

Tunisia

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 September – 6 October 2013



House Bunting in Matmata



Sand Lizard in Sahara Desert



Hoopoe Lark



Naturetrek Group Photo at El Jem amphitheatre

Report and cover images compiled by Dave Smith



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leaders:	Dave Smith	Naturetrek Ornithologist
	Amine Zorgati	Local Guide & Driver
Tour Group	Alan Bell	
	Judith Rungay	
	Kevin Crean	
	Sharon Crean	

Day 1

Saturday 28th September

London Heathrow to Tunis and Bizerte

With Alan and Judith already in Tunisia on a pre-tour extension, visiting the historical sites and ruins of the Tunis area, it was pleasing that Kevin and Sharon met up with Dave at Heathrow with sufficient time that allowed us to enjoy lunch together before gathering for the late afternoon flight to Tunis. There was a 90 minute delay to the flight which meant a take-off of around 2015hrs. We were met at Tunis by our local guide and driver Amine who whisked us on our way to our hotel in Bizerte. Arriving in Bizerte around 2330hrs we were allocated our rooms and changed money at reception before retiring for the night. No sooner had we settled than there was a knock on the door, with a waiter bringing the remains of the evening meal for our consumption. A quick snack and then back to a restful sleep...

Day 2

Sunday 29th September

Bizerte and Lake Ichkeul

Sunny and hot. 32°C

We awoke to a fine warm sunny morning a number of Blackbirds chasing around in nearby trees and lots of Sparrows flying around the hotel grounds, some easily recognised as Spanish Sparrow. Some of the group members were up for pre-breakfast birding around the grounds of the hotel and finding Sardinian Warbler, Zitting Cisticola, Crested Lark, Spotted Flycatcher and the ever present Laughing Dove. Our breakfast at 0700 was the first official gathering of the group and the ambiance of the room and the quality of the food ensured that everyone bonded successfully.

After breakfast we were away from the hotel at a leisurely 0815, heading north towards Lake Ichkeul with much anticipation of a good days birding. En route we called at a supermarket to buy supplies for the day's picnic. Approximately half way to the barrage we stopped to view a splendid Southern Grey Shrike perched on a power-line pylon. Vacating the vehicle to get better views we were delighted to scope a Black-winged Kite on the same pylon and then discovered some 20 Cattle Egrets on nearby farmland and our first Long-legged Buzzard of the trip. Our attention returned to the power-line when a group of Bee-eaters alighted on them. Further scanning along the line provided a view of some 50 Bee-eaters equally spaced along the wire.

Resuming our journey we soon reached the lake and surrounding farmland initially visiting the barrage which separates the salt water of the sea from the fresh water main lake. We were amazed to see masses of Greater

Flamingo, an estimate of 3000 not being an exaggeration. The low water levels in this area allowed a number of waders to be identified including Greenshank, Common Sandpiper and Kentish Plover. Both Little Egret and Great Egret were present and the dominant gull was Slender-billed a new species for some of the group. Nearby hedges held Cetti's Warbler and a fairly large group of Serin. Butterflies were noted here including Clouded Yellow and a splendid Two-tailed Pasha, the latter's speedy flight eluding all but the leader.

We drove around the lake anti-clockwise stopping a number of times to look at more Greater Flamingo and then a group of 15 Stone Curlew found by Judith., Collared Pratincole was added to the list after good spotting by Alan and Tufted Duck and Black-necked Grebe were also observed.. The water levels and area of water were not as extensive as in previous trips, but it tended to concentrate wildfowl and waders in compact groups. As late morning approached and the temperature increased viewing became hazier, particularly when viewing distant targets. This set-back was quickly ignored when a purple patch of raptor spotting ensued, starting with Marsh Harrier to get our eye in, followed by 3 Short-toed Eagles, then a couple of Common Buzzards, more Black-winged Kites taking the total to 5, a Black Kite and finally 3 Long-legged Buzzards.

