The first record of Yellow-throated Sparrow 

*Gymnoris xanthocollis* in Egypt

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The Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis* breeds in southeast Turkey, through Iraq, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (Porter & Aspinall 2010, Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). It has been recorded as a vagrant, three records, in Israel (Perlman & Meyrav 2009).

On 5 June 2010, on the Egyptian Red sea coast 17 km north of Marsa Alam city, while birding in the garden of Brayka Bay resort, MD noted a calling Yellow-throated Sparrow in the top of a palm tree (Google Earth GPS coordinates 25° 12' 59.92" N  34° 47' 58.23" E).

The bird was easily detected as its continuous calling had brought it to the attention of MD. The call was very like that of a House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, but because no House Sparrows had been seen or heard in the resort, MD investigated further. During the observation, the bird also uttered a guttural low-tone short song while perched on top of the tree.

Through binoculars, the yellow throat-patch, chestnut-coloured feathers on the edge of the scapulars and white median-covert bar were immediately obvious, sufficiently so to identify the bird without any doubt as a Yellow-throated Sparrow.

Regarding its behaviour, MD noted that it was very shy, but when its call was imitated by MD, the bird came closer to him and perched on a nearby eucalyptus tree.

The bird was observed 07.10–07.30 h before it flew away. Next day (6 June) the bird was seen again at 07.45 h for 10 minutes. The last time we found this bird was on 9 June at 08.20 h, when we observed its behaviour for about 30 minutes in an acacia tree just outside the resort. The bird was a male, and the strongly-pointed bill was pale, not black, which indicated that the bird was not yet in full breeding plumage. Documentary photos were taken (Plates 1 and 2). MD had seen the species previously in the United Arab Emirates.

As far as we are aware, there are no previous sightings of Yellow-throated Sparrow in Africa. The combination of yellow throat-patch, chestnut lesser coverts and white median-covert bar distinguish *Gymnoris xanthocollis* from the closely related, sub-Saharan, Yellow-spotted Petronia *G. pyrgita*, Yellow-throated Petronia *G. superciliaris* and Bush

![Plates 1 & 2. First Yellow-throated Sparrow Gymnoris xanthocollis for Egypt, north of Marsa Alam, June 2010. © Massimiliano Dettori](image-url)
Petronia *G. dentata* (Sinclair & Ryan 2010). The sighting constitutes the first record of the species in Egypt and it has been accepted by the Egyptian Ornithological Rarities Committee.

**REFERENCES**

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