

AROUND THE REGION

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Records and photographs for *Sandgrouse* 35 (1) should be sent by 15 December 2012 to atr@osme.org.

AFGHANISTAN

Our correspondent at Camp Bastion has supplied a useful number of reports of residents and migrants with a sighting of **Shikra** *Accipiter badius* on 5 Apr and notable counts of 200 **Crowned Sandgrouse** *Pterocles coronatus* on 29 Jan and 51 **European Rollers** *Coracias garrulus* on 2 May. There was also an **Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* 11 Mar and a **Mountain Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus (collybita) sindianus* 3 Apr. Expected migrants were a **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* 25 Mar and a **Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata* 17 Mar whilst of interest was a **Hume's Whitethroat** *Sylvia (curruca) althaea* on 3 Apr. The first passage **Variable Wheatear** *Oenanthe picata* was noted 3 Mar and a **Hume's Wheatear** *Oenanthe albonigra* 3 Apr. An **Oriental Magpie Robin** *Copsychus saularis* recorded 3 Apr will be the first record for Afghanistan if formally accepted. Three **Trumpeter Finches** *Bucanetes githagineus* were seen 19 Mar and there were single **Rustic Buntings** *Emberiza rustica* 24 Feb and 1 Mar.

AZERBAIJAN

Migrant **Demoiselle Cranes** *Anthropoides virgo* were noted through Besh Barmag this spring with one north 31 Mar and three north 16 May whilst three small parties of one–four **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius*, totalling 12 birds, were noted there late March/early April and a **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* 18 Apr. A particularly heavy passage of 630 **Black-winged Pratincoles** *Glareola nordmanni* through Besh Barmag occurred on just one evening, 18 Apr, while a vagrant **Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* was noted 27 Apr. **Arctic Skuas** *Stercorarius parasiticus* were often seen passing north offshore over the Caspian sea at Besh Barmag but a surprise

was the discovery of eight dead birds on the beach there 19 May.

The first **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus* of the spring was trapped at Besh Barmag 10 Apr while two **Olive-tree Warblers** *Hippolais olivetorum* seen in the Batabat region of the Nakhchivan enclave 22 May was the first occurrence of this species for Azerbaijan. A **Hume's Whitethroat** *Sylvia (curruca) althaea* in the mountains in this same area 25 May was also of interest. A **White-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla (flava) leucocephala* at Besh Barmag 12 Apr was the first record of this form for the country. Family parties of up to ten **Desert Finches** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* in the Batabat region on 20 May appear to be the first proof of breeding of this species in the country. Two **Pine Buntings** *Emberiza leucocephalos* were at Besh Barmag 31 Mar.

BAHRAIN

A **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* at Ras Jubour 5 Feb was the sixth record while also notable were two **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* at Hamalah farm, Manama, 2 Feb. Up to 60 **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* remained at Jasra until at least 24 Mar. A **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* was ringed on the Alba marshes 20 Jan, the first record for the island.

CYPRUS

Two juvenile **Mute Swans** *Cygnus olor* at Clapsides marsh 19–23 Jan were the tenth occurrence for Cyprus with the second **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis* at Gulseren pond, Famagusta, 3 May. **Northern Gannets** *Morus bassanus* are less than annual so of note were singles off Kermia beach, Agia Napa, 16 Mar and cape Drepanum 19 Apr. There were single **Baillon's Crakes** *Porzana pusilla* at

Polis reedbeds 14 Apr and Xeros Potamos pools 20–24 Apr and there was a stronger than usual spring passage of 400 **Demoiselle Cranes** *Anthropoides virgo* through the Akrotiri peninsula 13–24 Mar.

Other notable sightings included the second **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* for Cyprus at Akrotiri gravel pits 23–24 Mar, the ninth **White-tailed Lapwing** *V. leucurus* since 2000 at Paralimni lake 18–22 Apr and the largest ever flock of 27 **Greater Sand Plovers** *Charadrius leschenaultii* at Mandria beach 11 Mar. Single **Caspian Plovers** *C. asiaticus* at Paralimni lake 14–26 Apr and at Spiros pool, Larnaca, 25 Apr were notable as were single **Eurasian Dotterels** *Charadrius morinellus* at Akrotiri gravel pits 3 Apr and at Larnaca desalination fields 5 May. The 19th and 20th records of **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* were at Xeros Potamos 2 May and Spiros pool 12 May respectively and there was a **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* at Spiros pool 17 May. High numbers of **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* and **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* were seen this spring with eight of the former on Spiros pool 29 Apr and another eight on Akrotiri salt lake 16–19 May and two of the latter at Paralimni lake 7 Apr and up to five on Akrotiri salt lake 16 Apr–16 May. A **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* at Spiros pool 12 May was the fourth record while two **Cream-coloured Coursers** *Cursorius cursor* were at Akrotiri gravel pits 16–24 Mar with another at Spiros pool, Larnaca, 15–17 May. Notable gatherings of **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* included 200 at Akhna dam and 150 at Zakaki Mars 27 Apr with another 100 at Larnaca sewage works 28 Apr while there was a single **Black-winged Pratincole** *G. nordmanni* at Spiros beach 1 May.