Lunch was calling so we drove further around the lake and then on a road along the base of Mount Ichkeul to the National Park where we had a good picnic overlooking the now dried up lake. Raptor's still provided the highlights as we ate, with a couple of Ospreys, 3 Marsh Harriers and a Peregrine often disturbing wildfowl up from a distant pool. A couple of Blue Rock Thrushes appeared on the rocks beside us and a Common Snipe dropped into one boggy area nearby. Surprisingly dragonflies were common here with a number of Emperor and Lesser Emperor being noted.

After lunch we drove to a nearby viewing hide in order to gain sufficient height to view the distant wildfowl. Just before reaching the hide a stop was forced upon us as a flock of some 30 Collared Pratincole hawked for insects in the adjacent farmland, closely followed by a Hobby, possibly seeking the same prey. Reaching the hide we were disappointed that our target was not in view, the 100's of wildfowl and waders in the centre of the lake too distant to identify, but Alan had found a distant flock of falcons which were soon identified as Lesser Kestrel. Even better was one perched on a pylon no more than 20 metres from the vehicle! Restarting our circuit we had another Short-toed Eagle before reaching the barrage for a second viewing. We were pleased to discover a change around of species that included Kingfisher, Little Stint, Swallow and increased numbers of Common Sandpiper, Greenshank and Greater Flamingo. Returning to the hotel in Bizerte we met up in the bar for a pre-meal species roll-call and then experienced a splendid evening meal. It had been a great day and everyone would sleep well in preparation for day 3.

Day 3

Monday 30th September

Bizerte to Chilba Barrage, Korba lagoon and Korba

Sunny and hot. Temp around 32°C. Breezy from late morning

Some of us were woken around 0400 hours by a very violent thunder storm, the flashes of lightening being particularly spectacular. It didn't appear to be raining at the time of the storm but the grass was wet as we ventured to the restaurant for breakfast.

We were away and on the road before 0800 to get around Tunis before the morning rush-hour, our intention being to bird the southern part of the Cap Bon peninsular on our way to our next hotel stop in Korba. We travelled around Tunis and on the way out stopped at a supermarket to buy food for the day's picnic. From here we drove on towards Cap Bon with a stop overlooking farmland where we searched for larks. Here Skylark, Lesser Short-toed Lark, Short-toed Lark and Thekla Lark were noted as was a family party of Stonechat and a splendid Northern Wheatear. Just as we ventured back to the vehicle a falcon flashed across the road the ensuing discussion finalising the identification as Barbary Falcon.

Further along the road the Chilba Barrage could be seen in the distance, it appeared to have low water levels and water birds were very distant. However, we decided to stop for lunch on a disused bridge nearby and observed Grey Heron, Little Egret, Common Snipe, Little Stint Kentish Plover and Green Sandpiper in the waters below. After our picnic lunch we found a track heading towards the barrage in the hope of getting views of the distant wildfowl. We headed along the dusty road through a couple of settlements until the track ran out. We therefore left the vehicle and walked along a footpath to a vantage point overlooking the expanse of water. From our slightly elevated position we could make out masses of birds on the barrage, Coot were present in their hundreds, Mallard were common, but we were gob-smacked to see a group of some 50 White Headed Duck, a species on our list of must sees. Nearby a group of 15 Ferruginous Duck floated by together with a single male Pochard and a 100 Tufted Duck for comparison. Grebes were also present with both Great Crested and Little picked out from the masses, the latter forming quite a respectable group totalling 40 birds.

The surrounding farmland provided a number of goodies including Short-toed Lark, Calandra Lark, Isabelline Warbler (renamed from the previous Eastern Olivaceous Warbler), and a hand full of splendid Southern Grey Shrikes. It was here that a dragonfly appeared, looking like a cross between a Black Darter and a Banded Demoiselle, the resultant scrutiny of literature confirming the individual as a Banded Groundling. A local then approached Amine to ascertain our intentions and from the ensuing conversation we learnt that the local name for the area was a rather apt 'Bird'.

