

Southern Morocco

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 – 21 March 2015



Thick-billed Lark



Temminck's Lark



Northern Bald Ibis



Crowned Sandgrouse

Report by Peter Dunn & Dave Smith
Images by Peter Dunn



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Tour Summary

This tour took us through tremendously stimulating scenery packed with intriguing geomorphological and geological features: from high mountain passes with snow draped summits to stony hamada deserts, sandy deserts, marshes, estuaries and rivers. This year, after much rain the stony deserts were coated in green as plants raced to propagate and many of the water courses were brimming full of mud-laden water to a level not often seen on these trips. We took advantage of many opportunities to immerse ourselves in the culture of the country. We visited souks, markets, and small villages bustling with local commercial activities involving donkeys, carts and camels. The very special desert birds thrilled us. Houbara Bustard, Desert Sparrow, Brown-necked Raven, sandgrouses, Cream-coloured Courser, Thick-billed Lark, Desert lark and the inimitable Hoopoe Lark were all thoroughly enjoyed. We also studied beetles, dragonflies, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians and endearing mammals such as Barbary Ground Squirrels. On some days there was a cool wind, but it was sunny on most. This was ideal for watching the varied and exotic wildlife of the region.

Day 1

Thursday 12th March

UK - Marrakech

Peter met eight early travellers at Gatwick and they were quickly airborne en route Marrakech. The smooth flight arrived ahead of time and the advance party quickly negotiated immigration, changed money and were met by Zakaria, one of our drivers.

We were taken to Hotel Kenzi Farah where we checked in. Next we were transported into town with our guide Sana for a tour of the souk and the bustling square of Jemaa el Fna. We had a delicious lunch at a local restaurant

and then had an escorted journey through the alleyways and passages off the main square where you could buy anything from huge Berber carpets to homeopathic remedies. We had a brief talk at one of the homeopathic shops where one or two items were bought, and enjoyed freshly squeezed citrus while watching snake charmers and the hustle bustle of the square. All too soon it was time to return to the hotel for a rest before dinner. We noted a few birds on this afternoon jaunt including many House Buntings (the first was in the airport arrival lounge), both Pallid and Little Swifts, and noisy Common Bulbuls from most green places.

Dave arrived in the evening with the last of our group who had travelled on the afternoon flight from Manchester. Soon we were settled into our rooms and enjoying a buffet dinner. There was no log today and the promise of an early walk before breakfast had most retiring early.

Day 2

Friday 13th March

Marrakech to Boumalne via Tizi n'Tichka Mountain Pass and Ouarzazate Barrage.

With Common Bulbuls providing an early morning alarm call to many, the group assembled for a pre-breakfast walk around the hotel gardens with the highlights being Chiffchaff, a group of Serin and three House Buntings. Leaving the hotel just after 8am we headed through the outskirts of Marrakech towards the Atlas mountains noting good numbers of Spotless Starlings and Pallid Swifts on the way.

We made a couple of brief stops en route before we arrived at our scheduled drinks stop at Toufilite. Here we strolled along the road to witness a superb displaying male Goshawk, at least five Great Spotted Woodpeckers, small numbers of 'Atlas' Coal Tits, African Blue Tit, and the African race of Chaffinch. We had almost given up on our target species, Levillant's Woodpecker when the shout "over here" erupted. After much scrutiny of the roadside trees the female popped her head out of a nest-hole and then a male flew in to feed her. He then alighted on the branches above the nest-hole giving the group excellent views.

Returning to the cafe, we assembled on the roof to enjoy the panoramic view whilst quenching our thirsts. Here we noted Blackcap and Woodlark singing in the scrub below, and both Plain Tiger and Greenish Black-tip butterflies.

Back in the vehicles we made our way up the winding roads to the viewpoint at the top of the Tizi n'Tichka Pass, stopping here briefly for photographs and reasonable views of Raven and Crag Martin.

Moving on we made a stop for lunch on a high grassy plain area which was covered in Wild Crocus and the blooms of the common Hoop Petticoat Narcissus. Our picnic lunch was briefly interrupted by the flypast of a Barbary Falcon and the spotting of both Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow butterflies. Shortly after leaving here we found a huge mixed flock of Alpine and Red-billed Chough feeding on the side of the road.