Two **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyæetus* were noted at Pissouri bay 11 Feb with singles at Larnaca salt lake 21 Jan and at Akrotiri 13–14 Feb whilst the highest recorded number of **Gull-billed Terns** *Gelochelidon nilotica* occurred 23 Mar at Paralimni lake when 100 were counted. A **Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* at Spiros beach is a less than annual occurrence. **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* continued their run of sightings, the seventh in the last 20 years when one was at Mandria 22 Apr. A

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* at Lefka 17 Apr constitutes the ninth record. Single **Pied Kingfishers** *Ceryle rudis* were at Zakaki marsh 30 Jan, Agios Trias 7–11 Feb and Akhna dam 21 Feb.

A spring record of **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* at Baths of Aphrodite on 9 Apr (cf Israel observations) was the 11th record. There were a few noteworthy records of **Rose-coloured Starlings** *Pastor roseus* with singles at cape Kormakitis 24 Apr, Xeros Potamos 11 May, Gaziveran 16 May and Larnaca sewage works 19 May. A male **White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis* at cape Greco 15 Apr was a good record. The 17th–21st records of **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha* (all singles) occurred at Akrotiri gravel pits 14–15 Apr, Paphos lighthouse 15 Apr, Mandria 15 Apr, cape Kormakiti 21 Apr and Lady's Mile 22 Apr. Twenty **Rock Sparrows** *Petronia petronia* at Marathounta 1–19 Jan was a good record. The two **Ashy-headed Wagtails** *Motacilla (flava) cinereocapilla* at Spiros pool, Larnaca, 19–21 Feb is the fourth record. There was a **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* at Paphos lighthouse 4–7 Apr. **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* sightings were as follows: one at Pomos 3 Apr, three at cape Greco 21–24 Apr and one at Akrotiri gravel pits 14 May. A **Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus* at Mavrokolymbos dam 20 Jan is the ninth record. **Western Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza (cineracea) cineracea* is not observed every year so the sighting of a single at Androlikou 21 Apr is noteworthy.

EGYPT

Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan* is rarely recorded from the Red sea so one off Hurghada 3 May was notable as was the count of 76 **Yellow-billed Storks** *Mycteria ibis* at Abu Simbel 12 May. A **Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* was at the usual site of Hamata mangroves 8 May while 19 **Pink-backed Pelicans** *Pelecanus rufescens* were at Abu Simbel 11 May. **Lammergeiers** *Gypaetus barbatus* are only infrequently recorded along the Red sea so of note was one at Al Bahr al Ahmar 14 Mar whilst eight **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos tracheliotus* were at Shelatein 9 May where larger numbers have previously been recorded. A **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* at Sharm el Sheikh 31 Jan was of interest.

There have been few **Macqueen's Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueenii* records in recent years so one at Samalut, near Minya, 8 Mar was particularly noteworthy. The presence of two **Crab-plovers** *Dromas ardeola* at Hamata mangroves 12 May is a further indication of possible breeding in the area. Confirmation of successful breeding by **Three-banded Plovers** *Charadrius tricollaris* came from Tut Amon fishponds, Aswan, 10 May where two adults and two juveniles were noted; a second pair was at Abu Simbel 13 May. There was a **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* at El Gouna 15 Apr. A large flock of 19 **Black-winged Pratincoles** *Glareola nordmanni* was counted at Abu Simbel 3 Apr. **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* were present on the Nile this winter with seven at Kom Ombo 11 Jan and up to nine at Daraw 14 Jan–21 Feb but only one noted at Abu Simbel, 12 May.

A major discovery was the presence of **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* at Sandafa, near Minya, 18–23 Mar with a peak count of 120 on 22 Mar, the first records since 1979. Eighty-two **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles lichtensteinii* were at Sharm el Sheikh 18 Jan. The two **African Mourning Doves** *Streptopelia decipiens* first recorded at Abu Simbel in 2010 continued to be seen to the end of May 2012. Another good count of **Namaqua Doves** *Oena capensis* was made near Kom Ombo where 54 were present 14 Feb. A **Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* was well south of the usual areas, at Crocodile island, Luxor, 3 Feb. 20 **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* were counted at Wadi el-Rayan 13 Apr. Further evidence of the spread of the **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* south along the Nile was provided by a single at Beni Mazar 31 Mar. A migrant **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius (isabellinus) isabellinus* was at Hurghada 29 Feb. There are fewer than five records of **Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* for Egypt so the two at Gorgonia Beach hotel near Shams Alam 12–17 Feb and one at El Gouna 27–31 Mar will be subject to formal acceptance. Two **Asian Desert Warblers** *Sylvia (nana) nana* were at Nabq 10 Jan, a known area for previous winter records. Spring records of single **Rose-coloured Starlings** *Pastor roseus* are unusual so one at Samalut 6 May and one at Sandafa 10 May are noteworthy. **Black**

Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* now seems to be annual along the Red sea with one at Berenice 19 Mar. Four stonechats at Wadi Lahami 6 Apr appeared to be **Byzantine Stonechats** *Saxicola (torquatus) armenicus*. The first sighting of **Palestine Sunbird** *Cinnyris osea* on the African continent involved two at Ain Sukhna 12 Jan. A **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* was at Aswan 5 Feb and two **Eurasian Siskins** *Carduelis spinus* were well south at Sandafa, near Minya, 27 Mar.

GEORGIA

Two interesting migrants reported this spring were a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus* at Tsalka on 5 May and a **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* at Dedoplist Tskaro 10 May.

IRAN

The last surviving **Siberian White Crane** *Grus leucogeranus* of the former western population was last seen at the wintering site of Ezbaran on 1 Mar and a survey in the Semnan area of the Alburz mountains in early May found a substantially larger **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*/**Red-headed Bunting** *E. bruniceps* hybrid zone than previously reported by Jürgen Haffer in "Secondary contact zones of birds in northern Iran" published in 1976.