Heading back to the main road we drove to the Barrage head-wall and were rewarded with a couple of Black-necked Grebes and two Black Terns. The nearby factory outfall was excessively polluted, the obnoxious smell, curtailing the stop to just a couple of minutes. Surprisingly Black Kite, Marsh Harrier and Common Sandpiper were present here. It was now 1630 hours so we made the decision to speed to the Korba Lagoons, an area of brackish water adjacent to the beach just north of the Korba town-ship. On arrival it was obvious the area was alive with wading birds so we viewed from the vehicle as we drove across the dividing causeway to reduce disturbance to a minimum. Everyone was in their element as Little Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Redshank and Greenshank were scrutinised, as were Dunlin, Ruff, Knot, Ringed Plover and Kentish Plover. At least 500 Greater Flamingo were also present together with a large group of gulls which contained, Black-headed, Yellow-legged, Slender-billed and a new bird for the trip Mediterranean Gull. A single Bar-tailed Godwit dropped in just as the light started to fade signalling time to head to the hotel.

After all the excitement of a large and varied number of birds we drove to our accommodation at the Africa Jade Thalasso Hotel, a really nice 4 star venue beside the sea. We met later to complete the day's birds list and then to have dinner with a fantastic, varied buffet before retiring to bed after a very rewarding day, but not before checking out the Moorish Gecko climbing the wall near to the lifts.

Day 4

Tuesday 1st October

Korba, Cap Bon, Kerkouane, Kelibia and Korba

Sunny and hot, with a moderate breeze from the north. Temp c 33°C

Dave was up around 0630 for a stroll around the hotel grounds and was rewarded with a singing Common Bulbul and of all things a Kingfisher visiting the hotel pool.

After breakfast we left the hotel at 0800 for Cap Bon which is a migration hot-spot in spring but unproven in the autumn. We picked up food for the picnic in a small town on the way and drove straight to Cap Bon, stopping on the ascent to view the landscape and look for migrants. Here we had a number of Thekla Lark, an Isabelline Wheatear, Northern Wheatear, Black-winged Kite and of all things a splendid Tunisian Spur-thighed Tortoise found by Sharon. A further stop produced our first Moussier's Redstart and a pair of elusive Barbary Partridge.

Reaching the top of the access road to the transmitter tower we spent a while searching the rocky terrain for more birds and were rewarded with more Moussier's Redstart, a Lesser Short-toed Lark and good views of both Tree Pipit and Tawny Pipit. Sitting on the rocky cliff top we saw light sea passage in the form of 10 or so Cory's Shearwater and were pleased to see a number of birds arrive in off the sea including, Red-rumped Swallow, Robin and Mistle Thrush. Our picnic was consumed in the shelter of a small building below the main transmitter compound and once again was interrupted by avian presence, this time 2 Peregrine Falcon and a Lanner Falcon thrilling with their aerial skills.

After lunch we visited the Carthaginian ruins at Kerkouane where Amine gave an interesting and extensive insight into their history. The ruins had been uncovered and preserved but not rebuilt to any degree which gives a splendid overview of the whole area. Various houses were showing accurate structural detail right down to the stone bath-tubs. It was now quite hot so birdlife was pretty scarce although Spotted Flycatcher and Chaffinch of the race africana were seen. Both Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady butterflies were common, one bush in particular attracting 30 or more of the latter species. Again Dragonflies were present in good numbers with Blue Emperor, Common Darter and Desert Darter being identified.

We left here around 1440 hours and then drove to Kelibia Castle with its layered history of Carthaginian, Punic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, French and Germans during the Second World War, again expertly explained to us by Amine. The castle walls had been rebuilt but the interior still had work to be done in many parts, but never the less, was very impressive in its current state. Here we witnessed Cory's Shearwater passage from the castle ramparts, and were thrilled by a fly-over Bee-eater, a resident Blue Rock Thrush and a small group of Little Swifts hawking for insects over the adjacent town. Disaster struck here when Alan's hat blew off towards the exterior defensive slopes below. Despite a quick search it was not found.

