

Oman – Arabia's Finest Birding

Naturetrek Tour Report

16th – 28th November 2023



Coast near Salalah



Abdim's Storks



Persian Shearwater



Greater Crested Terns

Tour report by Andy Smith, photos by Kate Lessells



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Tour Participants: Naturetrek tour leader Andy Smith, local guide Qais and 12 Naturetrek clients.

Summary

This was another successful and enjoyable tour to Oman. We travelled the length of the country from Muscat in the north to Salalah in the far south and experienced a fantastic range of landscape and scenery, some great birding and a nice taste of Omani culture.

Along the way we encountered a good selection of the regional bird specialities and enjoyed a number of surprises. The rich wetlands produced an excellent variety of waders, gulls and terns, from Terek Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, Pin-tailed Snipes and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas to Saunder's and White-Cheeked Terns, mighty Pallas's Gulls and amazing Crab Plovers. Raptors were impressive too and included Eastern Imperial, Steppe, Greater Spotted and Bonelli's Eagles, Crested Honey Buzzard and Barbary Falcon, whilst an absolute highlight for many in the group were some wonderful views of a pair of Verreaux's Eagles cruising past a breath-taking mountain viewpoint near Salalah.

Desert species were represented by the likes of Chestnut-bellied and Spotted Sandgrouse, Cream-coloured Coursers, Hoopoe Larks, Arabian Babblers and seven species of Wheatear whilst a couple of pelagic trips brought Red-billed Tropicbirds, Persian and Flesh-footed Shearwaters, Jouanin's Petrels and Swinhoe's Storm Petrel. Back on land colourful Blue-cheeked and Arabian Green Bee-eaters, Indian Rollers and Arabian Sunbirds added to the fun and we also made some exciting unexpected discoveries including, most notably, a flock of Sociable Lapwings roosting on a ploughed field on a farm way out in the Empty Quarter.

We saw a nice range of insects and plants too and some great reptiles, including diminutive Rock Geckos and a False Cobra or Moila Snake. On one memorable starlit evening we visited a Green Turtle nesting beach and got close to nesting females and brand new hatchlings. All this and lots more in good company and fine sunshine and supported throughout by the warm friendliness of the Omani people – a great trip indeed!

Day 1

Thursday 16th November

Most of the group met up at Heathrow in the late afternoon prior to our overnight flight to Muscat via Doha.

Day 2

Friday 17th November

Sunny with scattered cloud, warm and breezy.

Meeting up with our last group member Kate in Doha airport in the early morning we flew on to Muscat and arrived a little before midday. Clearing the airport we met up with our local guide Qais and our driver and set off into Muscat where we checked into our comfortable hotel and ate a very welcome kebab lunch at the street restaurant next-door.

In the mid-afternoon we drove out of the city north to As Sawadi on the Batinah Coast. This is a low-lying beach-fringed headland with a series of small rocky islands a kilometre or two offshore. The area was busy with weekend crowds but we still saw a good range of introductory birds. These included Western Reef Herons (both pale and

dark), Kentish Plovers, Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, Sooty and Slender-billed Gulls and the confusingly similar Heuglin's and Steppe Gulls. Both Greater and Lesser Crested Terns were flying around too and at one stage we found a few of both species standing together out on the sandflats, allowing for a nice comparison. Moving back from the shore, a short exploration in the scrubby hinterland produced a covey of Grey Francolins, a few Crested Larks, a male Desert Wheatear and a few Arabian Green Bee-eaters, whilst a roadside Indian Roller and a passing Marsh Harrier added to proceedings and concluded a satisfying session.

Day 3

Saturday 18th November

Sunny with scattered cloud, very warm, breezy at times.

We left the hotel after an early breakfast, drove through Muscat to a marina at Bandar al Rawda and boarded a very comfortable boat for a trip out into the Arabian Sea. Conditions were good and during an enjoyable couple of hours we encountered a sizeable pod of Common Dolphins, lots of Greater Crested Terns, a single Bridled Tern, a Pomarine Skua, a couple of Persian Shearwaters and over 50 delightful Red-necked Phalaropes. We went as far as Fahl Island where we cruised close in under the spectacular limestone cliffs and although it seemed that any of the hoped for Sooty Falcons had already departed south, we did enjoy some fabulous views of Red-billed Tropicbirds, a new one for many in the party.

Back on shore we ate a tasty restaurant lunch and then headed inland towards the village of Yiti. At one reliable spot along the way we found a smart Hume's Wheatear and in a promising patch of scrub nestled in a natural amphitheatre in the hills we noted flyover Brown-necked Ravens, Egyptian Vulture and Imperial Eagle and had some lovely views of Arabian Green Bee-eaters and a male Arabian Sunbird showing his orange shoulder tufts. Just beyond Yiti itself, in a promising wadi we added another Hume's Wheatear, a couple of Desert Larks and some smart White-eared Bulbuls and put up a covey of Sand Partridges, some of which, after their initial alarm, settled down in the hillside rocks and allowed us some lovely telescope views.