We continued on towards Ouarzazate noting a number of White-crowned Wheatears on the way before spending an hour at the barrage just east of the town. Here wildfowl numbers were disappointing although we did see our first Desert Wheatear and Desert Lark for the trip. Other interesting discoveries were a couple of Toad Grasshoppers and a splendid Lesser Emperor Dragonfly. After a brief view of Marsh Harrier we left to continue our journey and arrived at our hotel in Boumalne Dades around 7pm.

A traditional evening meal was followed by entertainment from a group of local drummers, later joined by some volunteers from the male section of our group.

Day 3

Saturday 14th March

Tagdilt Plain and Dades Gorge.

We meet before breakfast and took a stroll to the nearby Tagdilt Plain for our first taste of real desert birding. Wheatears were present in good numbers enabling Red-rumped, Desert and White-crowned to be noted together with a number of larks, including, Thick-billed, Greater Short-toed, Thekla and Crested.

Back at the hotel a pair of House Buntings occupied the dining room fireplace, providing entertainment during our traditional breakfast.

We left the hotel around 9am and made the short drive to another part of the Tagdilt Plain, noting numerous larks from the vehicles. As we got out we were alerted to a distant Long-legged Buzzard and a couple of unidentified flying Sandgrouse. Here Greater Short-toed Larks were everywhere so we were pleased when we managed to locate a group of four Lesser Short-toed Larks and another pair of Desert Wheatear.

Moving on we drove to a small cultivated area in search of migrants. Here the nearby river was surprisingly high and very few birds were in view. The highlights were a Southern Grey Shrike of the race *algeriensis*, a Corn Bunting and a large number of Bath White butterflies. Back at the vehicles three House Buntings and a small group of Trumpeter Finches made the stop worthwhile.

Heading back towards Boumalne, we took the turn towards the Dades Gorge, enjoying spectacular scenery as we made our way to the top and our scheduled lunch stop. Our elevated eating area provided good views of Rock Dove, House Bunting, Blue Rock Thrush, Crag Martin and the briefest views of Tristram's Warbler; the latter to just a handful of the group.

After lunch and with temperatures rising, we all descended the gorge on foot looking forward to an ice cool beer in a restaurant at the base. It was a great disappointment when we got there to discover that there was no beer! Fortunately we had enjoyed good views of Lesser Kestrel, Bonelli's Eagle and Grey Wagtail on the way down which made the walk worthwhile.

Heading back to Boumalne we stopped briefly to photograph some peculiar shaped rock formations, and later for a group of three Bonelli's Eagles, and then stopping to photograph White Storks at their nest.

Heading again across the Tagdilt Plain we visited a rubbish dump and obtained good views of Thick-billed Lark, our first Temminck's Lark, and further views of Red-rumped and Desert Wheatears before making the short trip back to the hotel for another pleasant Moroccan evening.

Day 4

Sunday 15th March

Boumalne to Erfoud via the Tagdilt Plain.

On leaving our Boumalne hotel we were anticipating a spot of migration after noting Swallow and Red-throated Pipit flying over as we came out of breakfast. We again started our day driving over the Tagdilt Plain, this time towards a different area of cultivation. Here we again saw Temminck's Lark and were thrilled during our short walk to note a number of small groups of Black-bellied Sandgrouse totalling 14 birds. Searching the sky resulted in a Long-legged Buzzard being seen along with a pair of Short-toed Eagles. The cultivations also gave up three Hoopoes, two Northern Wheatears, another Southern Grey Shrike and a small group of Yellow Wagtails containing the races *iberiae* and *flava*.

We headed back to Boumalne for a comfort stop before heading to our lunch spot at Tizmoutine where we added Spectacled Warbler to our list. Next we stopped at a wadi in the Marrha Plain where we saw Spectacled Warbler and our eagle-eyed group discovered a number of purple and white Broomrapes and a mid-sized Scorpion.

Continuing east we stopped in another scrubby area and saw a distant Long-legged Buzzard, a Corn Bunting and many Greater Short-toed Larks. We reached our hotel in Erfoud around 5.45pm, noting a number of White-crowned Wheatears and a large herd of grazing Camels on our approach to the town. We retired to bed early as we had an early departure arranged for the next day.

Day 5

Monday 16th March

Jeep Safari from Erfoud into the Desert

We were up early, had breakfast at 5am and then at 5.45am had a sortie into the desert in 4x4 vehicles. We wasted no time in spotting birds when Cream-coloured Courser was seen in the vehicle headlights.