Heading back to Korba we called off at the lagoons again this time driving across the causeway then walking back on foot. Again the area was alive in waders in similar numbers to the previous day with Marsh Sandpipers and Ruff providing entertainment. Our walk back tended to disturb the birds but allowed excellent views of Marsh Harrier, Slender-billed Gull and Greater Flamingo. A fly-by Curlew and a distant Pintail were new in and the arrival of birds coming in to the evening roost included 8 Spoonbill, 125 Cattle Egret and 15 Grey Heron.

We were a little late back to the hotel so the bird list was carried out with haste so that another splendid meal could be enjoyed. Another great days birding had been experienced!

Day 5

Wednesday 2nd October

Korba to Jedidi Lake, Monastir Airport Saltpans, El Jem and Mahres

Sunny and very hot, around 38 °C

With hundreds of Sparrows roosting overnight in the hotel courtyard trees it was not surprising to witness the crescendo of noise as they woke up at first light in preparation for their daily sortie to the outlying district in search of food. During Dave's pre-breakfast stroll many groups of Sparrows could be seen leaving in the direction of nearby farmland. Again the Kingfisher was seen visiting the hotel pool in addition to Chaffinch, Greenfinch and White Wagtail. Highlight of the early birding was Little Owl near the ornamental lawns.

After breakfast we checked out and headed south stopping at Jedidi Lake at 0930 in the hope of finding both resident and migrant birds. Normally this is a large lake with reed fringed margins and is an attraction to migratory birds, being on the edge of a dry, arid area with a backdrop of rugged hills. We were all amazed to find it completely dry. Despite this huge set-back we scanned the adjacent foothills and located Crested Lark, more Moussier's Redstart and our first Black Wheatears.

We took the decision to detour via the saltpans adjacent to Monastir Airport and were pleased to record Greater Flamingo, Black-winged Stilt and Little Grebe in a small river before we got there. Arriving in Monastir just before noon, the pans and surrounding pools were well furnished by the usual Greater Flamingo and large numbers of Yellow-legged and Slender-billed Gulls. They also sported an array of waders including Greenshank, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Kentish Plover and Redshank. Wildfowl were here in good numbers too, with Mallard, Pintail, Shelduck and Teal on view. Not to be outdone Little Tern, Common Tern and the huge Caspian Tern vied for our attention with both Little and Great Egrets.

It was very hot by now, so we made a quick drinks stop before powering on to El Jem and our scheduled lunchtime date. Arriving around 1345 we were soon welcomed to a splendid cafe, looking out onto the entrance of the El Jem amphitheatre, and ate a super repast. Entering the world's sixth largest Roman amphitheatre after lunch we were in awe of such a wonderful structure, said to be better preserved than the Colosseum in Rome. Few birds were present here apart from the resident Rock/Feral Dove although flower tubs nearby were attracting the occasional Plain Tiger Butterfly.

We moved on to the nearby Mosaic Museum to see the wonderful wealth of preserved decorative floors before heading off towards Mahres and our next overnight hotel. Few birds were seen on this section of travel apart from an occasional Southern Grey Shrike. We made it to the Tamaris hotel by about 1810 and dispensed with the bird-list, concentrating on re-hydrating in the bar before a pleasant evening meal. Reflecting on the day, fewer birds had been seen, especially south of Monastir, presumably as a result of the highway passing through mile after mile of a mono-culture of Olive groves, with Olive trees planted in regimented rows as far as the eye could see.