From Yiti we headed back towards the city and visited the famous Qurm park. At the ornamental lake we found five Indian Pond Herons, over 30 Red-wattled Lapwings and several Black-winged Stilts and had some wonderful close-up comparison views of Little and Temminck's Stints feeding together on a small patch of mud. Interestingly, the Little Stints were consistently aggressive towards the smaller, slighter Temminck's. A flock of 40 Pallid Swifts hawking around low overhead plus some Red-vented Bulbuls and an Indian Roller completed the picture here. We finished up on the shore road overlooking the Qurm estuary. Here there were Western Reef and Grey Herons, Great Egrets, Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, some Kentish Plovers and a nice mix of other waders. Another Indian Roller flew past in a blaze of turquoise and some sizeable flocks of Ring-necked Parakeets heading off to roost as the light faded signalled the end to an enjoyable day.

Day 4

Sunday 19th November

Sunny with scattered cloud, hot and humid, breezy at times.

After another early breakfast we made our way the short distance to the Al Ansab water treatment works, an area of mud-fringed pools, scrub and trees. On the pools we found a good range of waders and ducks including notably a Marsh Sandpiper and a flock of Common Pochard, plus a few Indian Pond Herons, a couple of Whiskered

Terns, a Marsh Harrier and a roost of over 200 Great Cormorants. The scrub held Indian Silverbills, Delicate Prinias and lots of Purple Sunbirds; Clamorous Reed Warblers chuntered in the reeds and an unexpected Isabelline Wheatear foraged on a patch of lawn. Best of all for most though were fantastic point-blank views from one of the hides of three Temminck's Stints and a dazzling Citrine Wagtail.

From Al Ansab we headed out of the city north and then inland to Nakhal where we ate a splendid lunch in a Yemeni restaurant and took a brief look at the town's impressive fort. After this we continued up into the hills, over a low pass and into an area known as Al Ghubrah bowl, a flat desert plain surrounded by rugged and dramatic mountains. A series of short walks here brought a pretty good range of birds including two Red-tailed Wheatears, a brief Eastern Orphean Warbler, a few very skulking Menetries's Warblers, a group of Arabian Babblers and two very distant but still impressive Lappet-faced Vultures. A lucky few of us, whilst in pursuit of the babblers almost tripped over a pair of Lichenstein's Sandgrouse. Calling loudly as they got up and hurtled away, they gave us quite a start!

From Al Ghubrah we returned to Muscat and made a last stop at the impressive and beautiful Grand Mosque. The sun set and the full moon rose as we walked around, lending a lovely atmosphere to our visit.

Day 5

Monday 20th November

Sunny with scattered cloud, very warm, breezy at times.

A slightly more leisurely breakfast today then away southwards. We took a cross country route from Yiti across to the main highway south. This led us through some beautiful and dramatic desert scenery and with a couple of short stops along the way brought a few notable birds including a singing male Hume's Wheatear, some Desert Larks and Lesser Whitethroats, a Southern Grey Shrike and a couple of Egyptian Vultures.

At Qurayat we explored the estuary and found Reef and Striated Herons, a Gull-billed Tern, an Osprey and a nice range of waders including, outstandingly, a Terek Sandpiper tearing round in the frenetic manner so characteristic of the species. Egyptian Vultures were in evidence too with a number in the air and several more loafing on the beach and a careful look through a large flock of roosting Gulls revealed hundreds of Slender-billed, Sooty and the ubiquitous Steppe/Heuglin's plus about 25 huge and impressive Pallas's. A Baltic Gull passing offshore added further spice and at a nearby lagoon there were a couple of Black-necked Grebes, a further 17 Egyptian Vultures, about 50 Grey Herons and a Marsh Harrier.

We ate lunch at a roadside restaurant and then continued fast south along the coast to Sur where we made a brief stop at the water treatment works and found some Ruff, Wood Sandpipers and Red-wattled Lapwings, a distant Isabelline Shrike and a Namaqua Dove.

Our last stop of the day was a little further on at the tidal inlet of Khawr Jirama. This was a lovely spot and we'd caught the tide just right. An exciting range of birds were spread out on the mudflats in front of us and in good light we enjoyed great views of Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers, Kentish Plovers, Redshank, Greenshank and Bar-tailed Godwits, a very long-billed *orientalis* Eurasian Curlew, over 20 Terek Sandpipers and a Caspian Tern. Best of all though were three amazing Crab Plovers, an adult and two immatures, working their way along the water's edge, a new and much hoped for bird for most of the group.

From Khawr Jirama it was just a short drive to our hotel in the small town of Assilah. Settling in and eating a bite of dinner we then went out on a Turtle watching trip to nearby Raz al Jinz. The visitor centre was a glitzy place and very busy but eventually we were assigned to a group and set off into the star-studded desert night. Once at the beach we watched two female Green Turtles digging their egg-laying pits and a third laboriously returning to the sea. All were big animals, each with a carapace about a metre long and we felt privileged indeed to be so close to such mighty creatures at this vital and vulnerable part of their life-cycle. Nearby we found a number of hatchlings emerging from an earlier nesting attempt and watched as they made their way down to the surf. It was all rather special and made for a lovely end to the day.

