

# Northern Algeria (via Istanbul)

18-24 June 2019



## Participants

Bert de Bruin, Enno Ebels & Lodi Nauta

## Schedule

18 June	flight Amsterdam - Istanbul
19 June	birding around Istanbul, flight Istanbul - Constantine
20-23 June	birding around Constantine, Batna, Biskra, Bitam, Timgad and Tiddis
23 June	flight Constantine - Istanbul
24 June	flight Istanbul - Amsterdam

## Contact

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## Introduction

We made a short trip to Algeria with a stopover with a morning birding at Istanbul. In Istanbul, we were guided by Timur Caglar and in Algeria by Karim Haddad [karim241267@yahoo.fr](mailto:karim241267@yahoo.fr). We spent five days in Algeria.

It is prohibited to take binoculars to Algeria. As a result we had to borrow some low quality ones in both Istanbul and Algeria. This handicap made birding rather difficult and almost impossible to study birds in detail, e.g. House/Spanish Sparrow, swifts, Yellow Wagtails and crested larks (Thekla's, Crested and Maghreb). Cameras are allowed, though...

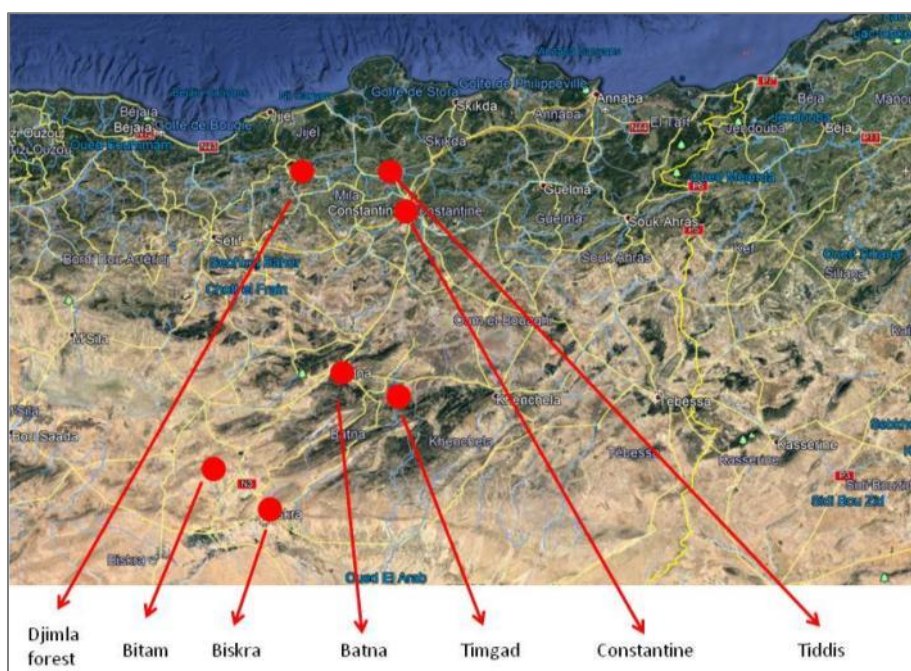
Our base was in Constantine. We visited areas in the northeast of the country: Constantine and its gorge, Djimla forest, El Mellah (Mila), RC Mellah (small lake), Tazult, the area of Nebka, Bitam south of Biskra, Batna, Daya, El Kantra (the 'Gate to the Sahara'), Chott Tinsilt, Missali farm and Djebel Quahch. Distances during this trip were long. As a result we drove a lot and spent much time in the car. Karim arranged all hotels, driving and food, so we could do the birding quite effectively. We took twice the opportunity to visit Roman ruin cities, Timgad (UNESCO World Heritage) and Tiddis. Karim is an excellent guide, both birdwise and social - a nice person who delivers the birds!

The weather was warm to hot, but lightly clouded on most days. Temperatures ranged from ca 17 °C in the hills in early morning near Constantine to 45 °C around mid-day in the desert near Bitam.