Our convoy continued into the desert stopping briefly for us to watch and photograph the sunrise as it appeared over the distant sand-dunes. Here more Cream-coloured Coursers were seen and we delighted in watching the fascinating display of Hoopoe Lark. Our departure was delayed firstly by a Desert Warbler and then by a Lanner Falcon as it dashed low over the terrain.

We finally moved off to a site selected for Egyptian Nightjar and were fortunate to get good views as it nestled down amongst a group of small boulders. Nearby were White Wagtail, Temminck's Lark, Bar-tailed Lark and a splendid Woodchat Shrike. With Egyptian Nightjar being new for almost everyone it was going to be difficult to top this sighting, but after just another five minutes travelling we were enthralled to see a Houbara Bustard come into view.

Continuing, we chanced upon a small area of cultivation and were amazed to record five species of wheatear, namely White-crowned, Isabelline, European, Desert and new for most, Seebohm's. Here we also saw our only Desert Sparrow of the trip before moving on to the famous Cafe Yasmina.

Arriving about 10.15am we were amazed to see a vast area of open water surrounding the encampment so we took advantage of the elevated viewing area to scan the lagoon while we took much needed refreshments. Water

birds on offer here included Little and Great Crested Grebes, Moorhen, Ruddy Shelduck and Grey Heron, whilst waders present included Common Sandpiper, Greenshank, Spotted Redshank and Kentish Plover. A female Marsh Harrier quartered the area looking for prey, as did our first Brown-necked Raven. Also of note were huge clumps of sulphur coloured Cistanche growing at the base of the building walls.

Back in the vehicles we headed back into the desert in search of sandgrouse and soon found a group of a dozen or more Pin-tailed Sandgrouse at quite close quarters. Also nearby were Bar-tailed Lark, three Brown-necked Ravens, a couple more Cream-coloured Coursers and a Tawny Pipit.

We stopped for lunch at a local Berber depot, listening to a sales talk about locally hand-made carpets before noting Laughing Dove as we made our way towards Merzouga and its adjacent lake. Here a group of 30 or so Greater Flamingo dwarfed a nearby group of 60 Marbled Duck, and both Gadwall and Shoveler were unexpected. Waders here included Little Stint, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish Plover, Little Ringed Plover and Green Sandpiper. A Yellow-legged gull was also unexpected as was a group of some ten Lesser Emperor dragonflies.

Heading back towards Erfoud we noted a couple of Marsh Harriers then hit another purple patch, obtaining super views of Cream-coloured Courser and Hoopoe Lark, and then more sandgrouse; this time Crowned and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse.

Back on the main road we headed towards base, veering off-road via a couple of Oasis, and we arrived back at our hotel at 5.50pm. What a fantastic day's birding it had been.

Day 6

Tuesday 17th March

Erfoud to Ourzazate.

With Common Bulbul and House Bunting singing we left our hotel on the next leg of our journey, travelling back west towards Ourzazate.

Our first stop some fifty minutes later was at a remote rocky escarpment where we hoped to see Pharaoh's Eagle Owl. No sooner had we walked the 400 metres or so than it was located in a shady crack in the crags: An excellent start to the day's birding.

Moving on we travelled to another craggy area to search for Lanner. Unfortunately we failed to find it here but were compensated by Short-toed and Booted Eagles and a couple of Brown-necked Ravens.

Today's coffee stop was uneventful with just a House Bunting for company. Just after we recommenced a Lesser Kestrel was seen. The drive was quite pleasant but birds were rather sparse so it was pleasing when we pulled up for our picnic in a Wadi just outside Tazarine to hear both Chiffchaff and Hoopoe singing. Riverine pools below our picnic spot were teeming with tadpoles and toadlets, and a large Sparrowhawk in a tree at the far side of the wadi required a check in the book to ensure its identification.

Continuing west we stopped at the River Draa where three Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, a target for many, were perched on wires spanning the river. Next we reached Ouarzazate about 6pm, driving to the barrage in the hope

of increasing our tally. Here birds were coming in to roost with 25 Little Egrets and a least 150 White Storks present. Our first Maghreb Lark put on a good show as did a group of four Garganey. Birds of prey present included Marsh Harrier and Osprey, and just as we entered the bus for our drive to the hotel seven Common Cranes glided in: A great end to the day.