Day 6

Tuesday 21st November

Sunny with scattered cloud. Hazy and very warm. Breezy at times.

Desert and Isabelline Wheatears and a couple of Tawny Pipits on the open ground just outside the hotel started the day well and with breakfast completed we were on our way again. We drove fast south along the coast and made one short stop at a picturesque dhow-filled harbour and another for fuel and water where two Indian Rollers adorned the petrol station infrastructure. A trio of roadside Cream-coloured Coursers further enlivened the journey for the occupants of one of the vehicles and we all eventually arrived at the legendary Birr al Hickman in the late morning.

This huge intertidal wetland is one of the most important sites for water birds in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula. Given the size of the place it was clear that our brief visit would only be scratching the surface, and so it proved to be. At a viewpoint by the little fishing village of Filim we looked out over vast mudflats stretching off into the far distance. The tide was on its way in and was gradually pushing the birds in towards us and by scanning with binoculars or telescope you could get a very clear sense of the huge numbers of birds present: many thousands of waders, gulls, terns and herons were visible. The best for us in the near distance among large numbers of commoner and more familiar species were over 35 Crab Plovers (in flight and scattered on the mudflats foraging), a flock of 80 or so Pacific Golden Plovers and several Terek Sandpipers. It was an impressive scene indeed and we could only marvel at the scale of the place and the uncountable horde of birds scattered across the far distant mudflats.

Continuing our journey towards Duqm we made a late afternoon stop in a promising acacia lined wadi that led up into an attractive rocky canyon. A short walk here produced four or five tail-wagging Menetries's Warblers, a few White-cheeked Bulbuls, a smart male Arabian Wheatear, some flowering spikes of the strange root parasite *Cistanche phebypea* and a number of large and impressive *Argiope sector* spiders. From here we headed on to our comfortable hotel in Duqm where we arrived in good time to settle in before dinner.

Day 7

Wednesday 22nd November

Sunny, hazy and very warm with a gentle breeze.

After breakfast and a quick look around the small hotel garden which produced a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Clamorous Reed Warbler we set off again. Our first destination, some way to the south of Duqm, was a place called Khawr Dhurf, a shallow lagoon just in from the sea. During an enjoyable walk here we found a good range

of birds including 20 Caspian and a couple of Gull-billed Terns, two Eurasian Spoonbills, a Temminck's Stint a Broad-billed Sandpiper and a Red-necked Phalarope, a few Curlew Sandpipers and several neat Pacific Golden Plovers. As we looked out over the lagoon a group of small terns flew in, 10 in all, and a close scrutiny of them both in flight and resting on the mudflats revealed them to be Saunder's Terns, a local breeder here but a good find all the same. Out on the sandflat hinterland there were Desert Wheatears and a Tawny Pipit or two and as we walked, we surprised a small snake which in its alarm raised up its head and spread a cobra-like hood. Reference to photographs later established that it was *Malopon moilensis*, the False Cobra or Moila Snake– another very good find!

Roadside stops as we headed back towards Duqm brought good sightings of Hoopoe Lark, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Desert and Isabelline Wheatears and an Isabelline Shrike and then, after lunch at a restaurant in As-Sa'danat, we turned westwards and inland, into the Empty Quarter. We passed through Al-Ajaiz and then Habib (where we saw a flock of over 50 Brown-necked Ravens swirling around in the sky) and made one short roadside stop for a very smart Southern Grey Shrike during which we startled a Cape Hare from under a bush. We stopped for fuel and refreshments in Hayma and reached our destination, the desert guesthouse at Al-Ghaftayn in the late afternoon. After a little time to settle in we checked out the small areas of cover in the grounds and enjoyed good views of a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a surprise Oriental Turtle Dove.

Day 8

Thursday 23rd November

Sunny, hazy and hot with a light breeze.

An early breakfast today and away from Al-Ghaftayn at dawn. An hour or so later we were at the oasis of Muntassar and in a couple of hours of exploration here we saw a Long-legged Buzzard, Red-tailed and Southern Grey Shrikes, three or four Bluethroats, a Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and a surprise White-breasted Waterhen. Muntassar is known as an important drinking site for sandgrouse and sure enough, as the morning progressed, Spotted Sandgrouse started to come in and assemble amongst the sparse low vegetation out on the surrounding sand flats. We counted over 80 in all and had some satisfying views of them both in the air and on the ground.

Continuing on southwards across the Empty Quarter we called in at the irrigated farmland at Al-Bilid. This proved to be a good move because, at our very first stop in this relatively huge area of cultivation we scanned across a ploughed field and found a flock of seven Sociable Lapwings – how about that? A globally endangered species and hard to find anywhere these fellows were a real bonus! They are handsome things too and with a careful approach on foot we were able to get within 30 metres of them without spooking them at all. When everyone had had a really good look (including the drivers!) and a sufficiency of photos had been taken we left them to it. Also here at Al-Bilid were Crested Larks, Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks, Tawny Pipits, Isabelline and Desert Wheatears, Namaqua Doves and Common Kestrels.

