

# Spring Birding in Kuwait

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

### Outline Itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	Fly to Kuwait
<b>Day 2</b>	Arrive Kuwait
<b>Day 3</b>	Al Shaheed Park – KISR West
<b>Day 4</b>	Abu Al Hassaniya – Al Nuwaiseeb
<b>Day 5</b>	Jahra Pools – Mutla'a Ranch
<b>Day 6</b>	Abdali Farms – Kabd Reserve
<b>Day 7</b>	Abraq Al Habari – Al-Shallal's Farm
<b>Day 8</b>	Jahra East Outfall – Jal Al Zor
<b>Day 9</b>	Pelagic Trip – Zour Village
<b>Day 10</b>	Departure

### Departs

April – May

### Focus

Birds

### Grading

Easy walks, but in a hot climate

### Dates and Prices

See website (tour code **KUW02**)

### Highlights

- Superb Western Palearctic birding with many sought-after migrants
- Crab-plover, Socotra Cormorant and Afghan Babbler
- Superb raptor passage including many species of eagles, harriers, buzzards, falcons and hawks
- Spectacular numbers of shorebirds
- An array of desert species including Afghan Babbler, Asian Desert Warbler and Hoopoe Lark



Crab-plover, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Menetries's Warbler



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

**T:** +44 (0)1962 733051

**E:** [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

**W:** [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

## Introduction

Located at the crossroads of three continents – Asia, Europe, and Africa – Kuwait serves as a crucial stopover along migratory flyways, where millions of birds pass through on their journey to breeding grounds further north. From March to May, the country's diverse habitats, including wetlands, deserts, and coastal areas, become vital rest-stops for a wide variety of migratory species. Kuwait's coastal areas, especially, provide prime habitat for shorebirds, waterfowl, and waders, while overhead, the raptor passage can be impressive. Migrant passerines can be found in any pocket of habitat and will include many sought-after Western Palearctic species. Such species as Crab-plover, Socotra Cormorant and Afghan Babblers are among the many birds observed during this season. For anyone interested in birdwatching or bird photography, spring in Kuwait is an extraordinary opportunity to engage with the vibrant avian-life at home or passing through this vital region.

## Itinerary

*NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.*

### Day 1 – 2

### Fly London to Kuwait

Today we'll take a flight, which will likely have a short connection, to Kuwait's International Airport, just a short journey from the country's capital, Kuwait City.

### Day 3

### Al Shaheed Park – KISR West

After breakfast, we'll begin our birding by visiting the Al Shaheed Park and coastal sites around Kuwait City. The park is an excellent place to see migrants which may include such species as Eastern Cinereous Bunting, Masked Shrike and Basra Reed Warbler (mid-April tours). Resident White-eared and Red-vented Bulbuls may also be seen alongside Indian Silverbill. Areas of vegetation are scarce in this arid country, which makes these parks a good place to find birds such as Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin amongst numerous grounded migrants. After birding the park, we will visit KISR West which



Turkestan Shrike

is a large, shallow bay rich in waders, terns and gulls. This is very much an urban location, but we would still hope to see a host of interesting species including Tibetan Sand Plover, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Western Reef Egret. Gulls might be numerous, and we will try to pick out Steppe Gull and Great Black-headed Gull amongst others. Terns will be well represented with Gull-billed, Whiskered, and Caspian Terns all likely amongst elegant flocks of Greater Flamingo. Moving west around the bay

we come to Sulaibikhat, where we hope to see our first Crab-plovers of the trip. This is a beautiful

and iconic species of the western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf that breeds in Kuwait in good numbers, arriving in late March, and is a prime target on most visiting birders' lists. Other waders that may be present here include the stunning Terek Sandpiper.