IRAQ

An adult **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* in moult 28 May and 13 Jun at Piraamagroon mountain (PM) in Kurdistan is an interesting record for the breeding season. A juvenile **Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus* was observed flying over rocky outcrops near the top of PM 11 Jun (Plate 1) while another on Jebel Shrin 30 May is the first record from this area. There was a strong passage of 215 **Lesser Kestrels** *Falco naumanni* through Haditah, Anbar province, in late April while a **Barbary Falcon** *Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides* pair with young were at Hazermerd at the end of May. Four pairs of **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles orientalis* were seen at PM 11 Jun. A **Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco* at Qara Dag on the late date of 27 May indicated probable breeding in this area. A new breeding site of **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* (Plate 2) was found at PM 28 May whilst a pair of **Common Kingfishers** *Alcedo atthis*



Plate 1. Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*, 11 June 2012, Piramagroon mountain, Kurdistan, Iraq. © Korsh Ararat



Plate 2. Little Swift *Apus affinis*, Kurdistan, Iraq. © Korsh Ararat

seen carrying food at Chami Rezan 30 May provided proof of nesting. A pair of **Red-backed Shrikes** *Lanius collurio* was found breeding on 10 May at PM (new breeding species record for Iraq). The first breeding for Iraq of **Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* was noted 8 Jun on Jebel Shrin where one of the two pairs seen was feeding young. A **Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti* at PM 2 Jun is the most northerly record for Iraq. Eight pairs of **Plain-leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus neglectus* were counted 26–29 May at PM while the first confirmed breeding for the country of **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* was at Chami Razan 28 May with a further six birds noted at Mawat 1 Jun. Single singing **Olive-tree Warblers** *Hippolais olivetorum* were observed at PM (8 May) and in the garden of Sulaimani University (16 May). A good series of sightings of **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* involved 11 individuals at two sites in Salah-ad-Din province in early May and there was also a male in the western desert of Anbar at this time. Two breeding colonies of **Desert Finches** *Rhodospiza obsoleta* were found at PM in late May/early June.

ISRAEL

The second Israeli record of **Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*, present at Kfar Barukh reservoir from 2011, stayed to 4 Feb. The nine **Whooper Swans** *Cygnus cygnus* at Hagoshrim in Hula valley, also from 2011 and Israel's fifth occurrence, stayed to 9 Feb. A female **Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula* was well south at the KM19 sewage ponds, Eilat, 13–18 May. Some notable seabirds included a **Great Shearwater** *Puffinus gravis* off Shikmona, Haifa, on 28 Jan, the 6th record for Israel if accepted, a **European Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus* off Ashdod beach 28 Jan, the fifth record for Israel, and a **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* reported off Haifa 18 Feb, the 6th or 7th record. Single **Leach's Storm Petrels** *O. leucorhoa* were off Ashdod 2 Feb and Jaffa 23 Jan with a remarkable 40 reported off Jaffa 19 Feb. A **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* off Eilat 2 Jan was joined by a second bird February–May. A surprise was a wintering **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* in the Eilat date plantations 6 Jan–4 Mar with several migrants reported through the Eilat area in May. **Black-**

winged Kites *Elanus caeruleus* nested for the second time in Israel, at Giv'at Koach in the Dan region where a pair with three fledged young was seen 11 May; the first occurrence of breeding was in 2011 at Agamon Hula. Three **Little Bustards** *Tetrax tetrax* at Hamadiya in the Jordan valley 8 Jan were followed by two at Ramtaniya reservoir, Golan Heights, 20 Jan and there was a **Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* at Neot Hakikar 7 Apr. Single **Demoiselle Cranes** *Anthropoides virgo* were at Agamon Hula 24 Mar, at Kfar Menachem 29 Mar–7 April and over Eilat 31 Mar. Of note were single **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* at Kfar Ruppim 23 Jan and Yotvata 22 Feb with a **White-tailed Lapwing** *V. leucurus* in the Bet She'an valley 20 Apr. Two **Caspian Plovers** *Charadrius asiaticus* at Eilat fields 12 Mar were followed by a single at Yotvata 22 Mar and possibly as many as ten more different individuals through the Eilat area to 15 Apr whilst a **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* was at Ma'agan Michael 5 Mar. A ringed **Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii* at Ashdod 30 Mar originated from Sardinia. A **Swift Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* off Eilat 8 Apr was not unusual but more exceptional was the report of a **South Polar Skua** *Stercorarius maccormicki* off Jaffa 15 Jan, the third record for Israel if accepted.