Lunch was eaten at a restaurant back out on the highway and then we booted it southwards again. In the mid-afternoon we reached the town of Thumrayt and turned off the highway to visit the local rubbish tip where we were confronted by the extraordinary sight of over 250 Steppe Eagles in the air and sitting around just about everywhere. Careful searching found a couple of Imperial Eagles amongst them but Steppe Eagles were definitely the overwhelming theme. Eagles and rubbish seemed a slightly unsavoury combination but it was certainly amazing

to see such numbers! Here too were the inevitable Desert Wheatears, a few Tristrams's Starlings and a couple of diminutive Carter's Rock Geckos.

Back out on the highway the Empty Quarter continued and just as we began to think that it would never end we came to some low rolling hills covered in sparse grassy vegetation. Then things changed rapidly. The hills led us up to the ridge of an escarpment and suddenly steep valleys clothed in lush green vegetation fell away before us down to a coastal plain far below; we had breasted the ridge of the Dhofar mountains! The change was as sudden and dramatic as I've seen anywhere in the world and the green of the shrubs and trees was a deliciously welcome change to our desert sore eyes. Salalah lay in the hazy distance below, we'd all but completed our long traverse of the country.

Dropping down into the lushness we made a late afternoon stop at the lovely Ayn-Razat, a steep rocky valley with a dense corridor of vegetation along a spring-fed creek. New and exciting birds came thick and fast and in an action packed hour or so we saw African Paradise Flycatcher, Abyssinian White-eye, Blackstart, Arabian Sunbird, African Silverbill, Arabian Warbler and Bruce's Green Pigeon.

Day 9

Friday 24th November

Sunny, hazy and hot with a light breeze.

Our first stop today was at the East Khawr, just a mile or two from our hotel. This reed and marsh-fringed lagoon next to the beach is always a productive spot and in short space of time we enjoyed excellent views of a wide range of species including an immature Greater Spotted Eagle, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana, a few Squacco Herons, an adult Purple Heron, a nice variety of waders, gulls and terns, nine Greater Flamingos and over 50 Glossy Ibis.

From here we headed inland towards Ayn Hamran, one of a number of well vegetated valleys that run up into the mountain hinterland from the Salalah coastal plain. A short speculative stop on the grassy flats on the way up to the valley produced a flock of 14 superb Cream-coloured Coursers and at Ayn Hamran itself we walked up into the wooded wadi and encountered a satisfying range of birds including Paradise Flycatchers, Arabian Sunbirds, Tristram's Starlings, Cinnamon-breasted Buntings, Blackstarts, a trio of Hoopoes and an Arabian Warbler catching and despatching a hapless mantis. A couple of Short-toed Eagles soaring against the bright blue sky were great to see and a variety of colourful insects included a Violet Dropwing dragonfly and an African Monarch butterfly.

Dropping back down again we stopped on the plains for an adult Imperial Eagle soaring in the distance then finished the morning at the lagoon and beach at Taqah where we found a smart male Red-tailed Shrike, another Greater Spotted Eagle, a couple of Gull-billed Terns and quite a few Red Sea Ghost Crabs.

After lunch and a siesta back at the hotel we headed west to the rather wonderful Al-Mughsayl. Here we had some great views of an adult and a juvenile Bonelli's Eagle, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana, a Red-knobbed Coot, some Teal, Shoveler and Pintail and a range of waders including a couple of Pin-tailed Snipe foraging next to some Common Snipe, allowing for perfect comparisons of their salient diagnostic features. We finished up at the famous blowholes along the shore here. The coastal scenery westwards towards Yemen was superb and a satisfying birding day was completed with the sight of a distant flock of Socotra Cormorants out over the sea.

Day 10

Saturday 25th November

Sunny and hot and gentle breeze.

Away after an early breakfast again, first to Ayn Tobruq to see if we could find an Arabian Grosbeak or two coming down to drink. We were unlucky and none appeared but we did see Ruppell's Weavers, Blackstarts, Cinnamon-breasted Buntings, a Grey Wagtail and various other common and familiar birds. Next we drove on up to the beautiful Wadi Darbat, a broad and extensive cliff-bound valley with wooded slopes, areas of stony grassland and a series of small lakes. Wadi Darbat is a good area for raptors and in the course of the morning we saw Booted, Bonelli's and Steppe Eagles and an Osprey. Whiskered Terns hawked over the lakes and Pale Crag Martins over the slopes, whilst Yellow and Citrine Wagtails foraged in the lake-shore grass and in the scrub and trees we found Arabian and Palestine Sunbirds, an Arabian Warbler, Lesser Whitethroats, Tree Pipits and a surprise Masked Shrike.

