

Western Sahara's Desert Wildlife (Mammals)

Naturetrek Tour Report

5 - 12 February 2020



Fennec Fox



Lesser Egyptian Gerboa



Temminck's Lark



Petrier's Sand Gecko

Report & Images by Javi Elorriaga



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Javi Elorriaga (leader) with five Naturetrek clients.

Day 1

Wednesday 5th February

Travel from UK to Dakhla via Amsterdam and Casablanca. The group reached Dakhla shortly after midnight and were welcomed by Javi, who had arrived a couple of days earlier to arrange the desert camp with his team in Dakhla. Next, we took the shuttle to the nearby hotel downtown. We got some snacks and by 01:30 everyone was in their rooms for some sleep.

Day 2

Thursday 6th February

Bay of Dakhla, Bir-Anzarane road and Desert Camp in Sbeta area.

Next morning, we had an easy start at the terrace of the hotel and a briefing to discuss our programme for the coming days, exploring the Western Sahara together. In doing so, we saw an Osprey flying over the sea promenade.

At 10:00, we met the rest of our local team, namely: Nico, of Italian origin and based in Dakhla where he has extensively explored the Western Sahara in a 4x4; Sidi, a native Saharawi who has gathered extensive experience living in the desert thanks to his previous occupation as a camel Shepherd but is now a wildlife tracker; and Amina, a Senegalese cook based in Dakhla, our house keeper.

First, we headed to Lassarga, the southernmost tip in the peninsula of Dakhla. Hundreds of traditional fishing boats were lying on the beach, along with various bits of fishing gear in a rather chaotic fashion. Nonetheless, the Western Sahara fishery ranks among the richest in the planet.

The intertidal mudflats and sandbanks of the bay hold large groups of wintering Lesser Black-backed gulls (two of which were wearing colour-rings from Norway!), Yellow-legged Gulls, Sandwich Terns, Bar-tailed Godwits and a varied array of waders. The roosting assemblages of Caspian Terns, totalling several hundreds, deserve special mention. Audouin's Gulls, Slender-billed Gulls, Mediterranean Gulls and Great Cormorants of the Moroccan race *lucidus / maroccanus* were well represented too. Nico, showed us an alive large seashell of the *volutidae* family.

A immature gull standing alone on a sandy bank caught our attention because of its large size and strong bill. As we were getting some pictures of the gull, we saw a pipit landing nearby. Thanks to the pictures we got of these two birds, we could later reliably identify them as a Red-throated Pipit and a Kelp Gull. Certainly two rare species in the region!

Next, we followed the Atlantic coast north and found our first Cream-coloured Courtes and Greater Hoopoe Larks right in the outskirts of the city. Pallid Swifts and Little Swifts were on the wing. Our next stop was at a vantage point overlooking the inner part of the immense Bay of Dakhla. Here, we briefly scanned the water surface for dolphins, with no luck.

Temperatures notably raised towards the central part of the day, reaching a maximum of 32°C. We looked for shelter in the Jaimas (Saharawi nomad tents here used by kite-surfers) of a campsite right in the shore of the

Ramsar site of the bay. Amina grilled some merguez (sausages from north Africa) for the group and we got our first Moroccan mint tea boiled on embers. In the bay we found a distant group of Greater Flamingos and several Whimbrel and Eurasian Curlews. Some resident Thekla Larks and migrant Common Chiffchaffs showed up around the Jaimas. A single Black Kite, probably exhausted after crossing the Sahara from its wintering quarters, landed on the shore to have a bath. We noticed a remarkable passage north of Vagrant Emperor dragonflies and Painted Lady butterflies.

After lunch we returned to the cars and drove inland along the Bir Anzarane road. While driving past the local landfill, we noticed a notable concentration of Black Kites (70+). Approximately one hour later, the first large aeolian sand dunes (erg) appeared in the horizon. We also came through the first groups of Camels, many of which were pregnant or had recently given birth. It was at this point when we left the asphalt and drove some 30km off-road across the immense plain. Along the way, we came upon Red-rumped Wheatears, Greater Hoopoe Larks, Greater Short-toed Larks of the *rubiginosa* subspecies, and at least one Dunn's Lark. Remarkably, the Dunn's Lark reaches its northernmost limit of its regular range and its presence in the region has only been discovered in recent years.

