

**WESTERN SAHARA**  
**Golden Nightjar Quest**  
**23 UNTIL 31-03-2017**



*Golden nightjar, as and at the place we saw it and one of our birds photographed by Sam Jones on 23-03-17*

**Legenda:**

**\*AAAA** = New (Holarctic) Species (2)

**AAAAA** = Good species for the trip or for me (because not often seen)

*The list order is conform the WP checklist with the recent changes on the splitting and lumping issue mainly based on publications in the “important magazines”. Subspecies is only mentioned when thought to be important and really visible in the field. The totals of birds per species are just a total of the birds I saw to give an idea how many of a species you encounter during a trip. Only species seen are mentioned, and heard when no lifer.*

On this trip the weather was good with no rain, mostly sunny with (dry) temperatures above the 20 C and often no wind in Oued Jenna but a lot of wind along the coast and in the western part of the desert increasing in the afternoons.



*Above Oued Jenna and below Hotel Attitude from below*

### **Itinerary**

**23-03** Flew in the afternoon from Brussels via Casablanca to Dakhla.

**24-03** Birded from Dakhla to and around Hotel Attitude, as a pre birding tour.

**25-03** Birded around Dakhla and also again Hotel Attitude. Also visited the waterhole at Gleb Jidian. In the evening we drove to Oued Jenna along the Awsard road (226 KM one way).

**26-03** Birded most of the night at Oued Jenna far into the next morning at places around this site. Had a great lunch in Awsard and birded the evening at the Dirreman Hills. Again went night birding at Oued Jenna.

**27-03** Birded in the morning at Oued Jenna and then with birding stops back to Dakhla.

**28-03** Birded around Dakhla, near the lighthouse, the La Saga's mudflats and later on went night birding again to Oued Jenna.

**29-03** Birded on the way back from Oued Jenna to Dakhla. Slept in the afternoon and went out again for night birding to Oued Jenna.

**30-03** After a night of birding near Oued Jenna drove back with stops to Dakhla and birded there in the afternoon.

**31-03** Flew back via Casablanca to Amsterdam.



13. **Common Ringed Plover – *Charadrius hiaticula***  
Common at coastal places
14. **Kentish Plover – *Charadrius alexandrinus***  
Common along the coast, with sometimes 100 ex. on a day.
15. **Bar-tailed Godwit – *Limosa lapponica***  
Quite common along the coast, many birds coming into summer plumage.
16. **Whimbrel – *Numenius phaeopus***  
24-03 2 ex. along the coast at Dakhla.
17. **Common Redshank – *Tringa nebularia***  
28-03 2 ex. at La Saga's mudflats.
18. **Common Sandpiper – *Actitis hypoleucos***  
A total of 3 seen spread over the days.
19. **Ruddy Turnstone – *Arenaria interpres***  
24-03 10 ex. on the rock beach of Dakhla
20. **Red Knot – *Calidris canutus***  
25-03 1 ex. walking under a car at Attitude  
28-03 40 ex. at La Saga's mudflats, coming into summer plumage.
21. **Sanderling – *Calidris alba***  
Common along the coast, the most common calidris
22. **Little Stint – *Calidris minuta***  
28-03 2 ex. at La Saga's mudflats.
23. **Curlew Sandpiper – *Calidris ferruginea***  
28-03 10 ex. at La Saga's mudflats
24. **Dunlin – *Calidris alpina***  
28-03 Common at La Saga's mudflats
25. **Cream-colored Courser – *Cursorius cursor***  
A total of 13 birds seen spread over the trip in the desert. Great to see them again.
26. **Slender-billed Gull – *Chroicocephalus genei***  
24-03 30 ex. seen along the coast of Attitude and Dakhla, most were migrating with Black-headed Gulls.
27. **Black-headed Gull – *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***  
24-03 20 ex. seen along the coast of Dakhla, most were migrating.
28. **Audouin's Gull – *Ichthyaeetus audouinii***  
Quite common in flocks along the coast with up to 100 ex. a day, mostly (not all) immature birds of different ages. Also quite a few ringed birds, all photographed and recorded.
29. **Lesser Black-backed Gull – *Larus fuscus* ssp: *graellsii* + *fuscus* (?)**  
The commonest gull along the coast in big flocks. 2 ssp: *fuscus* near Dakhla on 30-03 (??).



*One of the fuscus types birds.*

30. **Yellow-legged Gull – *Larus michahellis***

Less common than LBG, but seen in every gull flock with tens every day we checked them.

31. **Caspian Tern – *Hydroprogne caspia***

Quite common often associated with LBG around Dakhla. Almost all birds where in winter plumage.

32. **(African) Royal Tern – *Thalasseus maximus***

24+25-03

7 ex. in total on the beach of Attitude. Some of them in winter plumage.



33. **Sandwich Tern – *Thalasseus sanvicensis***

Common along the coast.