We returned to the hotel for lunch and a siesta again and then in the late afternoon headed out towards Khawr Rawri. Just before Taqah town we pulled over and jumped out at the roadside to watch the wonderful spectacle of a flock of about 450 Abdim's Storks circling overhead and gaining height before moving on. At Khawr Rawri itself we started with a walk along the shore at the upper end of the lagoon and were rewarded with sightings of a juvenile Imperial and two Short-toed Eagles, several stunning Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, two Isabelline Shrikes, Green and Wood Sandpipers, singing Cinnamon-breasted Buntings and a pack of 50 or so Swifts which, after due attention, we considered to be Forbes-Watson's. We ended up at a rather lovely viewpoint where a few of us who happened to be looking in the right direction at the right moment had a brief view of an Arabian Wildcat dashing between one piece of cover and the next. Lucky or what?

We finished up by the shore further down the Khawr by the impressive ruins of Samhuran. Here we ended a rewarding day with views of a range of waders and a mixed flock of roosting terns. These latter comprised a few Great-crested and Whiskered, two Gull-billed, a White-winged and a White-cheeked – not bad!

Day 11

Sunday 26th November

Hot and sunny with some scattered cloud and a light breeze in the afternoon.

This morning we drove across to Mirbat for a pelagic trip with local boatman Hatem. During the course of a very pleasant morning out on the water we saw an exciting range of birds including Flesh-footed and Persian Shearwaters, Jouanin's Petrels, Masked Boobies and even a Swinhoe's Storm Petrel - a notable find! Hordes of Sooty Gulls were ever present and often at arm's reach and as we came back into the harbour we rounded things off nicely with close sightings both at the surface and under water of Green and Olive Ridley Turtles.

We ate an excellent lunch in a restaurant in Mirbat then drove inland and up across high rolling grasslands to a viewpoint at the top of lofty Jebel Samhan noting a Red-tailed Shrike, an Indian Roller and three Imperial Eagles en-route. At the viewpoint itself we could see east and west along the cliffs of the Dhofar escarpment and out over the coastal plain far below, a truly breath-taking vista. Tristram's Starlings whistled and wheezed, a large pack of Fan-tailed Ravens played acrobatically along the cliff-top and a handsome Long-legged Buzzard soared over the canyonlands far below us. Then the shout went up "Verreaux's Eagle!" as one of these utterly magnificent birds cruised along the cliff below us and landed on a distant crag. We had just enough time to set a telescope on it when

it took off again and to our dismay headed into the far distance, a speck in the void. We stuck with it and then imperceptibly at first and then very definitely, the speck started to get bigger until, in what seemed like no time and without a single wing-flap, it was back with us, close enough to appreciate it fully. From here it flew the length of the vista below us and was joined by its mate and we enjoyed fantastic views of these very special birds as they patrolled their realm.

From here, noting Arabian Wheatears and flowering Desert Roses along the way, we headed down to Tawi Atyr and walked to the huge and dramatic sink hole for which the place is famous. As we stood on the precipice looking down into the void the air was filled with the echoing high-pitched calls of over 200 Tristram's Starlings wheeling around the cliffs – a truly thrilling moment! Here too we had super views of a Barbary Falcon, plus a flock of 180 Abdim's Storks, another Imperial Eagle, both Palestine and Arabian Sunbirds and, perhaps best of all, a pair of Bonelli's Eagles, one of which passed so close along the cliff edge at our eye level that you could have pitched pebbles onto its back.

Day 12

Monday 27th November

Hot and sunny with some scattered cloud and breezy at times.

This morning we headed back up over the escarpment and across the desert to the oasis village of Mudday, a known site for the almost mythical Grey Hypocolius. The drive through the desert dawn was pretty special and at Mudday itself we saw a few nice things including close-up Arabian Green Bee-eaters, several Pale Crag Martins, some Stone Partridges and a male Hooded Wheatear, the only one of the trip. Hypocolius eluded us however so we high-tailed it back to Thumrayt in time to see over 200 Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse as they finished their morning drinking session.

After lunch and a siesta at the hotel we visited Saadah Park in the suburbs of Salalah and had an excellent little session with great views of a Grey-headed Kingfisher, a flock of Scaly Munias, a couple of Syke's Yellow Wagtails, a passing Booted Eagle and a superb Crested Honey Buzzard. We finished the afternoon and our Omani birding at familiar Ayn-Razat with Bruce's Green Pigeons, Imperial and Steppe Eagles, Blackstarts, Abyssinian White-eyes, African Silverbills and a Graceful Prinia. A great finale to an excellent trip.

Day 13

Tuesday 28th November

We made a very early start from the hotel and arrived at Salalah Airport in good time for our early morning departure. The check-in went smoothly, our flights were on time and we all arrived safely back at our various European destinations later in the day.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Qais for his expert fixing throughout; to all of our excellent drivers, both for their driving and for being such good company and such welcoming ambassadors to their country; to Hatem for an expertly managed boat trip and to all the members of the group for their consistent enthusiasm and good humour. It was a great trip.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			15	2				10	7		
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>			8								
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>									1		
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		1						4			
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>			35	20				1			
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			21								
Grey Francolin	<i>Ortygornis pondicerianus</i>	4	5	6								
Sand Partridge	<i>Ammoperdix heyi</i>		20		1							15
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	5										
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>		40									
Forbes-Watson's Swift	<i>Apus berliozii</i>									40		
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>									20		150+
Spotted Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles senegallus</i>							80				
Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles lichtensteinii</i>			2								
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>										3	
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	25	100's	50	20			10	50	5		20
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>						1					
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	5		4	5		8	5	2	2		1
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	15	25	40	30	30	35	30	35	50	30	50
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>				3	2		10			1	
Bruce's Green Pigeon	<i>Treron waalia</i>							5				8
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		5	2	1				6	5		
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>							1				
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>								12			
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>								1			
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		2	10					5	1		
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>				2							