## Day 4 Abu Al Hassaniya – Fintas Park – Ras Juliaia – Al Nuwaiseeb

Today we travel south from Kuwait City to bird sites along the coastal strip. We begin the day on the coast at Abu Al Hassaniya, where we hope to see Great Crested, Lesser Crested, and Sandwich Terns, along with a diverse selection of waders and possibly Socotra Cormorant. This is another bird that is restricted to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, and Kuwait is the only place in the Western Palearctic where it can be seen. Next, we visit Fintas Park in search of migrants, and this is a good place to find Semi-collared Flycatcher and White-throated Robin amongst others. From there, we head to the desert scrub of Ras Juliaia, where we aim to find residents such as Ménétries's and Asian Desert Warblers, as well as a selection of wheatears which may include Pied, Eastern Black-eared, Desert, Isabelline, and Northern.

Our final stop is Al Nuwaiseeb, where the habitat is rockier and offers opportunities to see Blue and Rufous-tailed Rock Thrushes as well as wheatears, White-throated Robin, and Siberian Stonechat.



White-throated Robin

## Day 5 Jahra Pools Reserve – Mutla'a Ranch

Our morning begins at Jahra Pools Reserve, Kuwait's premier wetland and birding site. 220 species have been recorded here including many rarities. The site is man-made and consists of small pools



Eastern Imperial Eagle

and *Phragmites* reedbeds and is managed for conservation. Species to look out for here include Clamorous Reed and Moustached Warblers, and rails and crakes including Grey-headed Swamphen and Little Crake. Spur-winged and Red-wattled Lapwings will be present, along with a diverse selection of freshwater waders, and herons will include Purple and Western Reef Herons. A feature of the surrounding area of this site is the presence of a good selection of raptors with Steppe Eagle, Eastern Imperial Eagle, and Greater Spotted Eagle all possible. A few hours here will

rack up a healthy list with a wealth of wintering warblers, shrikes, cuckoos, bee-eaters, kingfishers, rollers, hirundines, flycatchers and chats all present. We will also visit Jahra Farm where the cultivated fields are a good spot to find Bank Myna, pipits, wagtails, bee-eaters and shrikes.

After lunch, we'll visit the arid, scrubby plain of Mutla'a Ranch where possibilities include chats, pipits and wagtails including White-throated Robin, Caspian Stonechat, Pied and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears, Caucasian Water, Red-throated and Richard's Pipits, Citrine Wagtail, many variants of Yellow Wagtail, Pale Rockfinch, Yellow-throated Sparrow and Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin among many others.

## Day 6

### Abdali Farms – Liah Reserve – Kabd Reserve

We'll start at Abdali Farms, where a mixture of farmland and desert close to the Iraq border provides the habitat for the Western Palearctic's only Afghan Babblers which have been breeding here since 2007. We will spend enough time here to see this sociable species as it moves around in the small groups through farmland scrub. This site is also a good place to see Shikra and we will closely examine any passing *Accipiter* here to maximise our chance of seeing this charismatic little hawk. Other species present should include Red-wattled Lapwing and Greater Hoopoe Lark.

Next, we'll explore the open desert and mesquite trees of Liah Reserve where Greater Hoopoe and Crested Lark breed alongside many wheatear and shrike species. Migrants here might include Upcher's Warbler, Lesser Kestrel and Caspian Plover, and rarities such as Bimaculated Lark have been recorded.

Our final site for the day will be the large ungrazed Kabd Reserve where more desert habitat provides the opportunity to search for larks which might include Bar-tailed Lark, Black-crowned Finch-lark and there is a small chance of Arabian Lark.

## Day 7

### Abraq Al Habari – United Poultry Co. Fields – Al-Shallal's Farm

Today we head west to the irrigated oasis of Al-Abraq which is a magnet for migrants surrounded by arid desert. This site has a reputation for attracting rare migrants and there have been many firsts for Kuwait recorded here. Numbers of migrants can be high, and at this time of the year a diverse selection of Palearctic migrants may be found. We will also search the surrounding desert for arid specialists such as Temminck's and Desert Larks.



Temminck's Horned Lark

In the afternoon, we will visit the pivot fields around United Poultry Co., which is an area of irrigated agriculture on the edge of Kuwait City that is another area attractive to migrants as well as fly-over



raptors and again, anything might turn up here. We finish the day at Al-Shallal's Farm to the north of Kuwait City, which is once again an area of cultivation in barren surroundings and is another migrant hotspot. At the end of the day, we will have hopefully seen a good selection of migrant and desert birds.