We reached the desert camp by the mid-afternoon. The camp was strategically placed at the base of a large dune, which offered shelter from the wind. Moreover, the top of the dune was the only site within a large area enabling connection to our cell-phones. We were welcomed by Sara and Mubarak, members of a local Saharawi community, who had been taking care of the camp in our attendance. We accommodated in the different tents and had some time to explore the surroundings and relax to gain strength for the forthcoming first nocturnal spotlighting session. For the delight of the group, Javi verified that the camera trap he had set the night before had recorded a Fennec right next to the camp. A promising sign indeed!

The wind notably dropped towards the late afternoon leading to a nice sunset. With the group divided in two vehicles, and fully equipped with spotlights, we started scanning the vast plains of the hamada (desert landscape consisting of high, largely barren, hard rocky plateaus, where most of the sand has been removed by deflation), sand dunes and vegetated oueds (dry riverbeds).

After approximately one hour of searching, the first mammals we found were a Maghreb Hare followed by a Fennec at medium distance which rapidly ran away. In turn, we had good fun observing and photographing several *Stenodactylus* Geckos and the amazingly tame Lesser Egyptian Gerboas.

The highlight of the night came around 22:30, when a totally unexpected Saharan Striped Polecat showed up right in front of our cars. We were well-aware of the presence of this mammal in the region. However, we also knew that it is rarely seen. Therefore, we rapidly jumped off the vehicles to get better views and photograph this highly elusive creature. Interestingly, instead of running away, the mustelid looked for shelter at the base of a bush where it started digging in the sand, just in front of us. We spent some minutes enjoying the unusual scene before resuming our search and leaving the polecat alone. Next, we drove into a sandy area where our cars got stuck! However, our experienced drivers, easily got the cars released and ready to continue. Indeed, this unexpected stop led us to find an impressive Huntsman Spider and several gorgeous Striped Hawk-moths. The nocturnal search still produced two further encounters with Fennecs, one of which offered a closer approach. Around 01:30, we decided to call it a day and return to the camp for a well-deserved rest.

Day 3

Friday 7th February

Desert Camp and Sbeta area.

Today we had a late breakfast including, sampling among others, *Amlou* (a mixture of argan oil in addition to almonds and honey, typical of the Moroccan cuisine). The first bird of the day was a Desert Wheatear that visited our camp. During the night, the camera trap had recorded a Desert Hedgehog. Weather was windy and warm, with intense sunshine. We spend the central part of the day sheltering and resting in the campsite and exploring the surrounding dunes and extensive plain of rocky desert. Signs of human presence are virtually absent here, and scattered groups of Camels added exoticism to the scene. Nonetheless, the Western Sahara is one of the most sparsely population regions of the planet. Interestingly, Javi found the fragment of the Eggshell of an Ostrich, a species that disappeared from this region and the Western Palearctic during the second half of the previous century!

In the late afternoon, we took a stroll in a nearby vegetated oued, which we were planning to further explore in night time. We found some Common Chiffchaffs, 'Desert' Grey Shrikes, Brown-necked Raven, Temminck's Lark, Bar-tailed Lark, Greater Hoopoe Lark and the remains of an Osprey, which obviously failed to cross the Sahara on migration. Painted Ladies and Vagrant Emperors gathered around the Acacias.

Back at the camp, we had pasta Bolognese with camel meat and got ready for our second nocturnal spotlighting session. As happened the night before, after approximately one hour searching, the first species we connected with was a Maghreb Hare. As we were trying to photograph it, a Fennec stole the show. Remarkably, this night we came through a total of 16 different Fennecs. Some of them offered good views while other just run away on our presence. Gerboas, Gerbils and different species of Geckos kept us entertained. Unfortunately, we found no signs of Sandcat, despite our focus in optimal habitat where in previous trips our guides got frequent encounters. At this point, we speculated that the unprecedented density of Fennecs we had detected would have resulted in the absence of cats. Finding and observing at close range a group of 10 Cream-coloured Courses by night was another remarkable observation we had before returning to the camp to sleep around 01:30.

Day 4

Saturday 8th February

Desert Camp, Sbeta area and Aousserd.

Today the wind was blowing rather hard bringing up sand. The sunshine was strong too with temperatures reaching 32°C. Therefore, we spent most of the day catching up on sleep and socializing around the camp. The mint teas that Sidi prepared following the Saharawi tradition were very welcomed. A male Marsh Harrier flew over the camp in northbound migration. Certainly, the view of this species flying low over the dunes made an unusual sight. Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow and a single Woodchat Shrike were other migrants we observed. Among the local species, Bar-tailed Larks and Greater Hoopoe Larks showed up around the camp. A couple of inquisitive Brown-necked Ravens kept a close eye on us and even fed on the bait (a banana) Javi placed in his camera trap!

