaker in their nesting bush..

Summary

Both subspecies of Booted Warblers occur in the UAE. The status of *caligata* needs further investigation, but it is believed to be a scarce migrant visitor mainly in autumn.

The subspecies *rama* breeds in a colony in mangroves in Khor Kalba and is present there from at least February to June, possibly already from December. It is supposed to winter in small numbers in Arabia (Cramp *et al.* 1992) but, judging from the observations above, it is more of a winter vagrant or, possibly, an early arriving breeding species. In the rest of Arabia, the only published, reliable, winter record is one in December (unknown subspecies) in Oman (*Oman Bird List ed. 4*). In spring 1994 at least 6 males were holding territories at Kalba and all of them were seen together with silent birds, presumed to have been females. One case of birds carrying nesting material was observed.

The habit of breeding in mangroves in Kalba is unique for the species according to Cramp *et al.* (1992) but it is not unlikely that nearer populations of the species, for example in the underwatched parts of Baluchistan or even in northern Oman, might do so as well.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Jens Eriksen and Michael Gallagher for providing additional information on the status of the species in Oman and Mrs. F.E. Warr for providing

access to her files on the species. Colin Richardson, Dr. R.J. Hornby and Steve James provided additional information on the species' status in the country and Michael Gallagher and Colin Richardson read through and commented on a draft of this paper.

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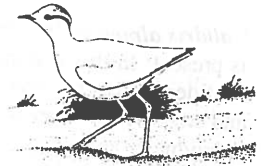
Appendix

All certain observations of Booted Warblers in the UAE

- 1971 One collected and noted as "quite common and in song" Khor Kalba 24.3.
- 1977 One Abu Dhabi 7.5.
- 1978 At least 20 Khor Kalba 24-25.3 and 20.4; up to 4 Khor Kalba 3-5.9; 2 Khor Fakkan 4.9.
- 1987 One Saffa park, Dubai 14.8.
- 1988 2 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 15.4; 1 Emirates Golf Course, Dubai 26.4; 1 Saffa park, Dubai 26.4; "several" Masafi hills 6.5; 4 Khor Kalba 6.5; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 2.10; 1 Emirates Golf Course 13.10; 2 Mushrif Palace Gardens, Abu Dhabi 14.10; 1 Khalifa street park, Abu Dhabi 24.10
- 1989 2 Saffa park, Dubai 7.4; 1 Jebel Ali Hotel 9.4; at least 4 Qarmeyn island 21-22.4; 1 Rugheilat farm 19.5; one Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 21.5; 2 Saffa park, Dubai 18.8
- 1990 One Saffa park, Dubai 8.2; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 2.3; 5 Khor Kalba 1.3-19.4, 1 still singing there 14.6; 1 Zabeel fish farm, Dubai 14.5; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 15.5; 2 Dubai 11.10; 1 Khor Kalba 9.11
- 1991 Up to 10 birds Khor Kalba 21.2-29.4; 1 Zabeel fish farm 18.4; 1 Sir Bani Yas island 3.5; 1 Abu Al Abyadh 6.5
- 1992 At least 10 Khor Kalba 12.3-12.6; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 15.9; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 2.10; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 30.10; 1 Khor Kalba 4.12; 1 Bateen wood, Abu Dhabi 10.12
- 1993 One resembling *caligata* Khor Kalba 14.10

FIRST CONFIRMED BREEDING OF CREAM-COLOURED COURSER IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

Simon Aspinall, Jaime Samour & Judith Howlett



Summary

Cream-coloured Courser has long been suspected of breeding in the United Arab Emirates, but an active nest or eggs have never been found. However, following the observation of courtship display at Sweihan near Al Ain, and the subsequent discovery of 2-week old young, it must only be a matter of time, and hopefully next season, before a nest site is located and further nesting details are obtained.

Being a desert, semi-desert and steppe specialist the Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor* is an unusual wader. It is widespread across North Africa, Arabia and parts of Asia and often relatively numerous. It exhibits little known and poorly understood post-breeding movements. Adults are often found accompanied by recently fledged juveniles along the Gulf coast of the United Arab Emirates as early as the beginning of April, or more often from late April, onwards. This puts the earliest egg-laying at some point in February - the exact duration of incubation and fledging period are apparently unknown as is their precise breeding area. Until 1994 breeding had not been proven in the UAE despite considerable effort spent looking in 'likely areas'.

Breeding may be synchronised to coincide with the cool of winter when dew and rain may result in an increased invertebrate food supply from increased insect breeding activity and/or their emergence from hibernation. There is a subsequent retreat to the coast by many coursers and it is then that it looks like the wader that it is - running along on intertidal flats or on the littoral fringe just above the high water mark. Large flocks of adults and juveniles may congregate, eg approximately 100 were at Khor al Beidah, Umm al Quwain in May 1993.

Breeding in the UAE was finally confirmed near Abu Dhabi in April 1994. From September 1993 until the end of the year, flocks of over ten birds were seen at various sites in the Sweihan area - an eminently suitable and likely breeding area one would have thought. Sightings became less regular thereafter (in 1994) but two or more trios of adult birds remained loyal to a relatively small area in two localities, one of which just happened to be on the Seih al Nisurieh at the National Avian Research Center's new desert research centre lying about 8 km south of Sweihan town - how very convenient for regular observation.

Numerous sightings of coursers were made here into 1994 but it was not until the 27th March that any evidence of breeding activity other than simple presence was obtained. On this date at 17.50h a single bird was seen giving a brief aerial display. It is apparently always thus and 'poorly developed', certainly compared to other species of wader, and rarely witnessed. The display lasted barely 20 seconds with the bird flying about 10 metres above the ground, initially giving the 'whack' call which had probably attracted the observer's attention in the first place. The call was not heard again or at least was not audible from the distance at which the bird was being watched. Suddenly the bird went into a jinking and twisting flight, reminiscent of the flight action used by several different waders as they come into land or to join a roost. It is also similar to an evasive flight pattern taken, by Dunlin

Calidris alpina or Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* for example, when an avian predator is present. In this instance no predator was observed and any raptor is rare here so there is confidence that this was a spontaneous display. The bird broke off the display, such as it was, and with wings depressed below the horizontal glided down to land out of sight. No other individual was seen. Three adult birds remained in the immediate area into April but no further display flights were seen. Breeding confirmation came unexpectedly after much early morning and late evening searching when three colleagues, ostensibly spotlighting mammals on the plain one night (25th April), caught sight first of an adult courser in the beam followed closely by two chicks and a second adult. This was close to where the aerial display was originally seen a month previously. The young were estimated to have been about two weeks old, at half, or less, the size of the adults and flightless but precocial. At last breeding was confirmed for the UAE. The young were able to fly by the 7th May at least.

The local topography south of Sweihan is one of table-flat plains separated by regularly spaced high fossil dunes sitting on this sand and gravel basement. The vegetation of the plain is a typically sparse admix of perennials, namely mainly *Zygophyllum*, the grass *Stipagrostis plumosa*, *Fagonia ovalifolia* (also an annual) and *Haloxylon salicornicum* (formerly *Hammada elegans*) with various annuals, such as *Arnebia hispidissima* and *Plantago ciliata*, present and sometimes locally abundant. The coursers were often found feeding where camels have been present for a while, although since the latter get just about everywhere this association may not be real. The coursers were also regularly found feeding inside the NARC compound where grazing is now excluded.

Similar, but not identical, habitat to that found around Sweihan is present over a large area between the Al Ain-Abu Dhabi and Al Ain-Dubai roads which might conceivably host many breeding pairs of Cream-coloured Courser. Much of the rest of the desert areas of the UAE may also be acceptable to them of course. Just so long as each ABBA square is covered in the next two years!

A quick check in the other area where a trio had been seen earlier in the year, revealed four adults and two fledged young on the 27th April and it is presumed that these too were true Emirati, locally raised. These soon relocated to cultivations just on the northern outskirts of Sweihan town.

Although both parent birds remain with their young the curious thing is that almost without exception a third or even fourth adult is often found associating with the family group. The mating and social system of coursers may be far more interesting than we realise. An interesting study for someone to undertake.

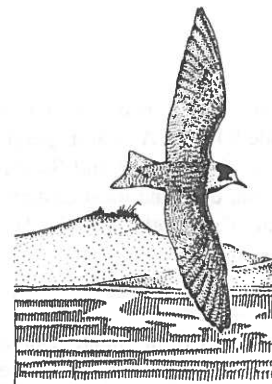
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THE FIRST RECORDS OF BLACK TERNS *Chlidonias niger* IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Erik Hirschfeld and Rob Quedsted



On Thursday the 8th April 1993, RQ, Dr. Penny Burton and Mrs. Nona Quedsted were driving along the beach at Khor Kalba and stopped to view a mixed flock of Terns, comprising mainly of White-cheeked *Sterna repressa*, Sandwich *S. sandvicensis*, and Lesser Crested Terns *S. bengalensis*. The flock suddenly took off, and the black plumage of a solitary tern was clearly visible. The flock was followed a further 300 metres along the beach, where the the bird could be studied closer and its identification as Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* was established.

On the afternoon of 14th October 1993, EH stopped 5 km north of Dadnah on the east coast of the UAE to scrutinise a flock of c. 900 mixed Terns, mainly Common *Sterna hirundo* and Little or Saunder's Little Terns *Sterna albifrons/saundersi* but with a few White-cheeked among them. The whole flock suddenly took off, and EH noticed a tern with a dark mark on the side of the body just in front of the wing. The tern flock eventually settled on the beach again, and the Black Tern was seen preening next to both Common and Little/Saunder's Little Terns. It was rather aggressive towards the smaller terns, but did not show any aggression towards Common Tern. The Black Tern was studied for about 30 minutes before EH left the beach.