Migrant **Egyptian Nightjars** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* were at Yotvata 2 Mar and Neot Hakikar 22 Mar with two at the latter site 2 Jun. Single **Daurian Shrikes** *Lanius [isabellinus]* *isabellinus* were at Kfar Ruppim 23 Jan, Wadi Habesor, Negev, 27 Feb and Nizzana 17 Mar. Two **Red-billed Choughs** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* on mount Hermon 18 May constituted the second record for Israel. There was a **Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda dunni* at Yotvata 1 May with a further five at Hameishar 18 May. Three single **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* apparently on spring passage (*cf* Cyprus summary) were at Kfar Adumim 8 Mar, Eilat 28–29 Mar and Haifa University 15 Apr. There were two further records of **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis*—singles trapped and ringed at Lahavot Habashan, Hula valley, 23 May and Hula valley ringing station 2 Jun. A little flurry of **Ménétriés's Warblers** *Sylvia mystacea* included singles at Eilat 15 Mar, Hai Bar nature reserve 23

Mar and KM19, near Eilat, 25 Mar. There was a **Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus* at Shikmona, Haifa, 28 Apr, a **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* at Jerusalem bird observatory 11 Apr and single **White-throated Robins** *Irania gutturalis* at Yeroham park 20 Apr and Neot Smadar 28 Apr. A **Black Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas podobe* was at Neot Smadar sewage works 17 May. An unprecedented passage of 100–150 **Pied Wheatears** *Oenanthe pleschanka* and 100 **Cyprus Wheatears** *O. cyprica* this spring also included **Kurdistan Wheatears** *O. xanthopyrmyna* at Ein Gedi 28 Feb and Neve Ativ, mount Hermon, 29 Mar, a 'vittata' form of **Pied Wheatear** at KM20, Eilat, 24–31 Mar, the first for Israel with undocumented reports of two further birds, and finally the sixth record of the black morph of **Eastern Mourning 'Basalt' Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugens* in the Uvda valley 21 Mar. There was a **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* at Neot Smadar 21 Apr, the tenth record for

Israel. There was a strong passage of **Western Cinereous Buntings** *Emberiza (cineracea) cineracea* with one at Ofira park, Eilat, 2 Mar, five at mount Amasa 12 Mar and two at Lotan 20 Mar when also six at Susita. The **Red-headed Bunting** *Emberiza bruniceps* at Bet Kama 18 Apr is potentially the third for Israel.

JORDAN

There were three notable vagrant sightings at the Aqaba bird observatory in January with an **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* on 3 Jan, **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* 11 Jan (Plate 3) and two **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* on 5 Jan. A wintering **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* at Aqaba 10 Feb was also notable. More usual was the **Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii* off Aqaba 2 Jan with a mid-winter sighting of two **Little Swifts** *Apus affinis* at Kafrayn reservoir 6 Jan. A **Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* was well south at Madaba 6 Jan and a **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* was at Aqaba 4 Jan, a regular wintering locality.

KAZAKHSTAN

A late **Goosander** *Mergus merganser* was in Charyn canyon 4 May whilst further north 20 **White-headed Ducks** *Oxyura leucocephala* were on lake Isay, near Khorgalzin, within the main breeding range, on 13 May. There was also a **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* near Khorgalzyn 13 May—this species is not often recorded from this area. An **Upland Buzzard** *Buteo (rufinus) hemilasius* was reported over Charyn canyon 4 May though hybrid **Upland × Long-legged Buzzards** *B. rufinus* have recently been observed in this area. Single **Lesser Sand Plovers** *Charadrius (mongolus) atrifrons* were at Sorbulak 9, 13 and 23 May (different birds) and although still a vagrant, sightings have been almost annual in recent years. Fifty **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarptis melba* over Charyn canyon 4 May was a good count whilst belated news of a **Pander's Ground Jay** *Podoces panderi* at Kyzylkumy, near Shimkent, 17 Mar 2011 shows that the species is still present in this area. A **Pied Stonechat** *Saxicola caprata* at Fetisovo, north Caspian sea, 21 May was north of the usual areas whilst the **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata* at Mangistau, Fetisovo, 24 Apr is probably not that unusual near the



Plate 3. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*, 11 January 2012, Aqaba bird observatory, Jordan. © Feras Rahahleh



Plate 4. Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*, 13 May 2012, Jahra East outfall, Kuwait. © Pekka Fågel

Caspian although probably under reported. Further singles of **East Siberian Wagtails** *Motacilla (alba) ocularis* were at Konshengal 5 May and Sorbulak 26 May adding to the 20 or so previous sightings whilst a late **Long-tailed Rosefinch** *Uragus sibiricus* was at Prudhoz, near Chilik, 22 Mar. A rarely recorded **Red-fronted Rosefinch** *Carpodacus puniceus* was at the Almaty cosmos station on 1 Jan though it is known to breed in the area. A **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* near Zhalanash, Charyn canyon, 17 May confirms its continued presence at the southern limit of its range. A **Meadow Bunting** *Emberiza cioides* was in the same area on the same date after one was noted at Kegen pass 4 May, also at the southern limit of its distribution in Kazakhstan.

KUWAIT

The third sighting of a **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* for the country was made at Jahra East outfall 15 Feb and a **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* in Sulaibikhat bay 5 May was the 16th record. There was a **Shikra** *Accipiter badius* at Al Abraq Al Khabari 7 Apr and an **Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis* at Jahra

East outfall 13 May (Plate 4), the latter the second record for the country. An excellent count of 2000 **Crab-plovers** *Dromas ardeola* was made on Boubyan island 18 May, the largest breeding concentration in the Middle East. A **Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan* at Jahra East outfall, present from 5 Jun, is the first country record. A **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* was recorded on Green island 2 Feb. **Hypocoliuses** *Hypocolius ampelinus* totalled over 60 at a combination of sites in mid February. A **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* at Al Abraq Al Khabari 30–31 Jan is the fifth record. **Afghan Babbler** *Turdoides caudatus huttoni* has again nested at Abdaly farms with a pair feeding a single chick 4 May. A male **Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer moabiticus* was seen and heard singing at Al Abraq Al Khabari 12–13 Apr and there are now more than ten records for the country. A **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis* 15 Mar and another at Subriya farm 6 Apr were the third and fourth records while the **Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla (alba) personata* at Wafra farms 12 Feb was the second record. The **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* noted at Al Abraq Al Khabari from 9 Dec 2011 stayed to at least

28 Feb and an **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza (cineracea) semenowi* was at Al Abraaq Al Khabari 23 Mar.