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	30				7	9		25	8		
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	5			1	4			5	5		5
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		6		15				70	2		
Sociable Lapwing	<i>Vanellus gregarius</i>							7				
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	3	30	20	10							
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>					80	9					
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>				4	10			1	4		2
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		5	12			2		3	3		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>				1			2	6	1		
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	10	15	5	50	30	25		20	5		
Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	5	30		10	100+	25		5			
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	2	4		3	10+	2+					
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>								2			
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		1		2	3			1			1
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		1		1				1	35		
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>				8	12			1	1		2
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>								2			
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		1			5						
Ruff	<i>Calidris pugnax</i>				5				3	1		
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>						1					
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>					3	2		2			
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>		2	4			1		3	1		
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>				1	1			2	5		9
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	1			2	50+			8	4		
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		7	10	25	20+			10	6		
Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>								5	1		
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			5					5	3		
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>				25	5+						
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		50				1		1		50+	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		15	5	15	5	5	1	12	15		8
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		1						2	2		2

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	1	1		2	10			25	13		15
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>			1								
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>				2				10	2		
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	2	1	1	5	10	2		12	8		3
Crab-plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>				3	40						
Cream-colored Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>					3			14			
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	50	2		250	100+	20		150+	6	10	3
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		50									
Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus</i>				30							
Sooty Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus hemprichii</i>	8	20		100	500+		3	100+	20	1000+	20+
Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>				10						2	
Heuglin's/Steppe Gull	<i>Larus fuscus heuglini/barabensis</i>	100's	15		100's	100's	30+		100's	100+	100+	50+
Baltic Gull	<i>Larus fuscus fuscus</i>				1							
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>				1		2		2	2		3
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>				8	10	15		5			1
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	5	120+		10	10			1	1	5	4
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	6			3							
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	1			1	2	1					
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>										5	3
Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>						10					
Little/Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons/saundersi</i>				1	5						
Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>		2								1	
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	3										
White-cheeked Tern	<i>Sterna repressa</i>									1		
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>			1					10	40		
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>									1		
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>		1									
Swinhoe's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma monorhis</i>										1	
Flesh-footed Shearwater	<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>										4	
Persian Shearwater	<i>Puffinus persicus</i>										10	
Jouanin's Petrel	<i>Bulweria fallax</i>										12	

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>		4									
Abdim's Stork	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>							1	4	450	260	
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>								120+	300+	250	1
Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>										5	4
Socotra Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax nigrogularis</i>								12		3	2
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	80	10	200	100+	100+			50			
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	8							35			
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>						2					
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>							1		2	2	1
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>				1	1	1	1			1	
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>								4	1		
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>		4	2			1	1	3	3		1
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>									50	35	3
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2	6	4	100	100's	15	2	30	10	5	1
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>								1			
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		1		5	100's	6		10			
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>			2				1		3		1
Western Reef Heron	<i>Egretta gularis</i>	5	6		15	30	15		10		4	1
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		3		2		1		2	2	1	
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>		3		30							
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>			2								
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>											1
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>								3	2		1
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga clanga</i>								2			
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>									3		1
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>				2			250	1	3	1	
Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>		1					2	1	2	5	3
Verreaux's Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>										2	
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>								2	1	2	
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	1		2	2					4		
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>										1	

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Pallid/Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus/pygargus</i>										1	
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>					1		1	2		1	
Arabian Scops Owl	<i>Otus pamela</i>									2h		
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>								3			
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>		2	1	6	12					1	
Grey-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>											2
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		1		1	1h	1h	1h				
Arabian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops cyanophrys</i>	7	20	6	7	5	1					2
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>							1		10		
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1	1					5	6	4	5	2
Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>										1	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	5	40		2			2	4			
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>									2	1	
Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>									1		
Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>				1		1			2		
Red-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius phoenicuroides</i>							1	2		1	
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>			1	1		1	2				
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>							1	7	1		1
House Crow - I	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	150	30	10	3			3	25	1	2	20
Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>		6		2	20	50	15				5
Fan-tailed Raven	<i>Corvus rhipidurus</i>									3	35	
Greater Hoopoe-Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>						5	3				3
Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>		2	2	5							
Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i>						8	5	15	2		2
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	5		2	2	5	6	10	5		6	
Red-vented Bulbul - I	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	1	2									
White-eared Bulbul - I	<i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>		8	8	3	5	2					
White-spectacled Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus xanthopygos</i>	1	6	5				6	8	10	8	12
Pale Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne obsoleta</i>	1	1	10	1			5	5	15	25	20
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>						2		4	1		
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		3	1			4	3				3