## Day 8

### Jahra East Outfall – Jal Al Zor

Today we will spend the morning birding wetland sites and we will start at Jahra Pools where we hope to find new migrants not present on our previous visit. We will then move to Jahra East Outfall which is an area of extensive *Phragmites* reedbeds and muddy foreshore. These reedbeds are the prime site for warblers as well as other reedbed dwellers. The foreshore is rich in waders, gulls, terns and herons and is best on a rising tide when these birds can be very close, allowing for photography and searching for scarcities.

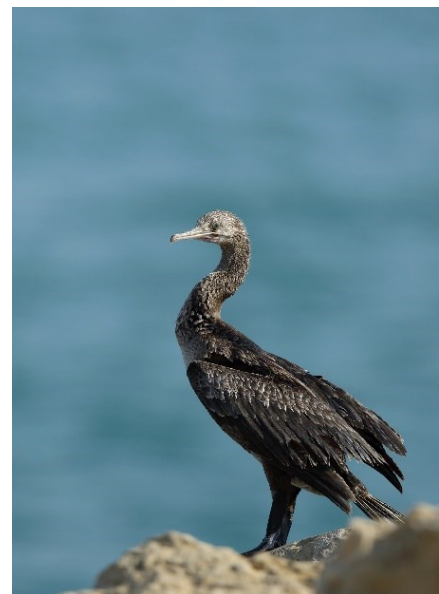
In the afternoon we will travel to Jal Al Zor which is a limestone escarpment rising steeply from the coastal plain. Mourning Wheatear, Trumpeter Finch and Asian Desert Warbler breed here and it is the prime spot for passage Caspian Plover in spring. This is another site where Arabian Lark as well as Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, along with Pale Rock Sparrow and occasionally MacQueen's Bustard, have been observed. Surrounding trees play host to passing Scops Owls and these must be checked carefully as Pallid Scops Owl may be present. The area is also superb for migrants and time spent here should be very productive.

## Day 9

### Pelagic Trip – Fahaheel Park – Zour Village

We'll spend the morning on a boat trip out into Kuwait Bay, where we should get close views of the more pelagic species. Terns will be evident and we will search for Bridled, Lesser Crested and White-cheeked Terns amongst the throng. Socotra Cormorant is another target today and we hope to get our best views yet of this sought-after species on offshore islets. Other possibilities are Great Black-headed Gulls and Skuas on passage and we may encounter cetaceans such as Indo-Pacific Humpback and Bottlenose Dolphins.

In the afternoon, we'll visit Fahaheel Park on the coastal strip south of Kuwait City, where the trees and shrubs will hold migrants, and to see Rüppell's Weaver which has become established at this site. We will also visit the Nuwaiseeb Lycium bushes, where we may see species such as Kurdistan Wheatear and possibly Desert Finch which breeds here. We end the day at the abandoned Zour village, where the surrounding arid habitat may hold Cream-coloured Courser alongside the many wheatears and larks.



Socotra Cormorant

## Day 10

## Departure

After an action-packed birding week, we will transfer to the airport for our flights back to the UK.

---

## Tour Grading & Focus

The primary focus of this holiday will be on the birds of Kuwait.

## Weather, Clothing & Equipment

While warm to hot, sunny conditions, and warm evenings are to be expected, there is a small chance of overcast conditions with occasional rain. It would be sensible to come prepared for such possibilities.

## What's Included

- Accommodation in a comfortable hotel with twin-bedded rooms that includes breakfast and dinner.
- Light lunch, water, tea, coffee, and refreshment during the daytime.
- Entrance fees to reserves and professional bird guidance.
- Ground transport in a 4x4, and also transport from and to the airport.

## Extending Your Holiday

We would be very happy to assist in arranging extensions, should this be of interest. Please contact Dan Lay ([Dan@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:Dan@naturetrek.co.uk) or 01962 733051) for further information and/or make sure to stipulate any interest in a possible extension upon booking.

## How to Book Your Place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements at the time of booking.

## Receive Our E-Newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.