34. **Common Tern – *Sterna hirundo***

24+25-03

12 ex. seen in total in tern flocks around Dakhla, not yet moulted in summer plumage.

35. **Great Skua – *Stercorarius skua***

28-03

1 ex. seen on a short sea watch from Dakhla.

36. **Crowned Sandgrouse – *Pterocles coronatus***

25-03

5 ex. in a flock flying over Gleb Jidian with dark primaries and secondaries.

37. **European Turtle Dove – *Streptopelia turtur***

24-03

1 ex. flying through Dakhla, a migrant.

38. **Eurasian Collared Dove – *Streptopelia decaocto***

The commonest dove, seen almost daily.

39. **Laughing Dove – *Spilopelia senegalensis***

A total of 10 seen in Dakhla.

40. **\*GOLDEN NIGHTJAR – Caprimulgus eximius**

26-03 1 ex. heard only in the morning  
26-03 1 ex. seen in flight in the late evening in the torch without  
sound for several minutes, most likely a feeding bird.  
27-03 1 ex. heard only in the morning  
29-03 3 ex. heard only  
30-03 3 ex. heard and seen well, singing from the ground and flying  
around. See:

<https://observation.org/waarneming/view/135891754>

<https://observation.org/waarneming/view/135891758>

<https://observation.org/waarneming/view/135891759>

<https://observation.org/waarneming/view/135965740>

<https://observation.org/waarneming/view/136010809>

<https://observation.org/waarneming/view/136010810>

Number of birds: At least 4 birds were heard in an area of 500 meters from the road (we did not go further in). On 26-03 the bird looked to have a bit less white in the wing and was not calling so maybe a female?. On 30-03 two birds were seen simultaneously calling and reacting on each other and because of calling presumed to be males.

**Description:**

Call: easy to recognize an unique “*chu-chouck---chu-chouck*” constantly repeating, topical like. Mostly calling in the early morning between 05.50 and 07.15 (when it became light)

The birds: A small looking nightjar with quite an erratic butterfly flight. Very obvious white wing patches bordered with black on both sides of this patch, near the top of the wings (on the primaries) and obvious white patches on the tops of the outer tail feathers, also bordered with black on the upper side of this spot. A white throat (seen when calling from the ground). All the birds showed much light barring on the underparts giving them a marbled appearance. On 30-03 saw them so well that in the torchlight the yellow/golden color on the whole body could be seen very well.

41. **Little Swift – Apus affinis**

24-03 10 ex. at Dakhla.

28-03 2 ex. at Dakhla.

42. **Common Swift – Apus apus**

28+29-03 A total of 11 birds seen over Dakhla. Big black (so no Pallid or Island) swift, also heard calling on 29.

43. **Eurasian Hoopoe – Upupa epops**

25-03 1 migrant seen while birding around Dakhla.

44. **European Bee-eater - Merops apiaster**

29-03 5 ex. in a small flock along the Awsard Road.

45. **White-Throated Bee-eater – Merops albicollis**

24-03 1 immature seen very well in the gardens of hotel Attitude.

The bird was quite worn.



*A worn bird, most likely due to wind and acacia's where it roosted*

46. **Common Kestrel – Falco tinnunculus**  
28-03 1 near Dakhla.
47. **Lanner Falcon – Falco biarmicus**  
24-03 1 seen in flight near Dakhla.  
27-03 1 seen very well, flying along the car along the Awsard road.
48. **Southern Grey Shrike – Lanius meridionalis ssp: elegans**  
Common in the desert, often in pairs.
49. **Woodchat Shrike – Lanius senator**  
25-03 1 ex. near Dakhla  
26-03 2 ex. at Oued Jenna.
50. **Brown-necked Raven – Corvus ruficollis**  
Quite common in the desert, often in pairs.
51. **Greater Hoopoe Lark – Alaemon alaudipes**  
Quite common in pairs in the desert. Great to hear them sing and see the display flight.
52. **Desert Lark – Ammomanes deserti**  
26-03 2 ex. seen well in the Dirreman Hills.
53. **Bar-tailed Lark – Ammomanes cincture**  
A total of 27 seen along the Awsard road, mostly in the most bare parts.
54. **Black-crowned Sparrow Lark – Eremopterix nigriceps**  
26-03 Very common at the visited areas of Oued Jenna on this day.  
30-03 1 ex. seen at Oued Jenna.
55. **Thekla Lark – Galerida theklae**  
25-03 Quite common around Dakhla and the start of the Awsard road.  
27-03 2 ex. drinking at Gleb Jidian.
56. **\*AFRICAN DUNN'S LARK – Eremalauda (eremodites) dunni**  
26-03 4 ex. two pairs seen well, in flight and perched, both in a large area just east of Jenna. Like the eastern but very sandy colored.