Description

The April bird at Khor Kalba was an adult in summer plumage. Its size was smaller than the accompanying White-cheeked Terns. The body was black and contrasted markedly with its white tail, rump and under-tail coverts and its sooty-grey wings.

The October bird was distinctly smaller than Common Tern, but slightly bigger than Little/Saunder's Little Tern which were standing beside it. It was an adult bird in winter plumage with a black crown, black extending down behind the eyes and on the nape, interrupted by a white wedge on the sides of the nape. The rest of the head was white. Upperparts were dark grey, lacking any contrast between mantle and wings. The folded wings were slightly paler on the central part than on the flight-feathers/lesser coverts. A dark carpal bar was visible. Rump, tail and back were con-colourous grey with a dark grey smudge extending down on the sides of the body in front of the folded wings, obviously visible when the bird was sitting and the character that drew EH's attention to the bird in flight.

The head pattern, dark smudge in front of the wing and grey tail exclude other marsh terns.

Distribution

Black Tern breeds both in North America and Eurasia. The Eurasian breeding population extends from western Europe to approximately longitude 80° E in Asia and spends the winter in western Africa and along the River Nile, mainly in southern Egypt and Sudan. Most of the migration seems to pass through the Mediterranean Sea, even the most eastern-most breeding birds seem, from ringing recoveries, to use that route (Cramp *et al.* 1985). The Arabian Gulf is not included in its normal migration route.

Other records from the Gulf

The species is rare in eastern Arabia. There are five records from Oman (*Oman Bird List ed. 4.* 1994) and five from Bahrain (Nightingale & Hill 1993). In Saudi Arabia the species is an irregular, or possibly regular migrant in small numbers (P.Symens *pers.comm.*). Stagg (1985) does not mention it as occurring in south-western Saudi Arabia, but Stagg (1987) mentions three records from the Riyadh region. Table 1. shows the monthly distribution of these.

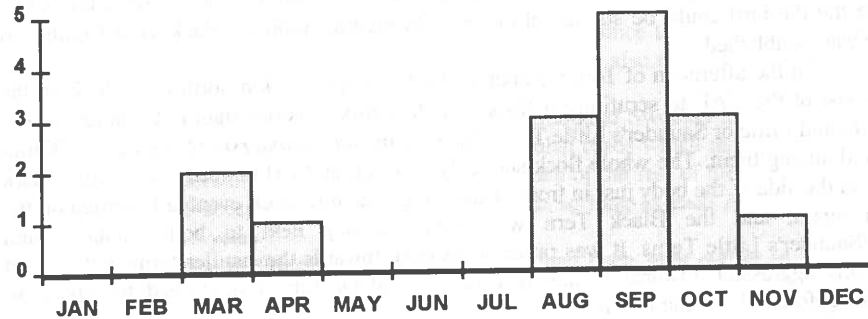


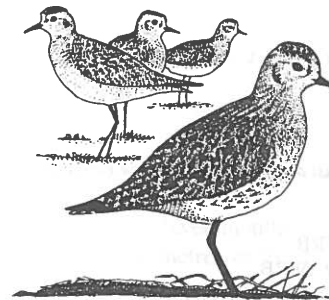
Table 1. The occurrence of Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* in the UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

These two records have been accepted by the Emirates Bird Records Committee as the first and second records.

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Golden Plover (foreground) with group of Pacific Golden Plovers

THE FIRST RECORD OF GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria* IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Erik Hirschfeld

On the morning of the 30th October 1993 I was busy ringing birds at Al Wathba Prison pools. I had completed a couple of rounds of the nets when I flushed a group of birds from a pool at about 7.00h. The majority of them were Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* with some Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, Little Stints *Calidris minutus* and a few duck *Anatidae*. One wader flew towards me instead of flying away and, without binoculars I identified it as a plover thinking, from its bulk, it was probably a Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*. I did not have to wonder much longer as it almost immediately called, and identified itself as a Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. The bird stayed in the vicinity of the site until at least January 1994 and was seen by several other birders.

Description

A bulky bird, rather unlike the slender, normally occurring Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva*. It had a rather square head and thicker wing-bases than Pacific and further differed by having completely white underwing and axillaries (grey in Pacific) and broad, white wingbars in flight (can sometimes be present on Pacific Golden Plover). It called on a number of occasions, a mellow whistling "pieew", completely different from Pacific's rather short and Spotted Redshank-like "chewitt". On at least one occasion the bird was seen feeding close to a Pacific Golden Plover, when the bulkiness in size of the Golden Plover was apparent, and on another occasion next to a (much bulkier) Grey Plover.

Distribution

Golden Plover breeds from western Europe to approximately 100°E in Siberia, wintering in western Europe, the Mediterranean and on the south shores of the Caspian Sea (Cramp *et al.* 1983). It is a common winter visitor in Iran (Scott 1994).

Occurrence in the Gulf

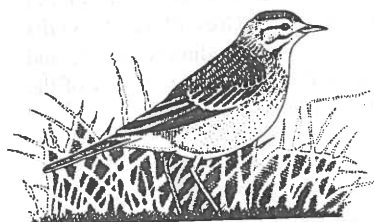
It is considered a scarce visitor to the Arabian Gulf states, possibly at times overlooked due to the regular presence of the more common Pacific Golden Plover in winter. The species is considered an irregular passage migrant in Saudi Arabia, mainly on coasts March to April and August to November (P.Symens *pers.comm.*). Stagg (1985 & 1987) mentions only one record (March) from south-western Saudi Arabia and considers it as a rare visitor to the Riyadh region with two certain records in September and November. Nightingale & Hill (1993) list five records for Bahrain December to March and there are five records in Oman October to January (*Oman Bird List Ed.4* 1994). One was reported at the

Emirates golf course in Dubai on 1st March 1994 (S.Aspinall pers.comm.), and is likely to become the second record for the UAE.

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THE BLYTH'S PIPIT STORY

Steve James

I want you to imagine a birdwatcher's nightmare, even worse than an eight-hour seawatch on the North Sea coast in winter. You leave for five minutes and on your return you've missed it, that bird of the day, that bird of the season - a lifer! You sit down surrounded by six smirking friends, all trying to play down the dream sighting - that you missed! The nightmare is just beginning.

It has happened to us all. My nightmare was on 5th November 1992 as I was walking around Abu Dhabi racecourse and I flushed an unidentified pipit, that just looked 'odd'. You set up your tripod and look through your telescope, slowly, your body goes rigid, the hairs on the back of your neck stand out and despite the Arabian heat, a chill wind blows on to your heart. You realise that you are all alone, that you are looking at a first for the United Arab Emirates and Arabia, but how do you prove it? You take rapid notes with a shaking hand and slowly check off all the ID features. Subtle as they are, your first impressions turn to cold, hard certainty. You've done it! You have discovered a bird seen only a few times before out of its Central Asian stronghold. The enigmatic Blyth's Pipit (*Anthus godlewskii*) has chosen this spot to materialise, to write itself into the ornithological record books! You walk closer, that extra pace does it - its head goes up and it takes flight.. This time different from before; it starts to climb and climb, rapidly gaining height, eventually flying high to the south, taking with it your dreams and any chance of the record being accepted by the ornithological community. 5th November 1992, a good day for your dreams to be blown away in the wind.

Of course, the rest is history, a one observer's sighting, no previous experience of the species, despite arriving on the same day as two White-capped Buntings (*Emberiza*

stewartii) in Dubai, the record is confined to the ornithological backwaters of uncertainty: a rejected record! Many of you reading this will have had similar experiences. But what do you do? You are certain, but the rarities committee are not - and they have the last word. But what do you do? The answer is, you go back, you work your area regularly, you wait and you find another Blyth's Pipit, and another and another! And so unfolds the incredible series of records in the UAE.

Eleven months later, I was again birdwatching Abu Dhabi racecourse, in fact within a hundred metres of the 1992 sighting. This time I flushed a Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*), then a Richard's (*A.richardi*). Great to have them side by side for comparison. Then it happened. A dark-looking, heavily streaked, short-tailed pipit flicked into the air and flew about eighty metres before landing again. It would probably have gone un-noticed but for its call 'pschoo', followed by a sharp 'chep'. In my experience pipits do not give funny calls, in fact one of the safest ways of identifying them is on their flight calls - sure they have variation, but variation within a set standard, which can be easily learnt. Even before the bird landed, on poor flight views, I knew that life had come full circle and that once again I was looking at a Blyth's Pipit.

Dusk on 11th October 1993 was not a good time to claim a rarity, especially a species that had merited so much debate in the not-so-distant past! Nevertheless I took the following description in fading light:

Size/shape: Size was slightly bigger than Tawny Pipit, but much smaller than the accompanying Richard's Pipits. This feature was extremely noticeable and, incredibly, the bird could be picked out in flight at over a hundred metres range on size alone! It was also much shorter legged and shorter tailed than Richard's Pipit. This short tailed appearance was very noticeable in flight, but also quite useful when the bird was on the ground. The head was very rounded and both the head and the bill were much smaller than Richard's Pipit.

Plumage differences from Richard's Pipit: The bird was in first-winter plumage, and in plumage was very similar to Richard's Pipit. However, the differences from Richard's included:

- a/ paler lores
- b/ smaller and less distinct supercilium, being much shorter behind the eye and not as broad.
- c/ fainter gular stripe.
- d/ slightly less streaked on the upper breast and without the coalescing of the streaks at the sides of the breast.

At the time, in the fading light I could discern no other noticeable differences in plumage. I knew to look for the pattern of the median coverts but on both Blyth's and Richard's they looked the same.

The three species of pipit were flushed at least 6 times. The Richard's Pipit called the normal flight call, so often heard in the United Kingdom - a very loud shrill 'screech' that can be heard over a great distance. The Tawny Pipit called the normal 'schlip' flight call. The Blyth's Pipit called a distinct 'pschloo', much softer and quieter than Richard's and about the loudness of a Tawny Pipit call. On every occasion this 'pschloo' flight call was followed by a 'chep', particularly upon landing. However, sometimes the 'chep' call was heard alone.