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Siberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus c. tristis</i>									1		
Clamorous Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>			1			1		3			
Graceful Prinia	<i>Prinia gracilis</i>								1	1h		1
Delicate Prinia	<i>Prinia lepida</i>		2	10	1h							
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>		1	8	3			2		1		1
Arabian Warbler	<i>Curruca leucomelaena</i>							1	1	1	2	
Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca crassirostris</i>			1								
Menetries's Warbler	<i>Curruca mystacea</i>			1+2h		5						
Abyssinian White-eye	<i>Zosterops abyssinicus</i>							10	15	15	2	10
Arabian Babbler	<i>Argya squamiceps</i>			8								
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	10	30	25	20	2			20	10	5	
Tristram's Starling	<i>Onychognathus tristramii</i>							4	15	20	200	5
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>							4				
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>						2					
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>							1			1	
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>			1		2	1	2	3	2	1	
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	1			1	7	12	15	5		1	1
Blackstart	<i>Oenanthe melanura</i>							3	6	2	2	4
Hooded Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe monacha</i>											1
Hume's Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe albonigra</i>		2		2							
Arabian Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe lugentoides</i>					1					4	
Red-tailed Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe chrysopygia</i>			2	1							
Palestine Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris osea</i>								4	3	2	
Arabian Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris hellmayri</i>							4	8	6	2	2
Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>		25	35	10							
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	30	100+	50	25	3	20	30		2		20
Rüppell's Weaver	<i>Ploceus galbula</i>							1	30	20	30	15
Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>											15
African Silverbill	<i>Euodice cantans</i>							10	8	6	1	4
Indian Silverbill	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>			6								
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		1					2	1	8		5

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>			1					2	4		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>									1		1
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>				3	1	3	3		1		5
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>					2	2	2	2			
Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similis</i>									1?	2	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>									5		4
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>							1h				1
Striolated Bunting	<i>Emberiza striolata</i>				1				2			
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>							1	3	10	50	5

Others

Non-bird checklist kindly compiled by Ros Broad, Helen Bryett, Dai Herbert and Kate Lessells.

		November 2023										
Common name	Scientific name	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
MAMMALS												
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>											
North African Wildcat	<i>Felis lybica</i>										✓	
Common Dolphin	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	✓										
Cape Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>					✓						
Wild Donkey	<i>Equus africanus</i>			✓								
REPTILES												
Terrapin sp	-						✓					
Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>			✓							✓	
Olive Ridley Sea Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>										✓	
Carter's Rock Gecko	<i>Pristurus carteri</i>					✓	✓					
Rock Semaphore Gecko	<i>Pristurus rupestris</i>									✓	✓	

Arnold's Rock Gecko	<i>Pristurus minimus</i>				✓								
Fringe-fingered Lizard sp.	<i>Acanthodactylus</i> sp. (<i>Opheodurus</i> ?)				✓								
Tessellated Skink	<i>Trachylepis tessellata</i>												✓
Jan's Cliff Racer	<i>Platycephalus rhodorachis</i>											✓	
Moila Snake	<i>Malpolon moilensis</i>							✓					
AMPHIBIA													
Dhofar Toad	<i>Firouzophrynus dhufarensis</i>									✓			
MOLLUSCS													
-	<i>Bullia mauritiana</i>												✓
-	<i>Euryptyxis latireflexa</i>							✓	✓	✓			✓
ARTHROPODS													
Spiders													
-	<i>Argiope sector</i>							✓					
Red-legged Golden Orb-web Spider	<i>Nephila sumptuosa</i>									✓	✓	✓	
Crustaceans													
Shore Crab sp	<i>Ocyrodinae</i> sp.							✓					
White-handed Fiddler Crab	<i>Austruca albimana</i>			✓									
Thin-shelled Rock Crab	<i>Graspus tenuicrustatus</i>									✓			
Red Sea Ghost Crab	<i>Ocyrodina saratan</i>									✓			
Insects - - Odonata													
Lesser Emperor	<i>Anax parthenope</i>			✓									
Emperor dragonfly sp.	<i>Anax</i> sp.	✓	✓										
Broad Scarlet	<i>Crocothemis erythraea</i>								✓	✓	✓		
Black Percher	<i>Diplacodes lefebvrei</i>								✓		✓		
Eastern Blacktail	<i>Nesciothemis farrinosa</i>										✓		
Epaulet Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum chrysostigma</i>									✓			
Slender Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum sabina</i>			✓	✓					✓			
Violet Dropwing	<i>Trithemis annulata</i>								✓	✓	✓		
Insects - Orthoptera													