The surprise of the day came in the form of a gorgeous Western Sandfish of the "*albifasciatus*" morphotype, showing its characteristic rusty colour dorsal bands (unlike the more common "*laterimaculatus*" found further north in Morocco), typical in the Atlantic Sahara. Remarkably, this extremely difficult to see skink, offered a

great show sand-diving, foraging and basking over the loose sand on the slope of the dune right in front of our tents.

Amina prepared a vegetable soup for supper. Around 18:00, the staff packed the tents and we left the camp towards our next base in Aousserd, 280km away, of which approximately one third involved off roading in easy terrain. Soon after departure, we found up to three adult Lanners beautifully perched atop Acacia trees. As usual in desert areas, these birds showed a notably pale plumage. 'Desert' Great Shrikes were well represented too and we found a Desert Locust in its solitary brown phase.

We reached the *Bir-Anzarane* road just before sunset. Here we met Martina, who was waiting us with fresh food supplies for the second part of the tour. We just crossed the asphalt and continued driving off-road towards Aousserd. We found an Atlas Long-legged Buzzard perched on one of the truck tires locally used as waypoint in the desert. We witnessed a nice sunset and the raising full-moon before we started spotlighting. Nico and his team mostly followed the main trail, while Sidi's team drove around to cover a bigger area. As usual, the first mammal we connected with was a Maghreb Hare, followed by a Fennec offering rather good views, and several Lesser Egyptian Jerboas. Approximately one and a half hours later, we reached the *Aousserd* Road. At this point we decided to move forwards at a faster speed (with no spotlighting) to reach an area holding suitable habitat for the Sand Cat. We reached the hotspot around 22:30. After a rather long while without any remarkable observations, except for a couple of Maghreb Hares (including a road-kill) we detected some eyes shining in the distance. We rapidly approached the area and found a cat running away, disappearing in the darkness. We followed its course and it suddenly jumped off the bushes right in front of the car. We could briefly but clearly distinguish the characteristic pale fur, large head, short legs and oversized ears of a Sand Cat! Unfortunately, the cat did completely disappear again. We scanned the area for a while, with no news from the feline, before we decided to resume our way to *Aousserd*. We reached our accommodation in Aousserd at 02:15 AM. We were welcomed by a striking White-spotted Wall Gecko right over the main entrance. The team was tired after a demanding spotlighting session so we went directly to sleep with no further delay.

Day 5

Sunday 9th February

Aousserd, Laglat and Derraman.

Amina got our breakfast/brunch ready around 10:00. After two nights camping in the desert, the possibility to get a warm shower was very welcomed. Next, we discussed the programme for the day and went for a stroll in Aousserd.

Aousserd, has (very) little to offer to travellers other than reliable petrol station and two tiny groceries. The large majority of its population is formed by the staff at the various military bases surrounding the village, and camel shepherds that maintain a partly nomad lifestyle in the desert. Most of the buildings are abandoned and disassembled. Rusting Land Rovers fill the streets. However, visiting such a desolated and neglected village, with such a delicate socio-political reality, should be considered an experience itself. The local school, with its colourful walls and smiley children (some afraid about the presence of strangers), added a nice touch of colour. In terms of birding, we saw a Lanner being chased by Brown-necked Ravens, several White-crowned Wheatears, the apparently omnipresent Collared Doves, and up to three Pale Rock Martins flying around the village. We even heard one of them calling in flight. Remarkably, this is one of the very few reliable sites to find this species

in Morocco and definitively a regional highlight. Every now and then, single or small groups of Black Kites flew pass in active migration from their wintering grounds south of the Sahara to their breeding areas in Europe.

Back at our base, we had time to relax and gain strength for the next nocturnal spotlighting session. Amina offered a nice supper and we enjoyed the visit of White-crowned Wheatears to the windowsill of the living room.