The Blyth's Pipit was more slender than the fat, pot-bellied Richard's Pipit and had a more horizontal carriage, lacking the upright stance of Richard's Pipit. The Blyth's was more skulking and quickly made use of the longer grass. In feeding action and jizz it was quite reminiscent of Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*).

The bill on the Blyth's Pipit was pale, slender and small and when seen in direct comparison with the more robust Richard's Pipit, the comparison was startling. The legs were

pale flesh, like Richard's but much shorter and when on sand, or perched on a nearby fence, the hind claw was much shorter than that of Richard's.

Upon arriving home, I rang a couple of friends to inform them that I was pretty certain I had found a Blyth's Pipit. Due to work I could not visit the site until late afternoon the following day. However Erik Hirschfeld promised to take a look in the morning.

EH phoned me the next day to inform me that he too thought the bird was a Blyth's Pipit and we arranged to meet for 'joint observation' in the afternoon. This time the light was excellent and the bird more approachable. Also the Richard's Pipit was still present for direct comparison. A much fuller set of field notes were made, by both observers and over a hundred photographs were taken.

The 13th October saw me once again just taking another look and I was pleased I did, I was seeing double, there were two Blyth's Pipits present. Other observers confirmed the sighting the next day and the two birds stayed in the same place until 6th November. Incredibly I found a third Blyth's Pipit at Mushref Palace gardens (500 metres away) on 18th October, at the same time as the two were still present at the racecourse.

5th November saw Erik Hirschfeld, Andrew Ross and the author birdwatching at Al Wathba camel racetrack. EH discovered an interesting looking pipit and attracted the attention of the other observers. The bird was watched closely and confirmed as a Blyth's Pipit. It then flew giving the characteristic flight call and landed next to two more Blyth's Pipits! After close study, we noted one bird was an adult and the other two were first-winter birds. There were also many Tawny Pipits and one Richard's Pipit for direct comparison.

6th November saw me again birdwatching Abu Dhabi racecourse and a Blyth's Pipit was present.

Unfortunately Al Wathba was not visited again until 19th November when two first-winter Blyth's were found by the author and Rob Queded. Al Wathba was infrequently visited during the next two months and there were no more records until an amazing five birds were discovered together on 13th February 1994 by EH and the author. I also found another one at Abu Dhabi racecourse on 17th March. EH discovered three birds at the Fujeirah National Dairy Farm, Dibba on 27th March. Finally, a party of visiting British birders found two still at Al Wathba on 29th March.

CONCLUSION

Since the first accepted record in October 1993 there have been many records of Blyth's Pipit in the Emirates, comprising a minimum of *fifteen individuals. Unless 1993 was an exceptional year, it would seem that Blyth's Pipit is a scarce but regular passage migrant and possible winter visitor to the area. Observers in neighbouring states should look out for Blyth's Pipit as it seems highly likely that it occurs as a visitor throughout Eastern Arabia.

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*possibly more than this at time of going to press - Ed.



Erik Hirschfeld

FIRST BLYTH'S REED WARBLERS *Acrocephalus dumetorum* IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

On the morning of the 5th May 1994 I was ringing migrants at Zabeel fish ponds, Dubai, as part of the National Avian Research Center's ringing scheme. My main target was to trap Marsh Warblers *A. palustris*, a species which was passing through in great numbers at the time. I erected the nets in the dark, and in my first catch caught fifteen Marsh Warblers, which kept me busy for some time. At 07.20h I extracted two *Acrocephalus*' from one net, but thought they were both Marsh Warblers at the time. I cleared the backlog of birds and then came back to one of these warblers. As soon as I measured the wing and saw the wing formula, I was aware that it was clearly not a Marsh Warbler. (See Table 1).

Description of bare parts and plumage of the Dubai individual

Lower mandible of bill pale, without dark tip. Rectrices with pale tips. General colouration olive-grey-brown, with a rusty tinge on rump which was not present on Marsh Warblers. Primary projection much slighter than both Reed and Marsh (several caught same day), tips of primaries did not extend to tip of upper tail coverts. Supercilium short and ended above the eye, no dark line bordering the top of the supercilium.

I kept the bird for half an hour as I knew that Colin Richardson would arrive later and both CR and myself took several photos of it before releasing it.

Additional birds trapped on Murawah Island

On the 23rd August 1994 the Abu Dhabi Shorebird Project ringing team, consisting of Jan Lontkowski, Michael Skakuj, Tadeusz Stawarczyk and myself were on Murawah preparing for the coming wader study. As there were some migrant passerines around we erected passerine nets around the buildings and caught one juvenile Blyth's Reed Warbler on the 23rd August and one adult and two juveniles on the morning of 24th August. Another six individuals were ringed on Murawah between 28th August and 11th September. These birds looked very similar to the Dubai individual and were released after being ringed, measured and, for most individuals, photographed (see Plates 7 & 8). At the same time, two Rose-coloured Starlings and one Black-headed Bunting were present on Murawah, indicating a migration of eastern species.

	Mean	SD	Range	n
Wing	62.6	2.0	59-65	11
notch	12.7	1.6	11-17	11
3p	48.5	1.3	47-50	10
Tail	51.3	2.3	27-53	6
Bill	17.4	0.8	16.1-19.0	11
Bill width	4.2	0.0	3.5-4.5	9
Tarsus	22.6	1.1	20.7-24.5	11
Tarsus width	1.7	0.1	1.4-1.9	10

Table 1. Measurements of the first eleven Blyth's Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus dumetorum* recorded in the UAE in 1994. Notch is measured on the second primary, 3P is the length of the third primary and bill is measured to skull.

Distribution

Blyth's Reed Warbler breeds in a belt stretching from the Baltic states to central Siberia, with the southern-most populations in northern Iran (Cramp *et al* 1992). In some parts of Siberia it is an extremely common bird (pers.obs) and the total population of this species must be large. Birds leaving their breeding grounds in late July and August migrate to wintering quarters from Pakistan to Burma, and return to their breeding areas in May (Cramp *et al* 1992).

Records in Arabia

Cramp *et al* (1992) does not mention Arabia as belonging to this species' normal migration route and suggests that wintering reports from tropical Africa probably refer to misidentified African Reed Warbler *A. baeticatus*. In Kuwait, Bundy & Warr (1980) state "several records of birds examined in the hand between April and early June, one July, one August and one September" and there is one record each from Bahrain in September 1977 (Nightingale & Hill 1993) and from Oman in April 1986 (Oman Bird List edition 4).

P. Symens (*pers. comm.*) mentions these records from Saudi Arabia: "...two trapped in the Riyadh region of Saudi Arabia in October 1991, and another three trapped in Jubail 28th August to 5th September 1992. PH suggests that the species is an overlooked, perhaps regular migrant along and adjacent to the Arabian Gulf, which endorses these UAE records. The species is notoriously difficult to identify in the field (eg Ellis *et al* 1994) and would therefore be easy to overlook for a non-ringing birder.

Although there have been a couple of recent claims of this species from the field in Abu Dhabi, the above individuals constituted the first acceptable for the country of this species. In connection with this it should also be mentioned that at least three, unringed, individuals believed to be this species were seen in the field on Murawah during the wader ringing project and several individuals were heard singing in reedbeds in Ruwais around the same dates as the autumn records described here (S. Aspinall *pers. comm.*).

Acknowledgements

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed kindly provided access and accommodation on Murawah Island. Peter Symens and Simon Aspinall are thanked for their essential input into this draft. The Abu Dhabi Shorebird Project was sponsored by ADCO, ADMA-OPCO, the

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NOT MORE NEW BARD NAMES

Colin Richardson

A good friend of mine (a member of the Bard Records Committee indeed), called me up the other day, and said he had his bard records ready for inclusion in the *Emirates Bard Report*. "Great!", I said, "pop them in the post and I'll edit them for the report."
 A summary follows, the results of his semi-legible handwriting.....

Greek Flamingo was thriving on Abu al Abyadh, while a **Honey Bazzard** had been found at Dhaid (unusual in the north of the country). More astonishing were the numbers of **Montagoose Harriers** seen on passage at a number of fodder fields throughout the country. Confirming my suspicions, a pair of **Bombany Falcon** were still hanging out at Hanging Gardens, something for the Oman Bard Records Committee to note. Some interesting waders had been reported at Abu al Abyadh, included the often confused **Cobbled Pratincole** and the regularly misidentified **Great** and **Lesser Sadlovers**. At inland wetlands, **Red-wattled Larping** was found at several nest sites, while migrant **Temminck Stork**, **Little Sit**, **Curler Sandpiper**, **Redhawk** and **Marsh Sedpiper** were usually feeding nearby.

A successful sea-watch turned up a few **Sanders Little** and **Sadwich Terns** at Ghagha, while a lot of patience searching the mountains at Fossil Valley ended in the flushing of a small party of **Lichtenwesters Snodgrasse**, the first record from that area.

Still expanding their range, **Rose-cupid Parakeet** were found at Delma and Ruwais. Proving difficult to find are those species which are more active at night, including several **Night Fars** at Abu al Abyadh and a **S.E.oul** on Das Island (this Korean subspecies is rarely found so far W) and on other neighbouring islands in May, while during a visit to George Chapman's garden in July he confirmed breeding of that most charming of all owls, the **Bruce's Scoop Owl**.

A couple of **Whynecks** were found in April, and why not, while at Ras Ghanada there was evidence of a new breeding species, **Lesser short-bred Lark**, (a species reared on a very unique diet, it seems).

One of the country's rarest species the **Grey Hypocolours** turned up in unusual numbers in February at Abu al Abyadh, while 9 species of wheater were found in just a few weeks in spring in the Western region. At Baynunah, a **Morning Wheater** was regular outside his camp window for several days after breakfast.