Green-winged Grasshoppers	<i>Aiolopus</i> sp.							✓				
Slender Green-winged Grasshopper	<i>Aiolopus thalassinus</i>								✓			
Brown-spotted Locust	<i>Cyracanthacris tatarica</i>						✓					
Mediterranean Splendid Grasshopper	<i>Heteracris littoralis</i>		✓		✓							
Migratory Locust	<i>Locusta migratoria</i>						✓					
-	<i>Scintharista</i> sp.										✓	
Bird grasshoppers	Subfamily <i>Cyrtacanthacridinae</i>			✓				✓	✓			
Slant-faced Grasshopper	<i>Truxalis nasuta</i>							✓	✓			
Insects - Mantodea												
Conehead Mantis sp.	<i>Empusa</i> sp.							✓				
Insects - Coleoptera												
Darkling Beetle	<i>Adesmia cancellata</i>			✓								
Darkling beetle sp.							✓					
Dung beetle	<i>Scarabaeoidea</i> sp.									✓		
Insects - Neuropera												
Ant lion pits	-		✓									
Insects - Hymenoptera												
Sahara ants and allies	<i>Cataglyphis</i> sp. (<i>nigra</i> ?)		✓									
Oriental Hornet	<i>Vespa orientalis</i>	✓										
Insects - Lepidoptera												
Bright Babal Blue	<i>Azanus ubaldus</i>				✓							
Pioneer White	<i>Belenois aurota</i>										✓	
Pearl Charaxes	<i>Charaxes latireflexa</i>							✓				
Small Salmon Arab	<i>Colotis amata</i>										✓	
Red-tip Butterfly	<i>Colotissp.</i>						✓					
Plain Tiger butterfly = African Monarch	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
Common Grass Yellow	<i>Eurema hecabe</i>										✓	
Long-tailed Blue	<i>Lampides bocticus</i>				✓	✓						
Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>		✓						✓			

Blue Pansy	<i>Precis orithya</i>	✓							✓		
Crimson Speckled	<i>Urethra pulchella</i>			✓							
African Grass Blue	<i>Zizeeria knysna</i>										
Insects - Diptera											
Bombilid fly sp.	Bombyliidae					✓					
PLANTS											
Trees											
Red Thorn	<i>Acacia gerrardii</i> (= <i>Vachellia gerrardii</i>)		✓								
Thorny Acacia	<i>Acacia nilotica</i> (= <i>Vachellia nilotica</i>)							✓			
Gum Arabic	<i>Acacia senegal</i> (= <i>Vachellia senegal</i>)							✓			
Umbrella Thorn	<i>Acacia tortillis</i> (= <i>Vachellia tortillis</i>)		✓								
Grey Mangrove	<i>Avicennia marina</i>			✓							
Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>								✓		
-	<i>Boscia arabica</i>								✓		
Frankincense Tree	<i>Boswellia sacra</i>						✓				
Myrrh family	<i>Commiphora</i> sp.									✓	
Dragon tree	<i>Dracaena serrulata</i>							✓			
Dragon tree	<i>Draecaena serrulata</i> ssp. <i>dhofarica</i>									✓	
Ghaf	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i>					✓					
Mesquite	<i>Prosopis juliflora</i>	✓									
Pomegranite	<i>Punica granatum</i>						✓				
Toothbrush Tree	<i>Salvadora persica</i>		✓								
Tamarind	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>									✓	
Christ's thorn jujube	<i>Ziziphus spina-christi</i>			✓			✓				
Herbs											
Desert rose	<i>Adenium obesum</i>									✓	
Bristle Salt-bush	<i>Anabasis setifera</i>										
Mexican Poppy	<i>Argemone mexicana</i>										
Glaucous Glasswort	<i>Arthrocnemum macrostachyum</i>										
Saltbush	<i>Atriplex leucoclada</i>										

-	<i>Blepharis ciliaris</i>				✓							
Caper family	<i>Cadaba farinosa</i>											
Giant milkweed	<i>Calotropis procera</i>			✓				✓				
Veldt Grape	<i>Cissus quadrangularis</i>											
Desert hyacinth	<i>Cistanche phelypaea</i>				✓							
Desert Squash	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>											
-	<i>Corchorus depressus</i>		✓									
Rattleweed	<i>Crotukaria retusa</i>											
Rattlepod	<i>Crotularia aegyptica</i>											
Caustic Creeper	<i>Cynanchum viminale</i> (=Sarcostemma viminale)										✓	
Devil's Trumpet	<i>Datura stramonium</i>											
-	<i>Euphorbia larica</i>											
-	<i>Heliotropium bacciferum</i>						✓					
Alkali heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium curassavicum</i>			✓								
-	<i>Heliotropium longiflorum</i>											
-	<i>Indigofera</i> sp.								✓			
-	<i>Indigofera volkensii</i>											
Beach morning glory/goat's foot	<i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i>						✓					
Sea Lavenders	<i>Limonium</i> spp.											
False Fleabane	<i>Pulicaria</i> sp.											
Castor Oil Plant	<i>Ricinus communis</i>											
-	<i>Salsola rubescens</i>											
Saltworts	<i>Salsola</i> spp.											
-	<i>Sarcostemma viminale</i>											
-	<i>Schweinfurthia imbricata</i>		✓									
Thorn Apple	<i>Solanum incanum</i>											
Black Nightshade	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>											
Nubian Hoary Pea	<i>Tephrosia nubica</i>											

Camel’s Flower	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>												
Grasses													
Egyptian Crowfoot	<i>Dactyloctenium aegyptium</i>												
Purpletop Chloris	<i>Chloris babata</i>												



Desert Rose and Fan-tailed Ravens