*Great to see both possible lifers on this trip.*



*Really easy this year, or maybe always??*

57. **Barn Swallow – *Hirundo rustica***

The commonest migrating swallow, seen daily in good numbers.

58. **Common House Martin – *Delichon urbicum***

24-03 1 ex. at hotel Attitude.

59. **Red-rumped Swallow – *Cecropis daurica***

28-03 1 ex. seen well migrating over a green patch in Dakhla.

60. **Willow Warbler – *Phylloscopus trochilus***

24+25-03 7 ex. all migrants at Attitude and Gleb Jidian.

61. **Common Chiffchaff - *Phylloscopus collybita***

A total of 12 recorded mainly around Dakhla and also in Oued Jenna.

62. **Western Bonelli's Warbler – *Phylloscopus bonelli***

A total of 3 seen in and around Oued Jenna. Great to hear the typical “hoe-iet” call.

63. **Cricket Warbler – *Spiloptila clamans***

A total of 28 seen in the Oued Jenna area (mainly on 26<sup>th</sup>), often in pairs, The call is very distinctive and an easy way to find them.

64. **Fulvous Babbler – *Turdoides fulva***

Quite common along the Awsard road in small family flocks.

65. **Blackcap – *Sylvia atricapilla***

A total of 4 migrants recorded along the Awsard road (hiding in a really small bush in al landscape that looked like Mars) and Attitude.

66. **Western Orphean Warbler – *Sylvia hortensis***

26-03 2 nice males seen well in Qued Jenna.

67. **African Desert Warbler – *Sylvia deserti***

27-03 1 nice male singing along the Awsard road and seen very well sitting on top of small bushes. Again I was stroke by their sandy color.

68. **Common Whitethroat – *Sylvia communis***

30-03 1 female in the desert along the Awsard road.

69. **Western Subalpine Warbler – *Sylvia inornata***

A total of 10 birds found as migrants in the Oued Jenna area. Also nice views of males.

70. **Northern Wheatear – *Oenanthe oenanthe***

A total of 10 migrants seen spread over the trip.



71. **Desert Wheatear – Oenanthe deserti**

A total of 9 birds seen, often in pairs along the Awsard road.

72. **Black-eared Wheatear – Oenanthe hispanica**

24-03

1 female, a migrant, on the beach of Dakhla.

73. **Red-rumped Wheatear – Oenanthe moesta**

25-03

2 ex. a pair of these lovely wheatears where seen, near the turnoff from Dakhla to the Awsard Road.

74. **Black Wheatear – Oenanthe leucura**

24-03

species.

2 ex. seen well at Attitude, it was “ages” ago that I saw this



*Great views of this long not seen species.*

75. **White-crowned Wheatear – Oenanthe leucopyga**

26-03

1 male at seen well in the Dirreman Hills.

76. **House Sparrow – Passer domesticus**

Quite common around Dakhla.

77. **Desert Sparrow – Passer simplex**

A total of 140 birds seen well in big flocks, males, females and many immature birds. One of the nicest species recorded, the males are awesome.



*Desert Sparrow(s) with Sudan Golden Sparrow in between.*

78. **Sudan Golden Sparrow – Passer luteus**

26-03

2 males seen in a flock of Desert Sparrows giving great views.

79. **White Wagtail – Motacilla alba**

A total of 15 birds seen spread over the trip.

80. **Red-throated Pipit – Anthus cervinus**

28-03

2 ex. seen at La Saga’s mudflats, seen and heard well.

81. **Tree Pipit – Anthus trivialis**

A total of 4 birds seen at the visits to Attitude.

82. **Trumpeter Finch – Bucanetes githagineus**

25+27-03

2 ex. a pair coming into drink at Gleb Jidian.

**The Harry List:**

01 Desert Hedgehog (*Paraechinus aethiopicus*) – 29-03 2 ex.

02 African Savanna Hare (*Lepus microtis*) – A total of 6 animals seen.

03 Lesser Egyptian Jerboa (*Jaculus jaculus*) – Quite common running over the road at night.

04 Lesser Egyptian Gerbil (*Gerbillus gerbillus*) - Quite common running over the road at night

05 Pygmy Gerbil (*Gerbillus henleyi*) – 26+30-03 2 ex. seen running in the desert.

06 Wild Cat (*Felis silvestris*) – 29-03 1 ex. seen for a long time walking along the road at Oued Jenna.

07 Sand Cat (*Felis margarita*) – 29+30-03 1 ex. seen along the road to Oued Jenna, both were the same animals (same spot).

08 Ruppell's Fox (*Vulpes rueppellii*) – A total of 9 seen during our nightbirding, also playing young animals.

09 Fennec Fox (*Vulpes zerda*) – 26+30-03 a total of 4 animals seen along the Awsard road.



*A nice Fennec, showing its big ears*

10 Saharan Striped Polecat (*Poecilictis libyca*) – 29+30-03 a total of 2 animals seen in the desert.

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