It was a good spring at Merawah for little brown jobs, where several big **Greek weed Warblers** and a **Glamorous Reed Warbler** turned up in beautiful breeding dresses.

In late summer flocks of **Brown-nosed Ravens** were everywhere, while several pairs **Great Gerrys** were still seen at the nest in June.

(Any resemblance to any bird name living or dead is purely co-incidental)

Not the Recorder's Report 1993

UNUSUAL EXAMPLES OF KLEPTOPARASITISM

Simon Aspinall

On 22nd May 1994 an Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* was seen pursuing a Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* about 30 metres above the ground over the fodder fields at Hamraniya (Ras al Khaimah). The lark was seen to be carrying a large food item, probably a grub, with the roller in hot pursuit about 30 metres above the ground and less than a metre behind. The chase continued across the open fields with the not specially aerobatic lark probably finally foiling the roller, which virtually stalled each time the former manoeuvred when it was caught up. Aerial piracy is not a food-gathering method known to be used by Indian Rollers.

Slightly later in the day a Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, also carrying a larva, was pursued in the same way by this or a different Indian Roller. Again however, the final result was not witnessed. There is an abundance of flying prey for rollers at this site but sub-surface grubs appear to be mostly unavailable to them, whereas larks and starlings seem to have no problem extricating them from the soil.

On 4th July 1944 a cock House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* was seen chasing a Rufous Bush Chat *Cercotrichas galactotes* through and around an unweeded grove of low date palms *Phoenix dactylifera* at Sweihan (Abu Dhabi). The entire chase took place less than a metre from the ground with much twisting and turning. On several occasions they both landed, hopped or ran forward under foliage through which flight was not possible, before continuing flying again. The chat flew with its legs dangling almost throughout the chase. This may have aided it elude the sparrow which otherwise frequently got left behind. Had the former stopped and swallowed the prey itself the sparrow would have surely been out of luck. However this was food bound for a hungry chick. The chase lasted for nearly two minutes and ended up with the sparrow successfully stealing the large larva. This was achieved when the chat, perhaps thinking it had finally shrugged off its pursuer, presented the grub to its own begging fledgling. At this point the sparrow darting in swiftly from the other side of the date palm and snatched the juicy looking morsel out of the adult chat's beak - just as it was leaning forward to drop it into the juveniles wide-open gape. This left the bush chat flirting its tail, its chick still begging and the sparrow departed.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Simon Aspinall would be interested to hear from anyone who witnesses similar examples of kleptoparasitism in Arabian birds. Also being collected, by the same correspondent, is data on vocal mimicry in the region and he would be interested in receiving any records anyone is able to provide. All information will be acknowledged and credited accordingly.

Simon Aspinall, National Avian Research Center, P.O. Box 9903, Sweihan, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

ASIAN WATERFOWL CENSUS

Simon Aspinall & Colin Richardson

JANUARY 1994

The winter count took place over several days in mid January 1994, and covered 22 sites, including 9 sites never covered before on the annual census. A total of 66,573 birds were counted, of which 42,016 were waders (shorebirds), 13,418 gulls and 1,920 terns. Significant numbers in other groups included 4,501 **Socotra Cormorants**, 1,488 **Mallard** and 24 **Marsh Harriers**.

Of the new sites covered, Merawah Island proved to be the most exciting, with 10,775 birds counted. The figure included 495 **Crab Plover** and 90 **Great Knot**, in addition to significant numbers of **Grey Plover** and **Charadrius** plovers and **Bar-tailed Godwit**. The numbers closely approached those at Khor Dubai, which was still the key site for significant numbers of **Ringed Plover**, **Redshank** and **Dunlin**. 76 **Broad-billed Sandpiper** were found there, a species scarcely reported elsewhere.

Ramtha tip held 78 **Black-necked Grebe** again this year, the highest number recorded in recent years. Surprising finds included 2 **Bewick's Swans** at the Nadd al Shiba golf course lake. This was the country's first record of the species and the first record in Arabia for many years.

SEPTEMBER 1994

Following the success of this year's winter wildfowl census (above), and knowing the importance of migrant shorebirds and their reliance on the country's wetlands, the National Avian Research Center put great efforts into this year's first official autumn waterfowl count.

The sites covered were virtually identical to those covered in the January census; missing only were Al Wathba, Bateen and the Bahrani island area. Of the 20 sites covered, new were extensive parts of the coast between Jebel Dhanna and Mirfa (Harmiyah) and the Creek golf club in Dubai. Of the data compiled there were as expected lower numbers of flamingo, wildfowl and gulls but larger numbers of terns. A comparison of some numbers proved revealing, with 456 **Grey Heron** (249 in Jan'94), 31 **Purple Heron** (1 in Jan'94) suggesting there must be onward autumn passage for these herons. While of waders, 735 **Sanderling** (258 in Jan'94) and 1199 **Turnstone** (364 in Jan'94), confirming what was suspected, and early southbound passage. **Curlew Sandpiper**, a well-known passage migrant, were difficult to separate and were probably the bulk of the 3463 unidentified *Calidrids* reported. The same may be true of **Little Stint**, whereas it was probably too early for numbers of **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Grey Plover** and **Dunlin** (but 214 **Great Knot** had managed to reach Merawah from Siberia!) Different species have different moult strategies; for example, some stop to moult elsewhere rather than flying to Arabia first and juveniles may arrive first or last depending on the species. Also, in a good year the populations of Arctic-breeding waders will include almost as many young as adults.

The total number of waders counted was 36,343, compared to 42,016 in January 1994, but with so many not identified to species we are not yet in a position to produce a cumulative peak total for a year in the UAE. Nonetheless it is estimated that one to three million waders pass through the country annually.

See Tables on following pages.

TOTAL SUMMARIES FROM TABLES

	January 1994	9-11 September 1994
GREBES-CRANES	9171	1251
WADERS (shorebirds)	42016	36343
GULLS	13541	2360
TERNs	1920	3300
Total	66,648	43,254

Asian Waterfowl Census - January 1994 - non-shorebirds										
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Ruwais	Merava h	Abu al Abyadh	Dhabyiah	Das Island	Al Wathba	Western Lagoon	Eastern Lagoon	Bateen Airp.lagoon	Bahrani island area
Little Grebe										
Black-necked Grebe								215	5	20
Great Cormorant	5		25							2492
Socotra Cormorant		2000			6					
Night Heron	1									4
Little Green Heron		1								
Indian Pond Heron								46		
Cattle Egret	2							14	7	5
Western Reef Heron	3	39	104	6	2		5			
Little Egret				1						
Great White Egret								8	2	
Grey Heron			11					17		7
Purple Heron										
Glossy Ibis								1		
Spoonbill			3					22		
Greater Flamingo		36	46					141	1	
Bewick's Swan										
White-fronted Goose								3		
Greylag Goose	7		5							
Egyptian Goose	3	8	60							
Shelduck										
Wigeon										
Gadwall										
Teal	8					20				
Mallard	2					15	5			
Pintail						2				
Shoveler	1					25				
Pochard						1				
Ferruginous Duck	1									
Tufted Duck										
Moorhen										
Coot	2									
Common Crane			3							
SUB-TOTAL	35	2084	257	7	8	63	10	467	15	2528
Sooty Gull						35				184
Great Black-headed		7	86	2						108
Black-headed Gull			24		500			3		1557
Slender-billed Gull		20	422	44			2390	2		715
Yellow-legged/Herring		30	376		1000		242	26		
Lesser Black-backed			10							
Unident. gulls										
TOTAL GULLS	0	57	918	46	1535	N/C	2632	31	0	2564
Gull-billed Tern							1			1
Caspian Tern		25	13	15				4		1
Swift Tern										205
Lesser Crested Tern		30	110							79
Sandwich Tern										241
Saunders' Little Tern		70	6	17						
Whiskered Tern	1									1000
Unident. terns										
TOTAL TERNS	1	125	129	32	0	0	1	4	0	1527

United Arab Emirates													
Emirates golf course	Khor Dubai	Nad al Shiba G.C.	Zabeel fish ponds	Ramtha lagoons	Khor al Beilah	Al Jazeerah Khor	Dhayah/Rams	Khor Kaiba/beach	Fujairah-Dibba	Ayn al Faydah	Al Ain Sewage plant	TOTALS	
2		4	5	6								21	Little Grebe
3		2	1	78							4	84	Black-necked Grebe
	63		20	41				1				395	Great Cormorant
					3							4501	Socotra Cormorant
			26									27	Night Heron
			1									6	Little Green Heron
								1				1	Indian Pond Heron
	33			13	1							62	Cattle Egret
			3	76	4	16	19	6	7			349	Western Reef Heron
			3	5	5							14	Little Egret
	21		5	9		5	11		1	1		63	Great White Egret
			1									1	Purple Heron
	109		8	25	1	57	7	1	1	5		249	Grey Heron
				1								2	Glossy Ibis
	29			8		11						73	Spoonbill
2	844	1		57	18	19	182		2			1349	Greater Flamingo
		2										2	Bewick's Swan
				6								3	White-fronted Goose
												18	Greylag Goose
	2			1								71	Egyptian Goose
2	3	13										3	Shelduck
7		17										18	Wigeon
9	47	2	13	59								24	Gadwall
28	716		140	10			120		15	6		179	Teal
	18		2	2					450			1486	Mallard
			4	56					3			27	Pintail
3		3	1	4					1			87	Shoveler
		1										12	Pochard
			1	3								2	Ferruginous Duck
			7									4	Tufted Duck
												7	Moorhen
6		4	3	14								29	Coot
												3	Common Crane
62	1885	49	244	474	31	109	339	9	11	479	6	9171	SUB-TOTAL
												35	Sooty Gull
	2		8			166	11	61	123			650	Great Black-headed
	650		40	726				101	830			2982	Black-headed Gull
	172		1	1		647			2			5258	Slender-billed Gull
			1			29	25	130	781			3355	Yellow-legged/Herring
					1							11	Lesser Black-backed
							1250					1250	Unident. gulls
0	824	N/C	60	727	1	842	1286	292	1736	0	0	13541	TOTAL GULLS
	10		3		1	4	3					22	Gull-billed Tern
	17						2					77	Caspian Tern
								1				2	Swift Tern
												345	Lesser Crested Tern
	12								1			92	Sandwich Tern
						4	4					342	Saunders' Little Tern
						15	3					19	Whiskered Tern
								21				1021	Unident. terns
0	39	0	3	15	1	11	30	1	1	0	0	1920	TOTAL TERNS