Traffic to the hotel was quite light although a slight jam did allow a group of three Lesser Kestrels to be noted as we approached the Hotel.

Day 7

Wednesday 18th March

Ourzazate and the barrage, Tinfat Saffron Centre and on to Tarodant

After an early breakfast we left the hotel and headed to the nearby barrage hoping to continue where we had left off the previous evening. The first bird to be seen was a Little Owl on the corner of a ruined building, and then half a dozen Maghreb Larks were noted, with a single Spanish Sparrow nearby.

Scanning the water's edge produced a Grey Heron, 15 Avocets, three Green Sandpipers, six Redshanks and a Curlew. Still roosting were 100+ White Storks, three Little Egrets and at least 30 Cormorants, and scrutiny of the 30 Eurasian Coot present failed to relinquish a Red-knobbed Coot. Migrants noted included two singing Sedge Warblers, a mixed flock of hirundines containing Swallows, House Martins and Sand Martins all feeding with the resident Pallid Swifts, and a group of wagtails and pipits. This latter group consisted of 20 White Wagtails, a single Moroccan Wagtail, one Yellow Wagtail of the Spanish race, and both Meadow and Red-throated Pipits: Quite a good haul to start the day.

Leaving the barrage about 9.30am we continued west encountering cloud by late morning as we drove through the Anti Atlas mountain range. We made a few stops but had little to show other than Black and White-crowned Wheatears and Greater Short-toed Larks.

Stopping for lunch at the Saffron Shop in Tinfat we enjoyed a short walk in the adjacent gardens, but not before donning coats and jumpers to protect against the cold wind blowing directly off the snow covered mountain peaks. Here we saw Great Spotted Woodpecker, Woodchat Shrike, Hoopoe and the day's highlight, Tawny Owl of the race *maurtanica*.

Continuing after lunch we saw more Black Wheatears from the vehicles and noted that the main tree habitat changed from Almond to Argan as we approached the Aoulouz area. By mid-afternoon conditions became hazy as though we were in a mild sandstorm and this continued until we reached the outskirts of Oued Targa around 4.10pm. Here, three Black Kites were noted above us together with a Common Kestrel and a Southern Grey Shrike nearby.

Approaching Taroudant just after 5pm we stopped at a dry wadi and were pleased to see Booted Eagle and Black Kite before driving the short distance to our hotel.

Day 8

Thursday 19th March

Taroudant to Agadir; Tamri and Oued Sousse

Before breakfast we made a short journey east of the town to a site near the wadi visited the previous evening. This time the area was open flat ground bounded by a hedge on one side. The area also had a large amount of stored concrete pipes and drainage conduits. We soon saw new species for the trip with Fulvous Babbler, Black-winged Kite and Red-rumped Swallow. Other birds of note included Marsh Harrier, Spanish Sparrow, Hoopoe and a super Barbary Falcon.

We returned to the hotel for breakfast, and then were on our way towards Agadir and the coast. By 10.45am we were passing Agadir airport and then Agadir port en route Tamri. We stopped for coffee midway to Cap Rhir noting Lesser Black-backed and Yellow-legged Gulls in substantial numbers.

Continuing we reached Tamri around 12.30pm and parked at the beach. We were greeted by a large mixed flock of Lesser Black-backed, Yellow-legged and Audouin's Gulls on the adjacent river, and a splendid fly-over by some 80 endangered Bald Ibis on the hillside opposite us. Although fairly distant we got some remarkable views of this special bird.

We had lunch while at this location so had plenty of opportunity to add species to our list. A pair of Gannets was the first to be noted followed by Sandwich Tern, Zitting Cisticola and a splendid Moroccan Cormorant. A couple of Sand Lizards were present, presumably a food item for the Short-toed Eagle that flew overhead later.

We left Tamri about 2pm and made our way back to Agadir where we booked into our hotel and rested for a short while before meeting up at 4.30pm for our evening sortie to the Oued Sousse. Only 20 minutes away from the hotel, the river was well populated allowing Oystercatcher, Avocet, Black-headed Gull and Mediterranean Gull to be noted alongside Curlew, Cormorant, Spoonbill and Grey Heron. A flock of waders flying downriver included Ringed Plover, Redshank, Dunlin and a Common Sandpiper. Birds of prey in this location included two Peregrines, an Osprey and a male Sparrowhawk.