Day 6

Thursday 3rd October

Mahres Harbour, Bouhedma National Park and onto Douz via the Chott El Fejaj

Sunny and hot, temperature 38 - 40°C

Breakfast as usual at 0700 then birding near the hotel looking out over the bay at Mahres and the sea. It was nearing high tide and so the usual array of waders were absent from the bay. We did have Spoonbill, Curlew, Black Necked Grebe, Oystercatcher and Common Sandpiper from this viewpoint before moving to the nearby harbour where the birding improved substantially. Viewing from the harbour access road we soon spotted Greater Flamingo and more Spoonbills but it was the wading birds present that took our attention. Redshank, Grey Plover, Golden Plover and Turnstone were in evidence as were the expected Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Curlew, Little Stint and Dunlin. Gulls were represented by Slender-billed and Yellow-legged and these were accompanied by Caspian Tern. During our avian scrutiny Sharon managed to find and photograph a solitary Crimson Speckled moth a new sighting for us all.

After a quick stop for fresh bread and for water we drove south then west towards the arid area of the Bouhedma National Park. Stopping occasionally to scan for birds we managed to locate Long-legged Buzzard, Southern Grey Shrike, Raven, Crested Lark, Thekla Lark and Lesser Short-toed Lark. We also saw Little Owl, Northern Wheatear, our first Desert Wheatear and a group of Yellow Wagtails one of which was sporting the black head of the race feldegg. Butterflies were also noted during these stops with Bath White, Plain Tiger and Painted Lady particularly noticeable. One road kill of note was a Wild Boar, obviously the result of an overnight collision.

We reached the Bouhedma National Park by 1145, a remnant of the original North African landscape with numerous Acacia trees depicting a scene similar to the dry habitats of central Africa. After registering we drove to the central area and then had a short walk through the Acacia scrub with little success. The temperature was rising so all the birds and mammals appeared to have left to seek the shade. Even the 2 Griffon Vultures seen soaring above the mountains as we registered had disappeared. Luckily the group were not disheartened and we eventually located Thekla Lark, Common Bulbul, Hoopoe, Redstart Spotted Flycatcher and Laughing Dove. Returning to the shade of the picnic area we prepared and ate lunch while viewing a Barbary Sheep in a nearby pen, and watching Plain Tiger, Painted Lady and Desert Swallowtail butterflies feeding on the herbaceous bushes.

After lunch we were joined by the Park Ranger and he escorted us to a spring located at the foot of the mountain. This hike produced a group of Barbary Partridge, another Hoopoe and our first Maghreb Wheatear (the western version of the Mourning Wheatear). The spring was quiet on arrival but birds soon arrived to drink resulting in Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Isabelline Warbler, Garden Warbler and Spanish Sparrow being seen. Our walk back to the vehicle produced Moussier's Redstart and Desert Wheatear but no mammals. Leaving the park the Ranger pointed out a group of some 20 Scimitar Horned Oryx near to the entrance headquarters. Saying our goodbyes to the park staff we took the road south to Douz, following the boundary fence of the national park, resulting in Addax, Dorcas Gazelle and more Scimitar Horned Oryx being added to our mammal list. Missing from this area was Ostrich, but we soon located a group of 20 or so.

With time getting on we sped towards Douz passing between a mountain range before crossing the Chott El Fejaj, both areas providing spectacular scenery as the evening sun began to set. Dark was soon to follow so we were fortunate to see a couple of Stone Curlew fly across the vehicles headlights in the dim evening gloom. Arrival at our hotel was quite late so we postponed the bird list until tomorrow, hastily showered then sat down to a splendid feast. Another long but rewarding day had been enjoyed...

Day 7

Friday 4th October

Douz and 4x4 vehicle trip into the Sahara Desert, visiting Jebil National Park.

Sunny and very hot. Temperature way above 40°C

We awoke to a clear, sunny day and a met for breakfast at 0700, but unfortunately both Amine and Kevin were absent due to overnight illness. The remaining group departed in a 4x4 vehicles for our journey into the desert and to the Jebil National Park. En route we had lots of Hoopoe Lark and were fortunate to stumble across Bar-tailed Lark, Scrub Warbler and Kestrel during the drive. A quick stop at a dried up well allowed good photograph opportunities to snap a delightful little Sand Lizard as it scuttled around a mini sand-dune.