Asian Waterfowl Census - January 1994 - shorebirds											
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Ruwais	Merawah	Abu al Abyadh	Dhabyah	Das Island	Al Wathba	Western Lagoon	Eastern Lagoon	Bateen airp.lagoon	Bahrani Island	Khor Dubai
Oystercatcher		83	54	57				2		27	124
Black-winged Stilt	2							2			
Crab Plover		495	6								
Little Pratincole											
Ringed Plover	1	1	1				21	76	35	1	494
Little Ringed Plover			1								
Kentish Plover		146	169	645			120	25	150	3	1700
Lesser Sand Plover		1145	996	185					5	19	350
Greater Sand Plover		130	69	120						1	
Charadrius sp.		1290	1654								
Caspian Plover			1								
Pacific Golden Plover			4							46	51
Grey Plover		693	213	163			7	2	4	6	730
Red-wattled Lapwing											
White-tailed Plover											
Lapwing											
Great Knot		90	7								
Sanderling		112	35	29						55	1
Little Stint	1		4	12			68	8	50	1	537
Temminck's Stint								6			
Curlew Sandpiper		12	558	33			26	101		3	270
Dunlin		2095	1207	777			24	9		8	3200
Broad-billed Sandpiper				15							76
Ruff									7		
Jack Snipe							1				
Common Snipe						2	67				
Pintail Snipe											
Black-tailed Godwit											50
Bar-tailed Godwit		1704	716	257			3	90		107	1500
Whimbrel		23	86	1				16		1	
Curlew		26	165	22			14	2	7	24	3
Redshank	1	351	915	58			79	67	130		1175
Marsh Sandpiper											
Greenshank		63	78	36			2	37		4	
Green Sandpiper											
Wood Sandpiper											
Terek Sandpiper		2	67	7			16	4			118
Common Sandpiper	1	1	1		1		4	37	2	3	
Turnstone		42	167	57					19	22	43
Unidentified waders sp.			1200	3455					150		2000
TOTAL WADERS	6	8504	8374	5929	1	2	452	484	559	331	12422

United Arab Emirates												
Emirates golf course	Nad al Shiba G.C.	Zabeel fish ponds	Ramtha lagoons	Khor al Beidah	Al Jazeerah Khor	Dhayah/Rams	Khor Kalba/beach	Fujeirah-Dibba	Ayn al Faydah	Al Ain sewage plant	TOTALS	
				30	8	27	23				435	Oystercatcher
			112						6	5	127	Black-winged Stilt
				360							861	Crab Plover
	1										1	Little Pratincole
16					35	6					690	Ringed Plover
1		3							2	7	7	Little Ringed Plover
40					37	89	21		1		3146	Kentish Plover
14					12						2726	Lesser Sand Plover
				400		10	9				739	Greater Sand Plover
											2944	Charadrius sp.
											1	Caspian Plover
104		2									207	Pacific Golden Plover
		13	5				9				1845	Grey Plover
		4	1						4		9	Red-wattled Lapwing
			2						1		3	White-tailed Plover
									1		1	Lapwing
											97	Great Knot
							26				258	Sanderling
			95		313	29			86		1204	Little Stint
						8			32		46	Temminck's Stint
											1003	Curlew Sandpiper
	1					3			2		7326	Dunlin
7	1	2									91	Broad-billed Sandpiper
5		3				2			11		28	Ruff
44		7									11	Jack Snipe
13									2		122	Common Snipe
											13	Pintail Snipe
											50	Black-tailed Godwit
											4750	Bar-tailed Godwit
				65		308					133	Whimbrel
				1	2	3					358	Curlew
				60	18	6	9	2			3049	Redshank
7		7	160	44	54	1					5	Marsh Sandpiper
1				1	3						270	Greenshank
		14		28	4	4					5	Green Sandpiper
		4							1		16	Wood Sandpiper
		7							9		227	Terek Sandpiper
				1	10	2					66	Common Sandpiper
					3	13					364	Turnstone
				4	7	1	2				8782	Unidentified waders sp.
				627	1075	275						
252	3	4	272	1713	1593	843	104	2	6	160	42016	TOTAL WADERS

Asian Waterfowl Census - 9-11 September 1994 - non-shorebirds																						
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Ruwais	J.Dhanna-Harmiyah	Merawah	Abu al Abyadh	Dhabyah	Das Island	Western Lagoon	Eastern Lagoon	Khor Dubai	Zabeel fish ponds	Emirates golf course	Creek G.C.	Ramtha lagoons	Ajman Khor	Khor al Beidah	Al Jazeerah Khor	Dhayah/Rams	Khor Kaiba	Fujeirah-Dibba	Al Ain sewage plant	TOTAL	
Little Grebe										14	2		10									26
Black-necked Grebe													1									1
Great Cormorant									1							4	1					94
Socotra Cormorant		30	6	3		50																15
Night Heron									15										2	1		11
Little Green Heron			3					1		2			2					2	1			1
Cattle Egret										1												357
Western Reef Heron	3	10	66	27	15		1	3	19	32	10	1		9	4	40	83	26	5	3		13
Little Egret	1									12												9
Great White Egret										1			2		2	2					10	456
Grey Heron	2		2	4		7	2	1	209	20	1		11	7	9	40	121		5	6	12	31
Purple Heron				2						6												8
Spoonbill										8												131
Greater Flamingo			4	11						44			72									10
Egyptian Goose			10								7	1	18		2	12						50
Garganey					10						6											6
Mallard											3	5										9
Shoveler	1																	10				10
Unident. ducks																						1
Water Rail	1																					4
Moorhen	2		1								2	1		1								11
TOTAL	10	40	92	47	25	58	5	21	302	92	28		0	110	11	63	129	167	12	25	14	1251
Sooty Gull						100							37							33	11	181
Black-headed Gull										2								18	2			22
Slender-billed Gull			2	11	4	1			8	264			175	12	20	26	11					534
Yellow-legged/Herring			19	8	11	7	60		8	220	3	92		9		14	27	380	105			963
Lesser Black-back																	55					55
Unident. gulls																50	555					605
TOTAL GULLS	0	21	19	15	8	160	0	16	484	5	0	129	175	70	40	666	415	116				2360
Gull-billed Tern							5	1	10	8					21	6						51
Caspian Tern			6	1					1	16												28
Swift Tern						50																50
Lesser Crested Tern				4	14					100					6		7	16	4			151
Sandwich Tern				1						33					1	3		6				44
Saunders' Little Tern			31	14	30	29				2			187	18	2	8		151	16			488
Whiskered Tern	1							1			5	1					8					8
White-cheeked Tern			127	43		1500				6								80	64			1829
Common Tern				2														62	180			244
White-winged Black										1	1	1							1			4
Bridled Tern			4			2																6
Unident. terns													12	30		255		100				397
TOTAL TERNS	1	158	72	47	30	1652	6	2	68	14	2	0	199	24	54	32	275	304	360	0		3300

Asian Waterfowl Census - 9-11 September 1994 - shorebirds																						
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Ruwais	J.Dhanna-Harmiyah	Merawah	Abu al Abyadh	Dhabyah	Das Island	Western Lagoon	Eastern Lagoon	Khor Dubai	Zabeel fish ponds	Emirates golf course	Creek G.C.	Ramtha lagoons	Ajman Khor	Khor al Beidah	Al Jazeerah Khor	Dhayah/Rams	Khor Kaiba	Fujeirah-Dibba	Al Ain sewage plant	TOTAL	
Oystercatcher		8	128	52	62				12	120					6	71	18	35	10	2		524
Cream-c. Courser											4											4
Black-winged Stilt	2										4	1	193								15	215
Avocet												1										1
Crab Plover			315	186	57									25	155	11	1					750
Ringed Plover		14	3	9	7		47		300		5		4	16						1		406
Little Ringed Plover					1	1					2										5	9
Kentish Plover		58	873	120	608	1	112	3	1000		62			60	45	83	24	18	2	2		3071
Lesser Sand Plover		33	1933	1916	300		116	6	200					7	125	8	54	1				4699
Greater Sand Plover		15	4	165	24	5		1						3		11						228
Charadrius sp.		122			1630				2095					52								3899
Pacific Golden Plover	4		1								84			20		22						131
Grey Plover		12	550	233	78		9	10	420						30	2	39	1				1384
Red-wattled Lapwing											5	26	21									52
Great Knot			214																			214
Sanderling		3	214	327	172														12	7		735
Red-necked Stint					1																	1
Little Stint	3	2	10	15	84		135	70	173		27	1		16	200	16	25				43	820
Temminck's Stint											5		5		45						19	74
Curlew Sandpiper		4	12	361	54		27	3						5	1	30						497
Dunlin		51	977	1125	148		8	1						6	125	36	15					2492
Unident. Calidrids					463					3000												3463
Broad-bill. Sandpiper		2		8			7		84					1	1	4	6					113
Ruff					1				2		15	1	3				20					42
Common Snipe										2	7											9
Pintail Snipe											2											2
Black-tailed Godwit									21					9	27	35		10				102
Bar-tailed Godwit		16	1619	587	141		33	7	410					2	150	425	11	1	6			3408
Whimbrel		1	2	103	9		7	26	1		4			5	1	26		39	2	5		231
Curlew		7	21	163	15		4	7	53					2	49	43	31	49	1	3		448
Spotted Redshank			4																			4
Redshank	1	25	397	814	40		73	14	710		1	4	3	30	205	116	17		11			2461
Marsh Sandpiper											1					5						6
Greenshank	1		27	60	95		2	1	13												1	208
Green Sandpiper			7								1	1	4									14
Wood Sandpiper	1										2		1									5
Terek Sandpiper		27	14	147	9		13	12	9					12	15	101	20	1				380
Common Sandpiper	1		1	3			3	9			5	3	2	2		2	1	2	7	2	2	45
Turnstone		34	71	740	50	5	1	17	98					16	5	22	73	27	40			1199
Red-neck. Phalarope											1											1
Kittlitz's Plover			1												2							71
Unidentified waders sp.		565	940	770	1250									380		20						3925
TOTAL WADERS	13	999	8339	7904	5299	11	598	199	8710	15	293	23	269	359	1664	945	454	82	79	88		36343