We left the riverside to join the track between the King's Palace and the Golf Course, targeting Red-necked Nightjar when dusk arrived. The track produced good views of Barbary Partridge before heavy rain sent us all scampering back to the vehicles. Not to be outdone, we parked on the road near to the track and were able to alight when the rain stopped. Not expecting anything to show after such a downpour, we were pleased to hear both Stone Curlew and European Nightjar singing before we returned to the hotel for our evening meal.

Day 9

Friday 20th March

Sousse Massa Reserve and area

We awoke early in preparation for an early breakfast and found the rain lashing down and the skies dark and dismal; not what we wanted on our visit to one of the trip's hot spots.

We set off around 7am for the 90-minute drive to the Sousse Massa and were pleasantly surprised when we turned off the main road at Belfaa to find the clouds clearing and the rain coming to a stop. Just down the road from Belfaa we found a little rubbish tip at the side of the road and a female Moussier's Redstart. Also here was

our first sighting of Stone Curlew for the trip. With the sun now breaking through the clouds, Heather produced a pair of glasses that enabled us all to view the partial solar eclipse in safety; a fascinating alternative to our trip.

Just down the road from here we encountered a pair of Little Owls before arriving at the Sousse Massa reserve around 9am. Here we elected to walk the track leading to the information centre, occasionally radioing the vehicles to park nearby in case the oncoming dark clouds brought more rain.

On alighting from the vehicles, the song of Quail was immediately heard, and this was one of about five noted from different sites during the day. Moussier's Redstarts were equally spaced down the track, as were Cetti's Warbler and Stonechat. Serin, Common Bulbul and Zitting Cisticola were common but our target species, Black-crowned Tchagra, was conspicuous by its absence although it could be heard singing over the river! Three Cirl Buntings were new for the trip, as was a Kingfisher darting upstream just before an Osprey flew downstream. Tchagra-searching produced two splendid Black-eared Wheatears, three Tree Pipits, a singing Grasshopper Warbler, an Isabelline (Western Olivaceous) Warbler, a couple of Sedge Warblers and at least six Chiffchaffs, but no Tchagra.

With rain threatening we drove out of the park to a nearby village and ate our picnic lunch in the spare room of a small cafe. After a few light showers we made a tour of the local bridges crossing the river and saw good numbers of Cattle Egrets and Swallows, more Moussier's Redstarts, and at long last super prolonged views of a Black-crowned Tchagra. With our luck changing we returned to the Massa reserve and secured sightings of Barbary Partridge and Red-rumped Swallow, and our 6th Little Owl of the day.

It was now time to head back to the hotel, but heavy traffic around Agadir meant we did not get there until 6.45pm: no worries as we had had another super days birding.

Day 10

Saturday 21st March

Agadir Mountain viewpoint, Agadir port, Oued Sousse and return to UK.

With steady rain continuing from the early hours there was no rush to leave the hotel. It cleared around 9.30am and gave us the opportunity to get in some final birding before our afternoon flights back to the UK.

Our first birding call was to drive up to the Agadir mountain viewpoint, where a stunning view over the town and port was had. From here we walked down the main access road scanning the roadside vegetation as we went. Highlights were Southern Grey Shrike, up to six Subalpine Warblers, three splendid Moussier's Redstarts, a male Blue Rock Thrush, a pair of Barbary Partridge and a Spanish Sparrow hybrid.

With the rain coming down again we got back into the vehicles and made the short journey down to the fishing port. Here there was much coming and going of the large fishing fleet with many boats off loading their catch on the port side close by. Hundreds of Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were milling around hoping for a free meal as the fishermen unloaded their haul, mainly made up of Sardines and Pipefish. After watching a group of Sandwich Terns diving for fish in the harbour the rain returned so we made our way to our lunch venue. Here the group enjoyed a selection of Tajenes before showing our gratitude to our drivers Zakaria and Abderazak for their wonderful work during the trip, both driving and preparing the picnics.

The last few hours in the afternoon were spent at Oued Souss where we walked the stone track along the side of the river. The unusually high rainfall this winter had made more marsh habitat which was buzzing with life. A small flock of Spoonbills slept alongside sleeping and feeding Little and Cattle Egrets and Grey Herons. Noisy Black-winged Stilts fed with Redshank and Greenshank. New trip additions were Curlew Sandpiper and Ruff.