A comfort stop at the oasis of Cafe la Fort du de Desert provided good birding in the surrounding trees and vegetation allowing Spanish Sparrow, Redstart, Isabelline Warbler, Yellow Wagtail, Fulvous Babbler and Southern Grey Shrike to be seen. Further along the sand covered road was another cafe which had a splendid White Crowned Wheatear perched on its roof.

As we reached the main gates of the Jebil National Park, around 1240, four Brown-necked Ravens were airborne and these increased to 8 as we parked up in the now searing temperatures. We were not allowed to participate in our usual drive into the park due to the current political situation with nearby Libya, but were allowed to walk around the nearby compound area. Here Desert Wheatear, Desert Sparrow and Yellow Wagtail were present, as was a lone Addax with deformed horns and a lone Ostrich. By now some of the Brown-necked Ravens had landed nearby allowing detailed scrutiny of their diagnostic plumage.

We ate lunch in the nearby museum/information centre building before deciding to retreat back to Douz to escape the high temperatures. Along the way Hoopoe Lark was again noted and our return stop at Cafe la Fort du de Desert produced the same species as before plus a Willow Warbler. Our arrival back to the hotels cool air conditioning by 1615 was welcomed. Judith and Sharon took advantage of the early finish to explore the local shops, enabling the group's new expression, 'Birping' (birding while shopping) to be invented. Again the evening meal was suitably impressive, and we all retired for an early night after a wonderful Saharan experience.

Day 8

Saturday 5th October

Douz, Mamata and drive to DJerba Island

Sunny and hot 35°C+

After a good breakfast the group met up for our final full day of birding, driving west towards Djerba Island and our scheduled flight to Tunis tomorrow.

With yesterday's absentee's restored to better health we were delighted to find a group of larks feeding by the roadside after just a few minutes drive. This group contained Hoopoe Lark and Bar Tailed Lark, species missed by Kevin the previous day. Nearby fabulous views of our first Temmink's Lark was obtained together with another new bird for the trip Red-rumped Wheatear. A brief stop at a small orchard brought little other than a fly-over Trumpeter Finch, although both Northern and Desert Wheatear were noted after we restarted our journey.

Approaching Matmata a small group of Brown-necked Ravens appeared allowing Kevin to pull back another missing species. After a comfort stop in the village we made our way to the outskirts to visit a Troglodyte style dwelling where a couple of sisters still live. Here Amine described their ancient way of life while we enjoyed refreshments of Mint Tea and traditional flat bread with a Honey/Olive Oil dip. Afterwards we climbed to the slopes above the house to visit the graveyard and were rewarded with spectacular views over the village and a family of House Buntings coming to drink from water put out for the birds. It was here that Alan had a Rock Sparrow fly by while the rest of the group were dotting on Black Wheatear.

Driving further along we stopped at the lookout vista on the edge of the village where both Thekla and Short-toed Larks were active. Also seen here was a Raven perched on a pylon enjoying the same spectacular view as ourselves. Time was now moving on so we made the decision to speed on to then ferry port just outside Medenine and delay lunch until we reached the island. However a large expanse of water just west of Medenine demanded our attention so we stopped to check it out. The rewards were well worth the delay as Greater Flamingo, Little Egret, Great Egret and Spoonbill were present in good numbers, as was Curlew, Redshank and Dunlin. 100's of waders too distant to identify were also present suggesting that this location is worth greater scrutiny in future. A couple of Gull-billed Terns and at least 15 Caspian Terns completed our list for this site.

We reached the ferry about 1345 but had 30 minutes or so to wait before boarding. Whilst waiting a number of gulls and terns flew by but the highlight was 4 Bottlenose Dolphins seen by Dave as they swam east midway between the mainland and Djerba Island. Despite his best efforts nobody else could get on them. Reaching the other side we quickly sped to our hotel in Houmt Souk to drop off our luggage before heading to a nearby restaurant where we had a super traditional Tunisian lunch.