Notes and News

A SUCCESSFUL AUTUMN

Erik Hirschfeld, organiser of this year's Abu Dhabi Shorebird Project (ADSP), has announced a very successful 1994 autumn. The project team's brief included trapping and measuring shorebirds and other migrants, counting wader populations and examining samples to identify the invertebrate population in the intertidal mud. The team, including top field ornithologists from Poland, France and Holland, was based on Murawah Island covered as much shoreline as was accessible. The results of the autumn survey have not yet been fully analysed but certainly confirm NARC's findings that Abu Dhabi Emirate holds a much larger population of shorebirds than was previously believed.

A total of 466 birds of 58 different species were trapped. Of the 300 shorebirds ringed, the most common was Bar-tailed Godwit, followed by Sanderling, Grey Plover, Lesser Sand Plover and Dunlin. Four new species for the country were discovered during the period of the survey from late August to mid September, River Warbler, Kittlitz's Sand Plover, Red-necked Stint and Lesser Noddy. A parallel study of Broad-billed Sandpipers discovered the presence of 2 colour-ringed birds, known to have been ringed by teams on the Black Sea, so providing additional evidence of a central Asian flyway for this species.

The species and numbers of birds ringed:

Little Green Heron	1	Common Tern	1	Reed Warbler	1
Crab Plover	14	White-cheeked Tern	1	Clamorous Reed Warbler	8
Oystercatcher	8	Saunders' Little Tern	2	Blackcap	1
Kentish Plover	22	Turtle Dove	1	Garden Warbler	2
Ringed Plover	2	Hoopoe	5	Common Whitethroat	2
Greater Sand Plover	2	Wryneck	1	Lesser Whitethroat	3
Lesser Sand Plover	38	Hoopoe Lark	1	Desert Lesser Whitethroat	8
Grey Plover	42	Blyth's Pipit	1	Menetries' Warbler	5
Sanderling	47	Yellow Wagtail	1	Willow Warbler	1
Dunlin	38	Swallow	6	Spotted Flycatcher	3
Curlew Sandpiper	16	Sand Martin	2	Golden Oriole	1
Little Stint	2	House Martin	1	Great Grey Shrike	3
Bar-tailed Godwit	56	Rufous Bush Chat	1	Isabelline Shrike	1
Whimbrel	3	Olivaceous Warbler	20	Woodchat Shrike	1
Greenshank	1	River Warbler	1	Common Rosefinch	4
Redshank	10	Savi's Warbler	1	Yellow-throated Sparrow	6
Common Sandpiper	2	Citrine Wagtail	2	Ortolan Bunting	4
Terek Sandpiper	9	Great Reed Warbler	1	Black-headed Bunting	1
Turnstone	4	Blyth's Reed Warbler	10		
Slender-billed Gull	1	Marsh Warbler	1		

Among the exciting discoveries, a (possibly) regular autumn migration route over the south-western Gulf island (off Abu Dhabi emirate) for Blyth's Reed Warbler was suspected, judging by the trapping of ten individuals on Murawah Island from late August to September (see page 113). Large numbers of Great Knot, with over 600 being unprecedented, were found regularly on the mudflats off Murawah Island in September. Unfortunately none were ringed but new theories as to their status and occurrence are already in preparation. While in Abu Dhabi in August (1994), Erik Hirschfeld trapped two Reed Warblers which he had ringed only the previous spring. One had been caught at exactly the same location in Bateen Wood in April 1994 and the other even more astonishingly had been ringed at its breeding site in Dubai, 160 kms distant, in May 1994. This dynamic migrant had only started breeding in the country in 1992 so it was interesting to be able to log its migration route so quickly!

Erik Hirschfeld co-ordinated the input from a number of national and international sponsors, including ETISALAT, Total oil, LOT Polish airlines and the National Avian Research Center (NARC). NARC and the Wildlife Research Centre in Dubai hope to pool their resources in a similar project focussing on the Broad-billed Sandpiper in spring 1995.

Findings from the study will be published in a number of international journals and a final report on the project will be published by the ADSP this winter.
See also page 92 for a report on phase I of the project which commenced in autumn 1993.

RARITIES COMMITTEE FORMED IN KUWAIT

In March 1994 an initiative was taken to establish a rarities committee in Kuwait and the newly created Kuwait Ornithological Rarities Committee (KORC) held its first meeting on 3rd April 1994. The Committee confirmed Charles Pilcher as Chairman and agreed that during the first year the duties of Secretary would also attach to that position. The three other members complete the Committee include Peter Cowan, S.Thomas Spencer and George Gregory (who replaced Bryon Wright in October 1994).

The function of the Committee is to assess reports of rare birds in Kuwait with a view to their inclusion in the Country List. It will operate according to the guidelines agreed at the international meeting of rarities committees in the Netherlands in October 1991. Because of its smaller than optimal membership the KORC will call on expertise as a regular practice, in accordance with Guideline 11 (*British Birds* 86:301-30, 1993). The Committee will also undertake a review of old, exceptional records as recommended in Guideline 8.

Observers are requested to submit their records to Professor Charles Pilcher, Faculty of Medicine, P.O. Box 24923 Safat, Kuwait.

SHARJAH DESERT MUSEUM

Work on a desert park and natural history museum beside the Dhaid highway, about 30 km. from Sharjah is likely to be finished early in 1995. The museum will be the first of its kind in the country and will feature a number of other special video and visual effects plus bird and animal displays. The centre-piece will be a landscape diorama, a huge model cross-section of Sharjah emirate from the Arabian Gulf coast to the Gulf of Oman featuring photographs of over 30 bird species and several mounted bird displays. There will be emphasis on Khor Kalba, the last stronghold of White-collared Kingfisher, and on other species whose ranges are mostly restricted to Arabia including Socotra Cormorant, Saunders' Little Tern, Sand Partridge, Hume's Wheatear and Arabian Babbler. The project is a joint venture, designed by Peter Hudson Buckle of Sharjah and James Gardner 3D concepts in London, for HH The Ruler of Sharjah. Local advisors on the project include Christian Gross (mammals and taxidermy), Marijke Jongbloed (general, including mammals) and Colin Richardson (birds).

ASIAN WATERFOWL CENSUS 1987-91

The Asian Wetland Bureau (AWB) and the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) have published a summary of the results of all the waterfowl census' undertaken since they began in 1987. The 32 participating countries of the Asian region stretch from Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the west to Japan in the east, and from Kazakhstan and Mongolia in the north to Papua New Guinea in the south. Altogether 3,109 wetlands were counted at least once, covering 299 species of waterfowl. Ramsar Criteria were used to identify sites of international importance and these are listed in one of the appendices. Five sites are credited to the United Arab Emirates, 2 of which have since been destroyed (Khor Khan and Al Ghar Lakes). Al Ghar lake held at a peak, 490 Black-winged Stilts (over 1% of the region's breeding population) while Khor Khan was unique in hosting 49,000 Black-headed Gulls (!) in January 1991. Of the other 3 sites, Khor Dubai is recognised for its high populations of Lesser Sand Plover, Kentish Plover, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Black-headed Gull, while Khor al Beidah and Dhabyah for their high average numbers of wintering Lesser Sand Plover.

The 372 page A4-sized report (ISBN 983-9663-13-5), contains over 200 excellent maps and is entitled *The Asian Waterfowl Census 1987-91: Distribution and status of Asian Waterfowl*, authored by Christian Perennou, Taej Mundkur and Derek Scott and is available from: The Sales Unit, Asian Wetland Bureau, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Malaya, Lembah Pantai, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, price (including p&p) \$31 Surface or \$39 Airmail (rates applicable to Arabia/Asia only).

RINGING RECOVERIES

A **Great Black-headed Gull** *L. ichthyaetus* was found shot on Jumeirah beach, Dubai on 9th January carried a Moscow ring, trapped as a juvenile in the Astrakhan delta on 25th January 1991. This reinforces the knowledge that most of this species, common in late winter in the UAE comes from breeding colonies along the northern Caspian Sea. Peter Hellyer kindly dealt with all correspondence with the BTO and passed the information to the EBRC.

The other two were as follows:

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Ringed: One adult ringed Bateen Wood, Abu Dhabi 10th April 1994, by Erik Hirschfeld.

Controlled: Bateen Wood 25th August 1994 by the Abu Dhabi Shorebird Project.

Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*

Ringed: One breeding adult (brood patch noted) Zabeel fish ponds, Dubai 4th May 1994 by EH

Controlled: Bateen Wood 1st September 1994 by ADSP.

These two exciting trappings show that (at least some) migrating Reed Warblers use Batten Wood during their northbound and southbound migration. In addition, an adult ringed at one of Arabia's only known breeding sites, in Dubai, migrated south after breeding to be caught in Abu Dhabi over 150 km. away in Abu Dhabi. We now have a precise departure date of a breeding Reed Warbler from its nest site in Dubai.