By the mid-afternoon, we prepared our gear and drove to the nearby *Laglat* area. This is a gorgeous black rock mass, with scattered acacia trees and sand dunes, a typical pre-Sahelian landscape. Desert Wheatear, Greater Hoopoe Lark, Desert Lark, Bar-tailed Lark, Sardinian Warbler and Common Chiffchaff were some of the species we found in the area. The local pair of Golden Eagles offered brief views over the horizon. Later on, we saw one of their nesting platforms, which seems to be had been occupied by Brown-necked Ravens, given the presence of blue plastic on it. We found numerous tracks of African Golden Wolf and waited until dusk scanning the rocky boulders where Javi had found this iconic species in previous visits. Before dark, we moved to the adjacent *Derraman* boulders. Already in complete darkness, we walked along the base of the cliff. It didn't take long until we found one of our main targets, a majestic Pharaoh Eagle Owl. It was perched and calling from its usual perch atop the cliff and offered a nice show. Indeed, we clearly heard its two type of voices: the typical "huo" and the less-frequent and alarm like variation "doo-u-hu" (as transcribed in the *Collins* bird guide). After this, we continued spotlighting by car, driving in sandy soil and inspecting the rock boulders and plains on our way. We found numerous Geckos and plenty of Striped Hawk-moths. Javi set his camera-trap at a strategic corridor with numerous tracks of mammals. Then, we continued spotlight until we reached the asphalt road again. The night was rather pleasant, with low wind and minimum temperatures reaching 18°C, although the feeling while spotlighting with open windows was rather chilly. Around 23:30, we decided to split the group in two. This way, while some decided to return home, the rest preferred to persevere. Remarkably, the first group found a gorgeous Saharan Horned Viper profiting from the residual heat in the asphalt. Besides, the second group found a couple of Maghreb Hares, one of them at very close range, and several Lesser Egyptian Jerboas and Geckos. In terms of carnivores, we first found a distant cat, which disappeared before we could determine whether it was a Sand Cat or an African Wild Cat. A second cat, sat in an opening, gave brief views, just enough to determine, by the proportion of its head and ears, it was our second brief encounter with a Sand Cat. Despite some search, we couldn't relocate it, and we decided to conclude the nocturnal search and drive back home. We finished the day back in Aousserd by 02:45.

Day 6

Monday 10th February

Aousserd and Derraman

Following the late end, and as usual in this tour, we had a late start. Our morning breakfast was interrupted by a pair of Desert Sparrows beautifully seen and photographed through the window. The female was carrying nest material (feathers) in its bill. Following this, Javi fixed a drinking plate for them in the windowsill, although it was exclusively used by White-crowned Wheatears. We went for another walk around Aousserd and detected several groups of Black Kites on migration.

Amina prepared some mozzarella and tomato grabs for lunch, along with dates, dry fruits and Moroccan patisserie. Sidi, once again, boiled tea on coal ember for the group. We worked on the checklist and discussed about the different species we had seen so far. It was rather windy and unpleasant outside so we decided to stay at home and have a rest, with our mind set on the next spotlighting session.

At 17:00, we had a nice Harira (traditional Moroccan soup) and got our gear ready for the nocturnal excursion into the desert. In the outskirts of Aousserd we found a group of Black Kites and Brown-necked Ravens roosting on the ground. This time we headed directly to *Derraman*, where we arrived well before sunset. A pair of Lanners flying at close range was the first highlight. Several Desert Orange-tip Butterflies were equally enjoyed. We found abundant tracks and scats of African Golden Wolf and, probably, Rüppell's Fox too. Pale Crag Martins flew around the cliffs. We enjoyed a magnificent sunset more reminiscent of the sub-Saharan Africa than of the Maghreb region. Already in twilight, we started spotlighting in the way to where Javi had set his camera-trap the day before. We met a camel shepherd from Mali who informed us that he had recently seen wolves in the area. Indeed, Javi retrieved his camera and verified that it got several pictures of videos of both African Golden Wolf and Rüppell's Fox. This certainly encouraged us to keep searching. In doing so we had a nice time observing the very abundant Geckos, an impressive Huntsman Spider and several Gerboas and Gerbils. As planned, we made a second attempt at *Derraman*. Once we reached the hotspot, we walked around spotlighting and, suddenly, Sidi said the magic word: wolf, wolf! After some (rather long) seconds of agitation, we managed to relocate the canid. With its gaze fixed on us, and the beam of our spotlight on him, its eyes shined unveiling its presence. It stayed sat on the bare rock for a while, and then it trotted to disappear behind the slope. With a nice feeling of rewarded effort, we returned toward the asphalt road with several stop to observe Geckos, Gerboas and Gerbils. An Egyptian Predator Beetle, known for its aggressive predatory habits and running speed was another interesting record. The sky was clear, full of stars, with Orion and Venus on display. Moreover, the wind had dropped and the thermometer of the car marked 24°C before midnight. This encouraged the whole group to extend the spotlighting session in the Aousserd road. Unfortunately, it proved rather unproductive and a Pharaoh Eagle Owl in flight and a road kill False Cobra were the most remarkable observation before one of the teams decided to return home. The second team continued and managed to find yet another owl. This time it was standing on the ground and allowed us to get some pictures. Next, we detected a pair of shining eyes. It was a medium sized mammal walking calmly. For a moment it walked in our direction. Unfortunately, we rapidly lost its track. Only afterwards, going through the pictures we got, we could determine it was a Rüppell's Fox. After this, we decided to conclude the session and drive back home, which we reached by 01:30.