LEBANON

A wetter winter and early spring favoured breeding waterbirds at Aammiq, including **Mallard** *Anser platyrhynchos*, **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* and **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*. Three pairs of **Little Grebes** with young were observed at Bishmezzine 12 Jun. **Spur-winged Lapwings** *Vanellus spinosus* also bred this year at Tyre Coast nature reserve.

OMAN

The real highlight of the period was the first record for Oman and the Middle East of **Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*, at Sahnawt farm, Salalah, 3 Jan. A further record of note was a juvenile **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* at the new Al Mouj golf course, Muscat, 1 Jan (9th record). Both records have been accepted by the Oman Bird Records Committee. Thirty-eight **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* were

at East Khawr, Salalah, 11 Jan. **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* records included four at West Khawr and two at East Khawr 15 Mar while there was a single **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* at East Khawr 7 Jan and two at West Khawr 9 Mar. There was a single **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* at Al Ansab wetland 9 Jan—this species is comparatively rare in the north. The **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* seen in the Wadi Darbat and Khor Rouri area in late 2011 were present until 28 Feb (four at Wadi Darbat). Seven hundred **Western White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* at Raysut 9 Mar was a high count. **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* is a regular breeding summer visitor to coastal khawrs in the south and there were five at East Khawr and two at Khawr Taqah 8 May. A single **Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* was at Khawr Sawli 8 Jan and one at Khawr Taqah 8 May. The three immature **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* present in December at East Khawr, remained until 22 Mar (Plate 5).

A **Black-eared Kite** *Milvus (migrans) lineatus* was at Al Mouj golf course, 2 Apr.



Plate 5. Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, 10 March 2012, East Khawr, Salalah, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen



Plate 6. White-throated vittata form of Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*, 15 April 2012, Sayh, Musandam, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen



Plate 7. Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca*, 15 April 2012, Sayh, Musandam, Oman. © Hanne & Jens Eriksen

Three **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* at East Khawr 7 Jan may have been the same birds seen in the area in November—small numbers now seem to winter in the south of Oman. One was also at Salalah 8 May. Twelve **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos tracheliotus* were at a carcass at Bahla 20 Apr. A **Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciatus* was at Al Ansab wetland 10–14 Mar. Eleven **Arabian Partridges** *Alectoris melanocephala* were seen on Jabal Nakhl 10 Jun—this species is uncommon in the north. A single **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana* was seen at Sall Ala, Musandam, 16 Apr—the first record of any crake species in this region. Single **White-breasted Waterhens** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* were seen at Ayn Razat 23 Feb, Al Mughsayl 27 Feb and Ayn Hamran 22 Mar. **Red-knobbed Coots** *Fulica cristata*, a rare visitor, were seen at West Khawr (three) on 7 Jan with one at Al Mughsayl on the same date and two there 27 Feb and 3 May. Sixty **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* were at Sun farm, Sohar, 3 May while eight young were observed 28 May. Single **Small Pratincoles** *Glareola lactea* were at Salalah nature reserve 2 Jan and at Khawr Taqah 11 Jan. Four **Spotted Thick-knees** *Burhinus capensis* were at East Khawr and eight at Salalah 8 May. Two hundred and forty **Pacific Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis fulva* were at Sahnawt farm, 10 Mar, a high count.

Six **Spur-winged Lapwings** *Vanellus spinosus* were at Sahnawt farm 3 Jan—a new maximum for this rare winter visitor (five had been seen there 14–18 Nov 2011). On the same day four **Red-wattled Lapwings** *Vanellus indicus* were at the same location—this species is rare in the south. Three **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* were at Sun farm 11–13 Jan. A single **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media*, a rare migrant, was at Al Ansab wetland 5 Feb, the second record this winter.

Three hundred and fifty **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyæetus* at Qurayyat 19 Jan was a high count. A single **Common Gull** *Larus canus* was at Al Mouj golf course 28 Apr—this was a late date for this uncommon migrant. Five hundred plus **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* at Sun farm 19 Jan was the highest count for some years. Eleven **Common Woodpigeons** *Columba palumbus casiotis* were observed at 1800 m in Wadi Sahtan 24 Apr. Twenty-six **Namaqua Doves** *Oena capensis* at Sun farm 13 Jan was the highest count since 2007. Two **Asian Koels** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* were at East Khawr 7 Jan. Four hundred **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops superciliosus* were counted at Sun farm 10 Apr. Two hundred plus **European Rollers** *Coracias garrulus* in one tree at Al Ghaftayn in the central desert 3 May was an unusual sight. **Indian Rollers** *Coracias benghalensis* are

rare visitors to southern Oman so one at Jarziz farm, Salalah, 8 Jan was noteworthy.