Dave and Peter Z had to leave early to get their flight back to Manchester while the remainder with Peter D found a small flock of Stone Curlew playing hide and seeks amongst a small flock of sheep and goats, and a substantial flock of Yellow Wagtails dropped into the marsh: a sign of migration after the rain.

Booking in at Agadir airport was straight forward. We said our goodbyes to Zakaria and were soon on our way back to the UK where a very successful Moroccan tour came to an end.

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Levallant's Woodpecker

Species Lists

Birds (H = heard only; ✓ = commonly recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common Name	Scientific Name	March									
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	2x	21
1	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>		2			10	6	6			
2	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>					2					
3	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		3				10	4	4	✓	✓
4	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>					30		6			
5	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>						4				
6	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>					60					
7	Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>								2	2	2
8	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		1			3	1		4		2
9	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓			6		6			
10	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>					40					
11	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		12	4	4	4	150	100	✓	1	2
12	Northern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>								80		
13	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>								1		14
14	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>							1	1		
15	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		15	12	✓		1			12	10
16	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		1			1	6	6	4	4	20
17	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>								1		
18	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		2			2	20	7	10	3	30
19	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>								2		
20	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		2				2	✓	10	3	10
	Great Cormorant (Moroccan)	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus</i>								3	1	3
21	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>						1	2	2	1	1
22	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>								1		
23	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>		1		2		1				
24	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		1				2	1			
25	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>			4							
26	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>						1		1		
27	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		1								
28	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		1			3	3	4	2		

	Common Name	Scientific Name	March									
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	2x	21
29	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>							3			
30	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>			1	2						
31	Houbara Bustard	<i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>					1					
32	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>					1				6	
33	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		1			40	✓	✓	✓	5	
34	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>						7				
35	Eurasian Stone-Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>								H	2	17
36	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>								10		
37	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>					✓					✓
38	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>							17	7		
39	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>								20		12
40	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>					2		1			1
41	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>					5	2	5	6		
42	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>							1	1		
43	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>					5					
44	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>						2	6	4		✓
45	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					7			1	H	3
46	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>					5		2			1
47	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					1			2	2	1
48	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					10					
49	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>										10
50	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>								20		
51	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>										7
52	Cream-colored Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>					26					
53	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>					1	1				
54	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>								1		2
55	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>							1	22		✓
56	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>										1
57	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyophaga audouinii</i>								30		
58	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyophaga melanocephalus</i>								18		20
59	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>					1			✓	✓	✓
60	Lesser Black-backed Gull (Lesser)	<i>Larus fuscus graellsii/intermedius</i>								✓	✓	✓

	Common Name	Scientific Name	March									
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	2x	21
	Lesser Black-backed Gull (Baltic)	<i>Larus fuscus fuscus</i>								1		
61	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>										2
62	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>								6	2	8
	Sandgrouse sp				2			7				
63	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>					12					
64	Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>				20						
65	Crowned Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles coronatus</i>					10					
66	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>			15							
	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
67	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓					✓	✓	4	✓
68	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
69	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>					3	2		1	4	1
70	Pharaoh Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>						1				
71	Tawny Owl (Atlas)	<i>Strix aluco mauritanica</i>							1			
72	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>							2			
73	Egyptian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus aegyptius</i>					1					
74	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>						1	20	✓	✓	
75	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>		✓				5	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	3	1								
77	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>									1	
78	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>						3				
79	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>							15	H		
80	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		3	1	3	2	H	3	2		
81	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		5					1	1		
82	Levaillant's Woodpecker	<i>Picus vaillantii</i>		2								
83	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>			1			4	4	2	2	
84	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		3	3	2		2	3	3	5	4
85	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>					1					
86	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>								2		
87	Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>		1						1		
88	Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>									1	
89	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>			1	6	5	5	6	5	2	3