### The taxa we concentrated on:

Yelkouan Shearwater in Istanbul. In Algeria of course Algerian Nuthatch, but also regional specialties like Barbary Partridge, Maghreb Wood Owl, Levaillant's Woodpecker, Tunisian Jay, Algerian Jackdaw, Maghreb Short-toed Treecreeper, Moussier's Redstart, Common Bulbul, Sahara Scrub Warbler, Ambiguous Reed Warbler, Atlas Pied Flycatcher, Ultramarine Tit, Tunisian Coal Tit, Maghreb Lark and Atlas Crossbill. We saw all of them.

### Map of main sites visited





*Enno Ebels*

Bert de Bruin, Karim Haddad, Enno Ebels and Lodi Nauta in Djimla forest



*Karim Haddad*

Enno, Lodi and Bert - first moment with Algerian Nuthatch



*Karim Haddad*

Lodi, Enno and Bert in Djimla forest



Gorge at Constantine, view to the city

*Enno Ebels*



Gorge at Constantine, view to the north

*Enno Ebels*



Bridge over the gorge in Constantine

*Enno Ebels*



*Enno Ebels*

Girls in Constantine



*Lodi Nauta*

Bert photographing Djimla forest



*Enno Ebels*

Karim, Bert and Lodi searching for Sahara Scrub Warbler and African Desert Warbler near Bitam



*Lodi Nauta*

Timgad



*Enno Ebels*

Timgad



*Enno Ebels*

Timgad



*Enno Ebels*

Tiddis



*Enno Ebels*

Tiddis



*Bert de Bruin*

Gate to the Sahara, El Kantra

## List of species

**001**    **White-headed Duck**  
6 (4 males, 2 females)

*Oxyura leucocephala*  
20-06 RC Mellah



*Enno Ebels*



*Lodi Nauta*

**002**    **Ruddy Shelduck**  
Family group with five pulli

*Tadorna ferruginea*  
21-06 Daya



*Enno Ebels*



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|------------|--|---|
| <b>003</b> | <b>Common Pochard</b><br>1 male  | <i>Aythya ferina</i><br>20-06 RC Mellah   |
| <b>004</b> | <b>Mallard</b><br>c 50   | <i>Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos</i><br>20-06 RC Mellah                            |
| <b>005</b> | <b>Common Quail</b><br>1 calling<br>2 calling  | <i>Coturnix coturnix coturnix</i><br>20-06 around Djimla forest<br>23-06 Farm Messali |
| <b>006</b> | <b>Barbary Partridge</b><br>1 flying   | <i>Alectoris barbara barbara</i><br>30-06 Djimla forest                               |
| <b>007</b> | <b>Greater Flamingo</b><br>> 100   | <i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i><br>21-06 Chott Tinsilt                                   |
| <b>008</b> | <b>Little Grebe</b><br>2<br>1  | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis ruficollis</i><br>20-06 RC Mellah<br>22-06 Djebel El Ouahch |
| <b>009</b> | <b>Great Crested Grebe</b><br>5  | <i>Podiceps cristatus cristatus</i><br>20-06 RC Mellah                                |
| <b>010</b> | <b>Black-necked Grebe</b><br>10 (adults and pulli)   | <i>Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis</i><br>20-06 RC Mellah                            |
| <b>011</b> | <b>Rock Dove</b><br>Difficult to judge, maybe some good birds seen (e.g. in gorge in Constantine), many feral pigeons seen as well, of different plumage types | <i>Columba livia livia</i>  |