A single **Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* was at Khasab, Musandam, 13 Apr while a **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* was at Dawkah farm, central desert, 4 May. Three **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* were at Sun farm on 2 Mar. Six **Bar-tailed Larks** *Ammomanes cinctura* were found near Mudday in the south 27 Feb and eight were there 24 May. **Dunn's Lark** *Eremelauda dunni* is highly nomadic and very elusive so one near Mudday 27 Feb was an excellent find. A male **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* was at Sall Ala, Musandam, 16 Apr while a '**Caspian**' **Stonechat** *Saxicola [torquatus] maurus variegatus* was at Al Mughsayl 4 Jan and another at Sun farm on 2 Mar. The white-throated vittata form of the **Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka* is rare so a male at Sayh, Musandam, 15 Apr (Plate 6) is noteworthy. There was a single male **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe (hispanica) melanoleuca* at Sayh 14–15 Apr (Plate 7)—this is also a rare visitor to Oman. Eight **Hooded Wheatears** *Oenanthe monacha* (six males, two females) were at Kitnah, Dhahirah region, 26 Apr. A single male **Semi-collared Flycatcher**

Ficedula semitorquata was seen at Sayh, 15 Apr. Four **Nile Valley Sunbirds** *Anthodiata metallica* at Qatbit 11 Jan were noteworthy. Eighty **Pale Rockfinches** *Carpospiza brachydactyla* were at Sun farm 11 Mar while 17 **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus (novaseelandiae) richardi* at the same location 2 Mar was a good count. **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak** *Rhynchostruthus percivali* is not always easy to find so two at Dalqut on 7 May and two at Ayn Hamran 8 May were noteworthy. Seventy **Ortolan Buntings** *Emberiza hortulana* were counted at Sayh 14 Apr.

QATAR

Rare winter visitors at Abu Nakhla included seven adult **Greater White-fronted Geese** *Anser albifrons* (10 Feb) and a **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* (23 Mar). At least five, possibly eight adult **Black Kites** *Milvus migrans*, a rare passage migrant, at Al Shamal (five) and Ras Al Shindwee (three) 18 May. A juvenile **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*, normally a rare winter visitor was at Irkayya farm (IF) 29–31 May. The first breeding record of **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* for Qatar occurred at IF May/June when a pair



Plate 8. Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* with chick, June 2012, Irkayya farm, Qatar. © Khalid Al Maadeed

succeeded in raising one young. Six juvenile/adult winter **Eurasian Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis apricaria*, a rare winter visitor, were at IF 13 Jan, with three staying to at least 21 Jan. An adult male **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus*, normally a rare winter visitor, was at Al Khor 30 May. The first breeding record for **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* was of an adult sitting on two eggs at IF 31 May. Subsequent observations in June showed that two pairs had produced chicks (Plate 8).

A male **Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* at Umm Jolaq farm 20 Apr–3 May is the first country record. An **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius*, a rare passage migrant, was at IF 30 Apr. A **Common Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* was seen at Traina 31 Mar, the third record. A **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* was at IF 2 Mar, the third record and the first since 3 Dec 1983. Single **Black Scrub Robins** *Cercotrichas podobe*, a rare visitor, were recorded at Al Udeid air base 16 Mar, Umm Jolaq farm 17–23 Mar and Sealine beach resort (SBR) 24 Apr. A first summer male **Kurdistan Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthoprymna* at Traina 2–15 Mar, was the

second record. **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata* is a rare passage migrant, so two males at IF (15 Apr), a female at SBR (18 Apr) and a female at Traina (19–20 Apr) are noteworthy.

SAUDI ARABIA

(All records are from the Eastern province (EP). Sabkhat Al Fasl, Jubail, is a wetland site 125 km north of Dhahran.)

A single second calendar year **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons* was at Sabkhat Al Fasl (SAF) 17 and 18 Feb (Plate 9). This is a vagrant to EP. An immature **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* was at Dhahran 23 May while a **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* was at SAF 25 May. Fifty-six **Western Great Egrets** *Egretta alba* were at SAF 6 Jan along with 357 **Common Shelducks** *Tadorna tadorna*—the largest flock for some years at the site. Six adult and two first year **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* were at Dammam port mangroves 13 Jan. Six adults were still present 10 Feb. An adult was at SAF 4 May. A juvenile **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* was at Dhahran 29 Mar while an adult **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus (caeruleus) vociferus* was there 29



Plate 9. Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*, 17 February 2012, Sabkhat Al Fasl, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

Mar–17 Apr (Plate 10, very dark under-wing markings on the secondaries unlike the more western race *E. (c.) caeruleus*). This was a first record for EP. A second calendar year **Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circus gallicus* was over Dhahran 11 Feb. Nineteen **Western Marsh Harriers** *Circus aeruginosus* at SAF 6 Jan was a high count. Thirteen **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* at SAF 2 Feb was the highest count of the winter. Two second calendar year **Eastern Imperial Eagles** *Aquila heliaca* were seen at SAF 2 Feb. Two adult male **Little Crakes** *Porzana parva* were at Dhahran 29 Feb. Four (three males and a female) were seen on 4 and 5 Mar with singles seen until 20 Mar. Two adult **Armenian Gulls** *Larus armenicus* were at the Dammam–Al Khobar wader roost (south) on 10 Feb. The status of this species in EP is uncertain but it is certainly rare. An adult **Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus* in breeding plumage was well inland at Dhahran 11 Feb.