Day 7

Tuesday 11th February

Aousserd, Oued Jenna, Gleb Jeidane and Dakhla

In our last day in Aousserd, we had another tranquil start to fully recover from the nocturnal efforts. We spent some time working on the checklist and reviewing the footage we got of the Wolf and Fox in the camera trap. Meantime, the staff packed the gear and loaded the vehicles.

We started off by the late morning heading back towards Dakhla, 240 km away. For the delight of the group, and thanks to the trained eye of Sidi, we found no less than 10 Sudan Spiny-tailed Lizards, showing their different colour variation ranging from ink black to buffy tones. Some obliging individuals allowed us to approach them and get some pictures before disappearing into their burrows. Our next stop was at the nearby Oued Jenna, where we had some snacks under the shade of an acacia tree. The rather warm temperatures discouraged the group from looking around for the interesting birdlife of this forested Oued. In turn, a group of inquisitive Fulvous Babblers approached us offering excellent views and performing their easily recognisable voice. Barn Swallow, Pale Rock Martin, Sand Martin, European Hoopoe, Vagrant Emperor and two Dumeril's Fringe-fingered Lizards were some of the additional species we found in the area. Next, we hit the road again with a brief stop for Javi to strategically set the camera trap in one of the areas where we had detected the presence of a

Sand Cat in previous days. With a maximum of 34°C inside the cars (maximum for the trip and unusual this time of the year), the temperature steadily dropped to 19°C as we approached the coast. Our next stop was at the famous (among birders) Gleb Jeidane. This is basically a water tank whose spill creates a sheet of water which often attracts interesting birdlife. Vagrant Emperor dragonflies were very abundant. Two groups of Trumpeter Finches totalling 16 individuals, numerous Thekla Larks including a longer-billed individual resembling a Maghreb Lark, two White Wagtails, Barn Swallows and a single Northern Wheatear approached the waterhole too. In the nearby Tamarisks we found a large African Chamaeleon for the delight of the group.

Twenty minutes later we reached the spectacular and still nearly unspoiled Bay of Dakhla. Here, we saw the White Dune and the distinctive profile of the Dragon Island, the two foremost landmarks in the bay. Already in the outskirts of Dakhla, we still made two further stops to scan the large flocks of Caspian Terns (100+), Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Oystercatchers and varied waders. Luckily, within a group of Audouin's Gulls, we found one of our last targets, a majestic West African Crested Tern. Indeed, this species has recently been split from its American counterpart (Royal Tern) and therefore ranks highly in the wish list of many Western Palearctic birders.

At 19:00 we reached our hotel, where Abdo welcomed us and assigned us the same rooms as our first night. At 19:45, we met again at the restaurant of the hotel. We had grilled fish for dinner, a local speciality. We completed the checklist for the last time and exchanged impressions on the tour before going to our rooms for a well-deserved sleep.

Day 8

Wednesday 12th February

Dakhla.

In our last day in Dakhla, we had breakfast in the hotel at 07:00. Half an hour later we took the shuttle to the airport, where we arrived five minutes later. Checking-in was straightforward and the group bid farewell to Javi, who stayed for a few more days in the region.