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| <b>012</b> | <b>Common Wood Pigeon</b><br>Few birds in wooded areas   | <i>Columba palumbus palumbus</i>  |
| <b>013</b> | <b>European Turtle Dove</b><br>Widespread  | <i>Streptopelia turtur arenicola</i>  |
| <b>014</b> | <b>Eurasian Collared Dove</b><br>Common  | <i>Streptopelia decaocto decaocto</i>                                       |
| <b>015</b> | <b>Black-bellied Sandgrouse</b><br>3 flyby's   | <i>Pterocles orientalis orientalis</i><br>22-06 Nebka Bitam                 |
| <b>016</b> | <b>European Nightjar</b><br>1  | <i>Caprimulgus europaeus meridionalis</i><br>21-06 Tazult                   |
| <b>017</b> | <b>Common Swift</b><br>Swifts sp were common in most urban areas. Identification was difficult to judge due to lack of good binoculars and strong light, but many looked most like Common. Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i> also possibly seen. | <i>Apus apus apus</i>   |
| <b>018</b> | <b>Alpine Swift</b><br>Common in Constantine   | <i>Tachymarptis melba tuneti</i>  |
| <b>019</b> | <b>Common Cuckoo</b><br>1  | <i>Cuculus canorus canorus</i><br>19-06 Istanbul area                       |
| <b>020</b> | <b>Common Moorhen</b><br>1   | <i>Gallinula chloropus chloropus</i><br>22 and 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch       |
| <b>021</b> | <b>Eurasian Coot</b><br>c 20<br>2  | <i>Fulica atra atra</i><br>20-06 RC Mellah<br>22 and 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch |
| <b>022</b> | <b>Yelkouan Shearwater</b><br>> 1000   | <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i><br>19-06 Bosphorus, Istanbul                       |



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**023 Black Stork**  
2

*Ciconia nigra*  
19-06 Istanbul area



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**024 White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia ciconia*  
Common around Istanbul and in Algeria

**025 Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis ibis*  
Common in Algeria

**026 Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea cinerea*  
A few in Istanbul area

**027 Western Great Egret** *Ardea alba alba*  
1  
19-06 Istanbul area

**028 Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta garzetta*  
5  
20-06 along road to Djimla

**029 Mediterranean Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*  
1 immature  
19-06 Bosphorus, Istanbul



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| <b>030</b> | <b>Continental Great Cormorant</b><br>c 10  | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i><br>19-06 Bosphorus, Istanbul                              |
| <b>031</b> | <b>Black-winged Stilt</b><br>3<br>3<br>c 10   | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i><br>20-06 El Mellah, Mila<br>20-06 RC Mellah<br>21 and 22-06 Daya |
| <b>032</b> | <b>Little Ringed Plover</b><br>2  | <i>Charadrius dubius curonicus</i><br>20-6 RC Mellah  |
| <b>033</b> | <b>Kentish Plover</b><br>5  | <i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus alexandrinus</i><br>21-06 Daya                                    |
| <b>034</b> | <b>Green Sandpiper</b><br>1<br>1  | <i>Tringa ochropus</i><br>20-6 RC Mellah<br>21-6 Daya   |
| <b>035</b> | <b>Yellow-legged Gull</b><br>Common in Istanbul   | <i>Larus michahellis michahellis</i>  |
| <b>036</b> | <b>Gull-billed Tern</b><br>2  | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica nilotica</i><br>21-6 Chott Tinsilt                                   |
| <b>037</b> | <b>Booted Eagle</b><br>Seen daily in hilly areas in Algeria, c 10 birds seen in total; all) were pale-morph birds | <i>Aquila pennata</i>   |
| <b>038</b> | <b>Western Marsh Harrier</b><br>1   | <i>Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus</i><br>19-06 Istanbul area                                  |

<b>039</b>	<b>Eurasian Sparrowhawk</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus punicus</i>
1		20-06 Djimla forest
1		23-06 Djebel El Ouahch
<b>040</b>	<b>Black Kite</b>	<i>Milvus migrans migrans</i>
	Widespread in small numbers in Algeria	
<b>041</b>	<b>Atlas Long-legged Buzzard</b>	<i>Buteo rufinus cirtensis</i>
1		20-6 Djimla forest area
2		21-6 along the road to Biskra
<b>042</b>	<b>Cucumiau</b>	<i>Athene noctua</i>
1		19-06 Istanbul area
1		20-06 Constantine
2		23-06 Messali farm



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<b>043</b>	<b>Eurasian Scops Owl</b>	<i>Otus scops mallorcae</i>
1	calling	22 and 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch
<b>044</b>	<b>Maghreb Wood Owl</b>	<i>Strix mauritanica</i>
	Juvenile and adult	20-06 Djimla forest