After lunch we headed to the beach area for some bird-watching and were disappointed to find the tide fairly well up. Undaunted we found a rough area of land with vegetation stretching to the sea and were amazed to record a good number of waders including, Grey Plover, Greenshank, Turnstone, Kentish Plover and Whimbrel. Amine knew another site near the airport so we moved to there and found even more waders, this time Little Stint, Sanderling and Golden Plover were present together with a large number of Grey Heron. Also here were a nice mixture of seabirds with at least 100 Slender-billed Gull on show with both Caspian and Sandwich Tern nearby. Kevin then asked the question is that Sandwich Tern sized bird with the orange bill something different? It certainly was...it was our only Lesser Crested Tern of the trip.

We had to head back to the hotel to register etc, and while a couple of us caught up with preparations for our homeward journey Judith and Alan did a little more 'Birping'. The day had been enjoyable yet again and it was capped off by a splendid candle-lit meal eaten alfresco by the hotel pool.

Day 9

Sunday 6th October

Jerba to Tunis to London

Cloudy start, c 25 deg C

Breakfast at 0630, check out of the hotel, then away to Jerba airport for our 0830 internal flight to Tunis. On the way the usual array of Spotless Starlings, Laughing and Collared Dove put in an appearance as did a lone Swallow migrating south. The airport car park brought our final sighting of Southern Grey Shrike.

After checking in for our flight we were already at the boarding gate when a one hour delay in departure was announced, putting paid to any potential birding between flights in Tunis. We eventually touched down in Tunis at 1045 and then checked-in for our flight to London. Saying our goodbyes to Amine, we completed the pre-flight procedures for our homebound flight to Heathrow where we said goodbye to our newly made friends and departed for our various home destinations.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Amine, our local guide and driver, who looked after us, sorted our accommodation, helped with the picnic purchases and provided information on Tunisia and its political, religious and ancient history. We had a seen respectable list of 138 species of birds between us, recorded in a varied range of habitats with both resident and migratory birds noted. We also saw a good number of butterflies and dragonflies many of which eluded identification. Taking in to account the mammals seen in the national parks visited, Tunisia's flora and fauna is worthy of further exploration. Naturetrek's visits have already proved that an important bird migration takes place here, so further exploration is recommended. My thanks also go to all the members of the group who contributed in a variety of ways to make this a particularly memorable trip. I thoroughly enjoyed your company.

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Species Lists

Birds (c = common)

	Common name	Scientific name	September/October							
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>					10	1		
2	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		3			1			
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		100		10				
4	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	3	2			1		1	
5	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>			100+					
6	Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1						6	
7	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	400	150	250	10				
8	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	50	25	10	10	1		5	
9	Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	5			2				
10	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	15	10	15	25		20		
11	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>			8		15		20+	
12	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	3000	500	300	250	5		100	
13	Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>				2				
14	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	50	25		200			6	
15	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>			1	6				
16	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				4				
17	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		1						
18	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	15	100						
19	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>		15						
20	White-headed Duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>		50+						
21	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>					2			
22	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	3							
23	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	4	1						
24	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		1	2	3				
25	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	1	2						
26	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	7		2					
27	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	8	3	3	1				
28	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	4				1			
29	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	2							
30	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	18	5	5	3		1		
31	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	21							
32	Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>		1						
33	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1			1				
34	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1		2					
35	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>			1					
36	Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>			2		9			
37	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2	10	4					
38	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		1000	25		50			
39	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>					6			
40	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>				30				
41	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	15				2			
42	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	42							
43	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	10	15	25		15		50	
44	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	25	25	30	6	5		15	
45	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>					1		1	
46	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>				1	20		15	
47	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>					1		3	