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Species Lists

Mammals (✓=recorded but not counted; CT = Camera trap; D = dead)

	Common name	Scientific name	February						
			6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	Desert Hedgehog	<i>Paraechinus aethiopicus</i>	CT						
2	African Wild Cat	<i>Felis lybica</i>			✓	✓			
3	Sand Cat	<i>Felis margarita</i>						✓	
4	African Golden Wolf	<i>Canis anthus</i>						✓	
5	Sand Fox	<i>Vulpus rueppellii</i>						✓	CT
6	Fennec	<i>Paraechinus aethiopicus</i>	✓						
7	Saharan Striped Polecat	<i>Poecilictis libyca</i>	✓						
8	Maghreb Hare	<i>Lepus mediterraneus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
9	Lesser Egyptian Gerboa	<i>Jaculus cf. Jaculus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
10	Pygmy Gerbil	<i>Gerbillus henleyi</i>						✓	
11	Lesser Egyptian Gerbil	<i>Gerbillus gerbillus</i>		✓				✓	
12	Tarabul's Gerbil	<i>Gerbillus tarabuli</i>		?					
13	House Mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>	D						

Birds

1	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	✓						
2	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓						
3	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓						
4	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓						✓
5	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	✓						
6	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓						
7	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓						
8	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
9	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	
10	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>			✓				
11	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓						✓
12	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓						
13	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓						
14	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	✓						
15	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	✓						
16	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	✓						
17	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	✓						✓
18	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpes</i>	✓						
19	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓						
20	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	✓						
21	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓						
22	Cream-colored Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	✓						
23	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	✓						
24	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>	✓						✓
25	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>	✓						
26	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	✓						
27	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis michahellis</i>	✓						✓
28	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>	✓						✓
29	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	✓						✓
30	West African Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus albididorsalis</i>							✓
31	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	✓						
32	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia var. domestica</i>	✓					✓	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	February						
			6	7	8	9	10	11	
33	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓			✓		✓	
34	Pharaoh Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>			✓	✓	✓		
35	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	✓						
36	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	✓						
37	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>						✓	
38	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓					✓	
39	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>			✓	✓	✓		
40	Great Grey Shrike 'Desert'	<i>Lanius (excubitor) elegans</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>			✓				
42	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
43	Greater Hoopoe-Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>	✓			✓		✓	
44	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>				✓			
45	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cinctura</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
46	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>	✓						
47	Dunn's Lark	<i>Eremalauda dunni</i>	✓						
48	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>		✓					
49	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓						
50	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	✓		✓				
51	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
52	Pale Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne obsoleta presaharica</i>				✓	✓	✓	
53	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	✓		✓	✓			
54	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Turdoides fulva</i>						✓	
55	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>						✓	
56	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>				✓			
57	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	✓					✓	
58	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>			✓	✓		✓	
59	Red-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>	✓						
60	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	✓						
61	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
62	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	
63	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>					✓		
64	Sudan Golden Sparrow	<i>Passer luteus</i>						✓	
65	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>	✓						
66	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>						✓	
67	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	✓						

Amphibians & Reptiles (RK = road kill)

1	African Green Toad	<i>Bufo boulengeri</i>						✓
2	Petrier's Sand Gecko	<i>Stenodactylus petrii</i>		✓				
3	White-spotted Wall Gecko	<i>Tarentola annularis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>					✓	
5	Western Sandfish	<i>Scincus albifasciatus</i>			✓			
6	Dumeril's Fringe-fingered Lizard	<i>Achantodactylus dumerilii</i>			✓			✓
7	Sudan spiny-tailed Lizard	<i>Uromastix dispar</i>				✓	✓	✓
8	Mediterranean Chameleon	<i>Chamaeleo chamaeleon</i>						✓
9	False Cobra	<i>Rhagerhis moilensis</i>					RK	
10	Horned Viper	<i>Cerastes cerastes</i>				✓		

Other Wildlife

1	Striped Hawk-moth	<i>Hyla livornica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	Common name	Scientific name	February						
			6	7	8	9	10	11	
2	Huntsman Spider	<i>Cerbalus pulcherrimus</i>	✓	✓	✓				
3	Vagrant Emperor	<i>Anax ephipiger</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	
5	Desert Orange Tip	<i>Colotis liagore</i>					✓		
6	Desert Locust	<i>Schistocerca gregaria</i>			✓				
7	Egyptian Predator Beetle	<i>Anthis sexmaculata</i>					✓		
8	Beetle sp	<i>Pimelia sp.</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9	Umbrella Thorn	<i>Acacia tortillis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	Seashell	<i>Cymbium senegalensis</i>	✓						



Saharan Striped Polecat



Off-roading in pre-Saharan landscape



African Royal Tern and Audouin's Gulls



Mediterranean Chameleon



Desert camp in Sbeta