An **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* was seen in the evening of 4 Mar at Dhahran. Shrike migration was noted

throughout March with highs of **Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* (3) and **Daurian Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* (8) at SAF 9 Mar, **Turkestan Shrike** *Lanius (isabellinus) phoenicuroides* (18) at the same location 31 Mar and **Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius (meridionalis) pallidirostris* (2) there 30 Mar. An adult **White-spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos* was at SAF 30 Mar. This appears to be only the second record for EP. Fifty **Red-rumped Swallows** *Cecropis daurica* were at Dhahran 4 Mar while a **Common Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia* was there 1 Apr. An adult male **Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* was seen in the evening of 7 Mar at Dhahran. An adult **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* was seen feeding on insects at SAF 12 Jan. An adult male was present at the same site 10 Feb and an adult male at Dammam airport pools on 23 Mar. A female **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala* was at Dhahran 8 and 9 May. Six **Corn Buntings** *Emberiza calandra* were at Dhahran 9 Feb with four still present the next day.



Plate 10. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, 29 March 2012, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. © Jem Babbington

SYRIA

Four **Northern Bald Ibises** *Geronticus eremita* returned to the breeding cliffs near Palmyra this year; there were three in 2011 and the origin of the fourth bird is unknown. One pair, the same individuals as in 2011, attempted to breed but failed. A captive pair from the Turkish population has also so far failed to breed successfully. This pair has been kept since 2010 at the reserve at Talila to supply future birds for release.

TAJIKISTAN

A late report of a **Pallas's Fish-Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* Sep 2011 comes from the Pamir mountains in the east of the country and would be the only recent record of this vagrant if accepted. A **Western Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus (coronatus) occipitalis* near Qala-i Khumb at the end of May was probably a breeding bird.

TURKEY

The cold winter Jan–Mar 2012 produced a good array of records of waterbirds that normally remain along the northern shores of the Black sea. Single **Red-throated Divers** *Gavia stellata* were recorded in Göksu delta 25 Feb, Kocaçay delta 22 Jan and Büyükçekmece lake 18 Feb. The sudden appearance of **Egyptian Geese** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* raised questions about origin. Two were in Riva, near Istanbul, 31 Mar and one Beytepe campus in Ankara 13 Apr. Despite the cold winter, the numbers of **Red-breasted Geese** *Branta ruficollis* were below expectations. One was at Sarıyar dam lake on 19 Feb and seven Kocaeli Kandıra 26 Feb. Six **Scaups** *Aythya marila* were at İğneada 10 Feb, one at Büyükçekmece 11 Feb, 5 İstanbul Şile harbour 22 Feb, one Hersek lagoon 5 Mar, one Filyos delta 4 Feb and 17 were recorded during the mid-winter counts in Yeşilirmak delta 13 Feb. **Common Eiders** *Somateria mollissima* were observed away from known localities: one Kocaeli Kandıra 25 Feb and one Sakarya Karasu 7 Apr. High numbers of sea ducks were present at Yeşilirmak delta 13 Feb, including 48 **Velvet Scoters** *Melanitta fusca*, 34 **Common Scoters** *Melanitta nigra* and a remarkable total of 702 **Goldeneyes** *Bucephala clangula*. A young **Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* was seen at Mogan lake

near Ankara, 18–24 June. One **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* was in the Meriç delta 21 Jan and one Kulu lake 15 Apr and 18 Jun.

A **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* was recorded Yenikent Zır valley, Ankara, 26 April. Cold weather pushed many **Rough-legged Buzzards** *Buteo lagopus* to the south. One was seen at Sarıyar dam 11 Mar, one Büyükçekmece lake 9 Feb, two Terkos lake 18 March, two Üsküdar, İstanbul, 11 Feb, one was at Filyos delta 18 March, one Yalova Safranlık 24 Mar and five were in Kızılırmak delta on 6 Mar. A **Saker** *Falco cherrug* was observed Büyükçekmece lake 28 Apr. A **Baillon's Crane** *Porzana pusilla* was at Yumurtalık lagoons 11 Apr and one Alanya 4–28 Apr. Twenty-seven **Great Bustards** *Otis tarda* were seen Burdur 29 Jan and two Şanlıurfa Kızılkuyu 4 Mar. A migrant **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor* was at the Göksu delta 21 Apr. Two individuals of the rare spring migrant **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* were recorded at Yumurtalık lagoons 11 Apr and 29 **Sociable Lapwings** *Chettusia gregarius* were at Şanlıurfa Akçakale 10 Mar and 21 at Şanlıurfa Kızılkuyu 4 Mar. The first breeding record of **Red-wattled Plover** *Hoplopterus indicus* away from the river Tigris was a pair in Akçakale 17 May–24 Jun and one was in Mardin 13 May.

A **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* was in Filyos delta 17 Apr, one Kavak delta 16 Apr and two Rize 25 Feb. A **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* was near Konya Kozanlı 8 Jun, the fourth record. Fifteen **Short-eared Owls** *Asio flammeus* were at Yedikır dam lake 11 Feb. A migrant **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops superciliosus* was in Riva, İstanbul, 29 Apr. One **Cyprus Wheatear** *Oenanthe cyprica* was in the Göksu delta 10 Apr and one at Akyatan lake 25 Mar. Four **Semi-collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula semitorquata* were in Erzurum Aşkale 21 Apr, suggesting a new breeding site. **Great Grey Shrikes** *Lanius excubitor* were present in many localities within the northern half of the country. One was in Kırklareli Vize 20 Jan and 13 Feb, one Çorum Alaca 21 Feb, one Kızılırmak delta 25 Mar, one Kocaeli Kandıra 10 Mar, one Manyas lake 26 Jan and one at Sarıyar dam lake 11 Mar. The **Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens* visited its traditional site again: one was at Samandağ 21 Jan. An **Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* was in Kızılırmak delta 12 Apr and one Mardin 5