MEWI (Middle East Wetlands Inventory)

An inventory of Middle East wetlands is being prepared jointly by IUCN, the Ramsar Convention bureau, IWRB and BirdLife International, with funding from WWF. A single volume entitled 'A Directory of Wetlands in the Middle East' is due to be published by mid 1995. All sites of national and international importance will be documented for each country. Within the UAE 24 such sites were identified, these varying in size from less than 200 ha. to 478,000 ha. Any area to six metres below sea level is eligible for inclusion. The UAE section was prepared by the National Avian Research Center, with individual sites accounts written by Simon Aspinall, Peter Hellyer, Marijke Jongbloed and Colin Richardson. *Contributed by Simon Aspinall.*

ISLAND SURVEYS

NARC's rolling programme of visits to western Abu Dhabi islands continued in 1994. Simon Aspinall, Kara Rawden, Colin Richardson and Maarten Verhage took part in a two-week cruise in June which surveyed the breeding wildlife of some forty different islands. Many were being landed on by such a survey hit-squad for the first time. The results, to be published in full in due course, showed vastly more seabirds than had been expected: Bridled Terns *Sterna anaethetus* >40,000 pairs, White-cheeked Tern *S. repressa* >21,000 pairs, Lesser Crested Tern *S. benghalensis* 24,500 pairs and Swift Tern *S. bergii* 1256 pairs. Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii* was newly found on Dayinah (20+ pairs) which, together with the 215 pairs on the well-known Qarnayn, constitute the only two Arabian Gulf colonies. Certain islands excelled, notably Qarnayn with 14,600 pairs of Bridled Tern, 20,000 pairs of Lesser Crested Tern and the UAE's sole Swift Tern colony; Ushsh and Ghasha each with over 2700 pairs of White-cheeked Tern and the latter also with c.6500 pairs of Bridled Tern. Muhaiymat with 4050 pairs of Lesser Crested Tern (see Plate 15) and Dayinah with over 6500 pairs of both White-cheeked and Bridled Terns to name just a few. All these colonies represent internationally important concentrations of those species names. The data obtained so timely was incorporated in MEWI accounts (see above). New breeding sites were found of Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* although these will require surveying in their winter breeding season. Other finds included 12-15 pairs of Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*, no fewer than ten islands with turtle nesting beaches and a herd of Dugong *Dugong dugon* west of Abu al Abyadh. Archaeological sites were also noted.

All was not rosy however and several islands known to have been important for seabirds in the past were found sadly, to be completely abandoned. These included Zirku, Arzanah and Delma. The rapid survey has laid foundation for follow-up surveys, monitoring and research and very importantly

identified existing and potential threats in each site thus allowing a prioritised conservation programme to be brought into effect.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

ON SOCOTRA CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*

Socotra Cormorant is endemic to Arabia and all but one of its presently known breeding colonies lie within the Arabian Gulf. There are possibly now only eleven extant colonies from a historical minimum of 28 formerly occupied sites (at least 8 sites have been lost in the UAE for example). In view of the small number of colonies and despite a world population estimated to lie between 500,000 and 1 million individuals there are grave fears for the conservation of the species, which continues to be persecuted and has been evicted from several breeding sites by development for example, it is not known whether displaced birds were able to relocate or may have been absorbed by other existing colonies. Starting in the winter breeding season of 1994/5 an international effort is being made by Gulf States to accurately census those remaining colonies and monitor breeding performance. This involves researchers in Saudi Arabia (3 colonies), Bahrain (1), Qatar (1) and the UAE (5). Initial results suggest the true world breeding population of Socotra Cormorant to be lower than previously thought. The current situation is to be summarised in the newsletter of the Cormorant Study Group of IWRB with the results of the 1994/5 international survey to be widely reported in 1995.

BIRDS IN BAHRAIN

A 3 year study of the migration patterns and status of all the birds found on Bahrain during the period 1990-92 has been documented by Erik Hirschfeld and will shortly be published. It contains some new information following the publication of the standard work by Nightingale & Hill (1993). There are some in-depth wader studies, including charts and graphs of their occurrence and frequency. It will include a full country checklist and information on every species' status. It is hoped that this flurry of books on Bahrain's birdlife will entice the authorities in Bahrain to take more care of their island. The book contains a number of line drawings by young Swedish artist Hans Larsson. For more details please contact Erik Hirschfeld, Sodra Forstadsgatan 62, S-211 43 Malmö, Sweden.

BAHRAIN BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

A bird records committee has been set up in Bahrain under the chairmanship of Dr. Saeed Mohamed and will meet at least annually. Records should be sent to Howard King, the country's Bird Recorder, who can be contacted on tel: Bahrain 742739. A thorough annotated checklist for the second half of 1993 was published in the May 1994 edition of the Bahrain Natural History Society Newsletter.

BIRD STAMPS FOR CHRISTMAS

The UAE General Postal Authority have commissioned a set of stamps illustrating the country's birdlife. The series will consist of 20 stamps over a period of 5 years. The first of the series will be issued on 12th December 1994 and will portray Indian Roller, Little Green Bee-eater, Crab Plover and White-collared Kingfisher. A souvenir sheet will feature a flock of Greater Flamingos. Future species to be featured will include Socotra Cormorant, Sooty Falcon, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Hume's Wheatear. The set for 1994 have been painted by Margaret Henderson. This is the country's first ever set of birds stamps and is in line with the Government's current stress on protecting the environment.

BIRDWATCHING TOURS

Seven birdwatching tour groups are expected to visit the Emirates from Europe during the 1994/5 season. The companies sending groups in 1995 include *Sunbird*, *Birdquest*, *WOLFTRAIL* of Holland and *Animal Watch* of the UK. The *Sunbird* tour scheduled to arrive in the UAE on 27th October 1995 is being run in co-operation with the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, and paid-up members will be entitled to a 10% discount. A group from Switzerland, promoted by the journal *Nos Oiseaux*, are due at the time of going to press and will be the first tour of the 1994 autumn season.

Most tours spend about 11 days in the Emirates, visiting all the best bird sites, providing a trip list in excess of 180 species. The key birds for the autumn tour will be Socotra Cormorant, White-tailed Plover, White-cheeked Tern, Eastern Pied Wheatear and Plain Leaf Warbler. The tours are organised by Colin Richardson, who also leads the tours.

EVEN MORE VISITING BIRDWATCHERS

London Bird Report editor Mark Hardwick arrived in the UAE on 25th March 1994 with a group of colleagues for a birding trip of the Emirates, and left after an intensive 11 days with 189 species under their belt. According to Mark, the trip was a great success and exceeded all expectations. They were all amazed to be able to see most of the 'specialities' well with not another birdwatcher in sight for most of the time. 34 wader species were welcomed and some of the surprise bonuses included Lanner, Blyth's Pipit, Hypocolius, Hume's Lesser Whitethroat and Spanish Sparrow. Surprisingly absent were White-throated Robin and Semi-collared Flycatcher. A very informative trip report with maps, itinerary and species list are available price 5.50 pounds from Mark Hardwick, The Garden Flat, 13 Southcote Road, London N19 5BJ. All sales proceeds will go to OSME.

OCTOBER BIRDWATCH WEEKEND

A dedicated band of observers were mobilised in the UAE during the weekend of 9-10th October 1994, to log a very respectable (exceptional) 194 species. The highlights included Lappet-faced Vulture, Lesser Kestrel, Barbary Falcon, Spotted Crake, Houbara, White-tailed Plover, Great & Pintail Snipe, 11 species of terns, Richard's Pipit, White-throated Robin, Upcher's & Menetries' Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Masked Shrike, Common Rosefinch and Yellow-throated Sparrow. 36 species were exclusively recorded in the UAE alone, surprisingly including Pallid Swift, Desert Lark, Lesser Grey Shrike, Nightingale, Lesser Whitethroat and House Bunting. It seems some migration routes and Afro-tropical wintering areas need to be concentrated on more during the next *World BirdWatch* which is due to take place in 1995.

BBC WILDLIFE DOCUMENTARY ON GOLF COURSE

A BBC film crew spent 4 days in Dubai in late November filming sequences for an edition of the *Natural World* production to be screened in March 1995. The episode is entitled *Survival of the fittest* and explores the amazing variety of wildlife found on golf courses and other man-made outdoor sporting facilities. The Emirates golf club was chosen as one of the best examples of this and the producer, Andrew Cooper, was not disappointed. Over 30 species of birds were featured, many in full-frame close up, including Cream-coloured Courser, Black-winged Stilt, Pintail Snipe, Little Green Bee-eater, Stonechat and Isabelline Shrike as well as a number of butterflies, dragonflies and plants. There is also an amusing item featuring an Ethiopian Hedgehog. More will be revealed in March!

COLOUR-RINGED GULLS

The Voorne Bird Observatory have advised us of a number of projects which took place in summer 1994 involving the placing of coloured rings on gulls' legs. Observers should look out for Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls with white, green or orange PVC rings from Holland, black rings from Latvia, red rings from the Ukraine or white rings on Heuglin's Gulls from Siberia. If anyone should see or find such a bird in the Emirates (or elsewhere) they should contact their local bird recorder or phone the Voorne observatory at: Netherlands (0) 1815-4816.

Journals and Newsletters

ARABIAN WILDLIFE

The first two editions of Arabia's first wildlife magazine *Arabian Wildlife* have been published in 1994. The articles are of great local interest, authored by experts living in the region. The general quality of the A4-sized journal is high. Issue No.1 contains articles on the failure of the UAE's Greater Flamingo colony in 1993 and a feature on the public concern on environmental matters in the UAE, as well as a summary of the progress on ABBA and on mammals and marine life in Oman and Saudi Arabia. No.2 covers Houbara, Dugongs and mountain flowers of the UAE. There is a nice article on the birds of Al Ansab lagoons in Muscat and both issues are punctuated by a selection of superb photographs by Mike Hill and Hanne & Jens Eriksen. Issue No.3 is due out in December 1994. Issue No.4, currently in preparation, will focus on Eco-tourism in Arabia, including the UAE. Subscriptions obtained from Marijcke Jongbloed, P.O. Box 12119, Dubai, will support the Arabian Leopard Trust.