	Common name	Scientific name	September/October							
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
48	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>								6
49	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>				1				
50	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	6	20	30		6		10	
51	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	3	30	25	20	5		30	
52	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		10	50					
53	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>			1		2		20+	
54	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>							4	
55	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>		1						
56	Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		6	2	2	4		6	
57	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	45	2		2	2		5	
58	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		10	2				2	
59	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa hypoleuca</i>		3						
60	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	20	1			5		1	
61	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	2	3	1					
62	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>		5						
63	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>	100	15	10	150	50		100+	
64	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	10	50	30	10				
65	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	2	15	6	200	100		50	
66	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>							2	
67	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>				5				
68	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>							1	
69	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>							2	
70	Common Tern	<i>Sterna Hirundo</i>	50			1				
71	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>							5	
72	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>		2						
73	Caspian Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>				1	2		25	
74	Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>							1	
75	Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba Livia/feral</i>	c	c	c	c	c		c	c
76	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	20	25	10	15	25	4	5	3
77	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>				5		6	5	5
78	Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	H							
79	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>				1	2			
80	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>			5					
81	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	50		1					
82	Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	2		1	1				
83	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>					5			
84	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		1						
85	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	2	15	15	6	25	2	6	
86	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>		2	10		2		10	
87	Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>		5					2	
88	Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>		3	8					
89	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cincturus</i>						3	2	
90	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>					2			
91	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>		1						
92	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>							4	
93	Hoopoe Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>						15	3	
94	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	45	50	75	30	20	3	25	2
95	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>				2				
96	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	12	10	10				1	
97	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>			1					
98	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>			1					

	Common name	Scientific name	September/October							
			29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
99	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>				1				
100	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>					6*	1		
101	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>				H		10+		
102	Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>				1				
103	Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	1		5		4	2		
104	Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>			6	3	1			
105	Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>		4						
106	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		1	10		6	1	3	
107	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>			1					
108	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>					4	1	2	
109	Maghreb Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe halophila</i>					1			
110	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>						1		
111	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>				3			2	
112	Red-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>							2	
113	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	8		5	1				
114	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	20	15	10	5	6			
115	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			1					
115	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	10	5						
116	Scrub Warbler	<i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>						1		
117	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	3	1						
118	Isabelline Warbler	<i>Hippolais opaca</i>		1			3	2		
119	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	15	5	20	5	5			
120	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>					3			
121	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>						1		
122	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	3	2	8	2	3			
123	Blue Tit	<i>Parus cearuleus</i>	4	2	5	3				
124	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	4	6	2	3	10	2	5	1
125	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Turdoides fulvus</i>						2		
126	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	50+	50+	50+	50+	30		10	10
127	Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>					1		2	
128	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>						8	7	
129	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passerhispaniolensis</i>	6	25	30	20	50	30	25	
130	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
131	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>						10		
132	Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>							1	
133	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			3	1	1			
134	Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	25	5						
135	Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		5	1	1				
136	Linnet	<i>Acanthis cannabina</i>		1						
137	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>							1	
138	House Bunting	<i>Emberiza striolata</i>							3	

*Group of Yellow Wagtails included at least one Black-headed male of the race *feldegg*.

Mammals

Dorcas Gazelle (Bouhedma)

Scimitar-horned Oryx (Bouhedma)

Addax (Bouhedma and Jebil)

Wild Boar (Road casualty)

Pipistrelle Bat sp. (Bizerte)

Bottlenose Dolphin (Djerba Island)

Reptiles and Amphibians

Moorish Gecko (Mahres and Douz)

Sand Lizard (Sahara Desert)

Tunisian Spur-thighed Tortoise (Cap Bon)

Butterflies

Desert Swallowtail
Clouded Yellow
Two-tailed Pasha

Small White
African Grass Blue
Painted Lady

Bath White
Plain Tiger
Small Heath

Moths

Crimson Speckled

Dragonflies

Oasis Bluetail
Keeled Skimmer
Orange-winged Dropwing

Blue Emperor
Common Darter
Banded Groundling

Lesser Emperor
Desert Darter



Tunisian Spur-thighed Tortoise by Sharon Crean



Southern Grey Shrike