May. A **Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* was near Samsun 30 Apr, the most northerly record for Turkey.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris* from December was re-found in Al Ain 13–15 Jan (5th record). Up to three **Red-crested Pochards** *Netta rufina* were in Dubai 28 Jan–11 Feb (12th record). The **Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus* at Wamm farms 28 Mar–2 Apr is possibly the returning bird last seen 24 Jun 2011. One **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* on a Khor Kalba pelagic 11 May was the 16th record. Up to two **Hen Harriers** *Circus cyaneus* at Wamm farms 13 Jan–23 Mar was only the 7th record since 2000. Another female-plumaged bird stayed at Khor al-Beida 20 Jan–22 Feb. One **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* was seen at Dubai desert conservation reserve on 16 Jan. Possibly the same **Great Stone-curlew** *Esacus recurvirostris*, first seen 27 Sep 2011, was re-found at Khor Qirqishan (Musaffah) 27 Feb–6 Mar (first UAE record). One **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis* at the Al Ain water treatment plant 18–26 May was the first UAE record and the first for Arabia. An adult **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* was at Mafraq rubbish tip 4 Feb–19 Mar (9th record) while a **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* was recorded on a Khor Kalba pelagic 11 May (13th record).

One well twitched **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* was at Wamm farms 20–26 Apr (third record) while a **White-throated Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis* was seen at Jebel Dhanna 1 Apr (11th record). An immature **Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* in Safa park 18–25 Feb was a new species for the UAE and only the second record for the region, the first having been seen in southern Oman 7 Dec 2011 (see *Sandgrouse* 34 (1) for further details). There were three records of **Bay-backed Shrikes** *Lanius vittatus* this spring—all at Wamm farms (8, 16 Apr, 4 May). One well photographed **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* at Al Barsha pond park, Dubai, 18 Jan–1 Feb was the second confirmed record; a bird at the Dubai pivot fields on 11 Mar and 15 Apr was possibly the same individual. The fifth record of **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* was

seen in Al Ain 18–25 Mar. This spring was very good for '**Caspian**' **Stonechats** *Saxicola [torquatus] maurus variegatus* with a total of 17 birds 6 Feb–24 Mar (8th–18th records). A male **Kurdistan Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna* at Jebel Dhanna 22 Mar–2 Apr was only the second UAE record (the first was in 2003/04). **Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii* has not been recorded in the UAE since 2006 so a male at Jebel Dhanna 21–22 Mar (the 21st record) is of note. A **Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis* photographed in Safa park 10–14 Apr was a new species for the UAE. Two **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus (rubescens) japonicus* the first of which was seen 10 Dec 2011, wintered at Emirates palace, Abu Dhabi, until 3 Mar with another bird at Wamm farms 20 Jan–2 Mar (21st record). A single **Eastern Cinereous Bunting** *Emberiza (cineracea) semenowi* was on Saadiyat island 9 Mar.

UZBEKISTAN

Following the first record of **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* April 2009 (*Sandgrouse* 31: 221) breeding was confirmed when two nests were found in a mixed colony of **Black-crowned Night Herons** *Nycticorax nycticorax*, **Little Egrets** *Egretta garzetta* and **Rooks** *Corvus frugilegus* in an ash-tree grove in Alat city (Plate 11, Bukhara region) 4 May 2011. Recent research at Dalverzin hunting management area IBA, in the middle reaches of the Syrdarya river south of Tashkent, has produced several records of note. A flock of 10 **Glossy Ibises** *Plegadis falcinellus* was observed 5 May 2012 with several flocks totalling 50 birds at nearby Sasikol lake on 2 Jun. These are notable counts and the first records for the site. A single **Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus* was present 7 Mar.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* is a scarce but annual migrant at Dalverzin, usually in April, so one on 9 Jun was of note and could, potentially, indicate local breeding. Confirmed breeding activity of several species was certainly noted in the area on this date. **Eurasian Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oedipnemos* was noted breeding on the banks of the Syrdarya river while two small temporary islands in the river hosted breeding **Little Ringed Plovers** *Charadrius dubius*, more than 50 **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola*, clearly holding breeding territories, as well as



Plate 11. Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, 4 May 2011, Alat city, Uzbekistan. © M Turaev

Common and Little Terns *Sterna hirundo* and *S. albifrons*. Normally river levels are higher at this time of year so there is usually no suitable breeding habitat. **Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* is generally considered to be a migrant and wintering species in Uzbekistan so a singing male in deciduous forest in the Amankutan mountains (Zarafshan range, Samarkand region) on 6 Jun was notable. The species breeds in northern Iran and the central and western Kopetdag in Turkmenistan so could, potentially, also breed in Uzbekistan.

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ERRATA

The following errors unfortunately appeared in *Around the Region Sandgrouse* 34 (1) 2012.

AFGHANISTAN

Black Drongo *Hypsipetus leucocephalus* should read **Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocerus*. **Snow Pigeon** *Lerwa lerwa* should read **Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota*. It is uncertain whether or not the **Painted Sandgrouse** *Pterocles indicus* reported was claimed as ssp *indicus* or *arabicus*. The latter is nowadays treated as a ssp of **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *P. lichtensteinii*.

ISRAEL

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* should read **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris (diomedea) borealis*.

KAZAKHSTAN

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus* should read **Lesser Sandplover** *Charadrius atrifrons*.



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