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90	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>					1		4			
91	Eurasian Magpie (African)	<i>Pica pica mauritanica</i>		✓						15	✓	✓
92	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>					4	3				
93	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		10						1		
94	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>		150								
95	Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>		50								
96	Coal Tit (Atlas)	<i>Periparus ater atlas</i>		2								
97	African Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae</i>		10	2							
98	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		2					2		6	
99	Greater Hoopoe-Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>					20					
100	Thick-billed Lark	<i>Ramphocoris clotbey</i>			3							
101	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>		2		2		2				
102	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cinctura</i>					2					
103	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>		H								
104	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>			5	2						2
105	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		3	2	2			✓	✓	✓	✓
106	Maghreb Lark	<i>Galerida macrorhyncha</i>					2		4			
107	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>			2	1	2					
108	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	
109	Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala rufescens</i>			10							
110	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	✓			✓	3	✓	✓	✓		✓
111	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>							30			
112	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1	3	1	1	1	20	✓	✓		✓
113	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		6	12	1			1			
114	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>							6			
115	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>							1	10		1
116	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		2			H	2	1	2		✓
117	Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus ibericus</i>										3
118	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>							5			
119	Western Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Iduna opaca</i>								2	3	
120	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>								2	✓	4
121	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Turdoides fulva</i>					3			10		

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			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	2x	21
122	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		1				1		2	12	
123	Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>							1			
124	African Desert Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserti</i>					2					
125	Tristram's Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserticola</i>			1							
126	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>				2		1				
127	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>				1	1				2	5
128	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>		1						6	✓	✓
129	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		1								
130	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓
131	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓	✓	4	1	1	3	✓	✓	✓	✓
132	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		1								
133	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>						1				
134	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>			1							
135	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>							1			
136	Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>		1					1	1	14	4
137	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			3						1	2
138	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>									10	1
139	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>				4	4	1			1	1
	Northern Wheatear (Black-throated)	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi</i>			1		1					
140	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>					1					
141	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>		2	6	4	2	1	2			
142	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>						2			2	
143	Red-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>			10	2			1			
144	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>		3				1				
145	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>		10	4	6	4	10				
146	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
147	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>								5		
148	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>					2					
149	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>					1		3		1	40
	Western Yellow Wagtail (Yellow)	<i>Motacilla flava flavissima</i>				2						1
	Western Yellow Wagtail (Blue-headed)	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>				1						2
150	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			1							

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			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	2x	21
151	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>			2		4	✓	10	2		1
	White Wagtail (Moroccan)	<i>Motacilla alba subpersonata</i>							1			
152	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>					1					
153	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		3					5		2	3
154	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>									2	
155	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>				1			1			
156	Common Chaffinch (African)	<i>Fringilla coelebs africana</i>		✓					✓	✓	5	1
157	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>			4			6				
158	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		2					✓	✓		✓
159	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		1	20	1	1	2		✓	8	✓
160	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		2		2			6	✓	✓	
161	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		4	10	✓				✓	✓	2
162	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		1	2	1		H	4			
163	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>		1								
164	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>									3	
165	House Bunting	<i>Emberiza sahari</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	2

Mammals

Barbary Ground Squirrel, *Atlantoxerus getulus*

Sundevall's Jird, *Meriones crassus*

African Savanna Hare, *Lepus microtis*

North African Hedgehog, *Atelerix algirus*

Lesser Short-tailed Gerbil, *Gerbillus simony*

Various unidentified rodents on night visits by group members

Butterflies & Moths

Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*

Large White, *Pieris brassicae*

Speckled Wood, *Pararge aegeria aegeria*

Small White, *Artogeia rapae*

Small Copper, *Lycaena phlaeas*

Bath White, *Pontia daplidice*

Greenish Black-tip, *Euchloe charltonia*

Clouded Yellow, *Colias croceus*

Plain Tiger, *Danaus chrysippus*

Morocco Orange Tip, *Anthocharis belia*

Moroccan Hairstreak, *Tomares mauretanicus*

Geranium Bronze, *Cacyreus marshalli*

Wall Brown, *Lasiommata megera*

Hummingbird Hawk-Moth, *Macroglossum stellatarum*

Dragonflies

Blue Emperor, *Anax imperator*,

Lesser Emperor , *Anax Parthenope*

Vagrant Emperor, *Anax ephippiger*

Other taxa

Side-striped Terrapin, Moorish Gecko, various sand/wall lizard sp., oil beetle sp., ground beetle sp., dung beetle sp.; Blue Flashwing; Egyptian Locust; bee fly sp.; Pool Frogs; toad grasshopper sp., scorpion sp., Common Toad,

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The desert in full bloom