PHOENIX 10

Phoenix 10, published in December 1993, contains many interesting articles on Arabia's 255-odd breeding birds. Compiled by Mike Jennings for the ABBA project and largely financed by the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development in Saudi Arabia, this edition announces the completion of the Interim Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia, due for publication soon. There are articles on new breeding species, Greater Flamingo and Corn Bunting in the UAE, Malachite Kingfisher in Yemen, further news on the Mountain Nightjar in south-west Saudi Arabia and a summary of the OSME spring 1993 Yemen survey. There is a table listing key towns in Arabia in terms of their importance for breeding birds. Top of the list in Arabia is square VA27, containing the cities of Dubai and Sharjah, with a staggering 86 species shown as at least potential breeders, 37 of them confirmed. *Phoenix* is free to all contributors and correspondents, from Michael C. Jennings, Co-ordinator ABBA, 1 Warners Farm, 2 Warners Drove, Somersham, Cambridgeshire, PE17 3HW, UK.

REPORT ON BREEDING SURVEYS IN OMAN, UAE & NORTHERN SAUDI

An ABBA report by Mike Jennings *et al* on atlasing surveys Nos. 11 & 12 carried out in parts of Oman and the United Arab Emirates in February/March 1992 and in northern Saudi Arabia in April/May 1992 was published by NCWCD in August this year. The report, which contains breeding maps and a number of colour habitat photographs, documents possible breeding Eurasian Cuckoo in the UAE and Musandam (Oman) and extensions of known range for a number of species in Saudi Arabia. 233 species were recorded in total during the survey, including 10 Lappet-faced Vultures (the largest flock recorded) in the UAE and the second record of Woodpigeon for Saudi Arabia. Copies of the report are available price 12 pounds sterling each (inc. p&p) from Mike Jennings (address as under *Phoenix 10*).

OMAN BIRD NEWS 15 & 16

A further two editions filled with a selection of notes and articles on Oman and Arabian ornithology were received this year. Of particular interest is a detailed note on the status of nightjars in Saudi Arabia and a summary of the NCWCD ringing scheme in *OBN15*, while *OBN16* contains a fascinating note on visible migration in the Oman desert in spring 1980 as well as articles on a spring visit to the Musandam region and a summary of this winter's waterfowl census. Recent firsts accepted by the Oman Bird Record's Committee included Lesser White-fronted Goose, Lesser Moorhen, Hume's Tawny Owl, Cinereous Bunting and Cretzschmar's Bunting, raising the Oman list to 435. *Oman Bird News* is compiled by Michael Gallagher for the Oman Bird Group, P.O. Box 246, Muscat 113, Sultanate of Oman.

In January 1994 the Oman Bird Records Committee published *Edition 4* of the *Oman Bird List*.

OSME Bulletin 32

The spring 1994 edition included a checklist of the *Birds of the Tihama*, a most thorough systematic list of the region's species, compiled as a result of extensive field work by ornithologists based with the NWCWD. *Around the Region* detailed a number of country firsts, including a Roseate Tern (11.9.93) and a Yellow-breasted Bunting (22.9.93) in Bahrain, a Siberian Rubythroat (9-12.11.93) in Egypt, a Black Lark (late October) in Israel, a Pied Stonechat (17.10.93) in Saudi Arabia and a White-crowned Black Wheatear (12.10.93) in Turkey.

SANDGROUSE 14

Running a little behind schedule, but well worth waiting for, Part 2 of Volume 14 (1992) arrived with us in spring 1994. The Notes were filled with no less than 7 'firsts' papers (eg Woodpigeon in Egypt, Plain Leaf Warbler in Bahrain etc.) a clear indication of the new discoveries awaiting all of us when birding in Arabia. The Mountain Nightjar story continues, this time the definitive paper on its identification, status and distribution, beautifully illustrated in colour by Pascale Symens. Other papers to be found inside include observations of seabirds off Oman, Greater Flamingos at Khor Dubai and an annotated checklist of the birds of Wadi Rima in western Yemen.

BRITISH BIRDS

The most popular issue of the year, November, contains the BBRC *Rare Birds in Britain 1993* report, and is packed full of rarity photos. In the last few months there have been a host of articles of interest to birdwatchers in Arabia, and the UAE in particular. In the March edition there are field tips on how to identify Blyth's Pipit, with, Radde's and Dusky Warblers in the September issue and Red-billed Tropicbird in October. Each edition is packed with letters, reviews, recent reports and of course the mystery bird photo.

BIRDWATCH MAGAZINE

For those of you who are not familiar with the selection of bird magazines and journals available in the UK (and all are available to overseas subscribers), then take a look at *Birdwatch*. It seems to suit the average-to-good birder, by providing monthly bird reports, not just from Britain but regularly from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and other Middle East points. There are usually good ID papers, including of particular interest in recent additions, *Tringa* sandpipers, Booted Warbler (*rama* and *caligata*), those tricky *Locustella* warblers and the enigmatic 'eastern chats' (many such as White-throated Robin are regular in the Emirates). For more information contact the Editor, Dominic Mitchell in London on fax 081-983 0246.

TRIBULUS

Another two excellent volumes, with a third due in late 1994, have been published recently. This bulletin of the Emirates Natural History Group is the country's only journal exclusively covering all aspects of natural history and is produced with the financial assistance of no less than 27 corporate sponsors. The lead article in Volume 3:2 (October 1993) describes the discovery and demise of Abu Dhabi's breeding Greater Flamingos, while Vol.4:1 (March 1994) holds an account of a survey of the remote south-western Gulf islands, during which many important bird discoveries were made. There are many other articles covering archaeology, plants, mammals, reptiles and insects, including one in Arabic. Volume 4:2 (October 1994) features the plight of the Sooty Falcon on Delma Island and details its status on the remaining undisturbed islands in the vicinity, after a detailed survey by NARC. Each volume contains a review of the birds found in the UAE during the previous 6 months. *Tribulus* is available from Peter Hellyer, P.O. Box 791, Abu Dhabi, UAE or through OSME Sales.

LIMICOLA

Germany's top ornithological magazine *Limicola* compiled and edited by Peter Barthel, continued to publish good in-depth articles in 1993 and 1994. The most notable being the full low-down on European black-and-white flycatchers in the October 1993 edition (6 months before it was serialised in English in *Birding World*). Many of the articles reflect the precision with which the Europeans regard plumage criteria, and this can be found in papers on how to identify by age Stonechats, Red-necked Grebes and Great Black-headed Gulls. There are also detailed papers on juvenile European owls and on how to separate Paddyfield Warbler from some of the little-known eastern *Acrocephalus* warblers and their sub-species. All captions and article summaries are in English.

WORLD BIRDWATCH

BirdLife International publishes a round-up of world bird conservation in their journal *World Birdwatch*. The June 1994 edition highlights a number of issues of concern to birdwatchers, including the on/off shooting ban in Cyprus, the revelation that 90 species are threatened in the Philippines alone and the continuing decline of the Shoebill in Uganda. There is good news however, for Halmahera, as the world turns its eyes on Indonesia's remaining rain-forests and the 26 endemic bird species threatened there. In Jordan, some progress is being made by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, which has managed to establish 6 nature reserves and control pollution in the Gulf of Aqaba. September's edition previews the BirdLife publication, *Birds in Europe*. This detailed review of the current trends of European species is essential reading and highlights the dramatic effect that altered habitats are having on bird populations due to political, economic and urban pressures.

TRINGA

This excellently produced quarterly colour journal, Helsinki's version of *Birding World*, usually contains a dazzling array of articles and photographs of Palearctic interest. Edition number 3/94 is very Arabian, with a Kalba White-collared Kingfisher on the front cover, painted by Matti Kapanen (a regular birding visitor to the UAE). It features the UAE inside too, with an article entitled *UAE, lintuharrastajan paratiisi* (literally 'UAE, Birdwatchers' Paradise') filling 5 pages. There is a feature on Yemen too, all illustrated with maps, photographs and paintings. The journal, entirely in the Finnish language (difficult for most of us.....!), also includes the 1993 systematic list, a mystery bird photo, a crossword and a rather appealing birdspotter's comic strip starring a spitting-image of Dick Forsman. Some good ideas for equivalent UK journals here. A limited number of copies are available from Colin Richardson.

EMIRATES NEWS

The environmentally orientated UAE daily, *Emirates News*, focuses its Thursday edition on all birdwatchers in the Emirates, as it contains a genuine *Twitchee's Guide!* This section holds a full round-up of all the week's interesting bird sightings in the UAE, and is essential reading for anyone at all interested in the country's wildlife. The *Twitchee's Guide* comes on the same page as *The Green Spot*, a weekly environmental editorial, with an often poignant message. All credit to Peter Hellyer and his band of amateur naturalists.

.....AND OF COURSE BIRDING WORLD

How *Birding World* manages to publish observer's reports and ID papers (with photographs!) on British and European 'firsts' only days after their occurrence is one of life's mysteries. It is a great credit to their editorial team, and particularly to the driving force of Steve Gantlett. It also has the most comprehensive *Western Palearctic News*, monthly featuring the UAE, plus regular bird finds from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey and Israel. In recent months (Vol.7:3-9) there has been a most comprehensive paper on separating Pied, Semi-collared and Collared Flycatchers, in addition to a range of articles on rare shearwaters, Swinhoe's Petrel, River & Blyth's Reed Warbler, Black-faced Bunting and eastern thrushes some of which are (arguably) likely vagrants to the Gulf.