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| <p><b>045</b>    <b>Eurasian Hoopoe</b><br/>Widespread in Algeria, but in small numbers</p> | <p><i>Upupa epops epops</i></p>   |
| <p><b>046</b>    <b>European Bee-eater</b><br/>Widespread in Algeria</p>                    | <p><i>Merops apiaster</i></p>   |
| <p><b>047</b>    <b>Levaillant's Woodpecker</b><br/>4 in family group<br/>1</p>             | <p><i>Picus vaillanti</i><br/>22-06 Djebel El Ouahch<br/>23-06 Djebel El Ouahch</p> |



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**048 Great Spotted Woodpecker**  
c 10  
3

*Dendrocopus major numidus*  
20-06 Djimla forest  
22 and 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch



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| <b>049</b> | <b>Common Kestrel</b><br>2-3 seen every day in Algeria                                       | <i>Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus</i>  |
| <b>050</b> | <b>Peregrine Falcon</b><br>1   | <i>Falco peregrinus brookei</i><br>19-06 gorge of Constantine                                 |
| <b>051</b> | <b>Eurasian Golden Oriole</b><br>1 singing   | <i>Oriolus oriolus</i><br>20-06 Djimla forest   |
| <b>052</b> | <b>Red-backed Shrike</b><br>4-5  | <i>Lanius collurio</i><br>19-06 Istanbul area   |
| <b>053</b> | <b>Desert Grey Shrike</b><br>Family of four  | <i>Lanius elegans</i><br>21-06 Nebka Bitam  |
| <b>054</b> | <b>Woodchat Shrike</b><br>Small numbers seen every day in Algeria                            | <i>Lanius senator senator</i>   |
| <b>055</b> | <b>Maghreb Magpie</b><br>2<br>This area is one of only three known breeding areas in Algeria | <i>Pica mauritanica</i><br>21-06 Tazult   |
| <b>056</b> | <b>Tunisian Jay</b><br>5<br>2  | <i>Garrulus glandarius cervicalis</i><br>20-06 Djimla forest<br>22 and 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch |



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| <b>057</b> | <b>Algerian Jackdaw</b><br>Common in the gorge of Constantine; an extremely localised endemic subspecies, (now) only occurring in and around Constantine | <i>Corvus monedula cirtensis</i> |
|------------|--|----------------------------------|





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**058 African Northern Raven** *Corvus corax tingitanus*  
15-20 every day

**059 Ultramarine Tit** *Cyanistes ultramarinus*  
Common in wooded areas



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**060 Great Tit** *Parus major excelsus*  
1  
23-06 Djebel El Ouahch

**061 Tunisian Coal Tit** *Periparus ater ledouci*  
c 25  
20-6 Djimla forest

**062 Woodlark** *Lullula arborea pallida*  
1  
23-06 Messali farm

**063 Thekla's Lark** *Galerida theklae ruficolor/superflua*  
1  
20-06 hills around Djimla forest  
2  
22-06 Timgad

More 'crested larks' were seen in urban areas and in Roman ruin cities and these were probably Thekla's. Difficult to judge due to lack of good binoculars and much driving.



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- **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata carthaginis/arenicola*  
Extremely difficult to identify: the subspecies *carthaginis*, *arenicola* (Crested Lark) and *randonii* (Maghreb Lark) may grade into each other and status/distribution is unclear. Probably seen some bird along the road at lower elevations in cultivated areas but none identified with certainty.

- 064 Maghreb Lark** *Galerida macrorhyncha*  
Status of *macrorhyncha* is unclear in the region south of Biskra we visited (lowland desert). Presumably this taxon was seen in the desert area and degraded agricultural fields near Nebka Bitam, including a family with recently fledged young. Identification was tentatively based on the very long bill.



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| <b>065</b> | <b>Eurasian Crag Martin</b><br>2 adults feeding 2 young       | <i>Pytyonoprogne rupestris</i><br>19-06 gorge of Constantine |
| <b>066</b> | <b>Barn Swallow</b><br>Common in cultivated areas             | <i>Hirundo rustica rustica</i>                               |
| <b>067</b> | <b>Common House Martin</b><br>A few seen in the larger cities | <i>Delichon urbicum meridionale</i>                          |
| <b>068</b> | <b>Common Bulbul</b><br>4                                     | <i>Pycnonotus barbatus barbatus</i><br>20-06 El Mellah, Mila |

**069 Sahara Scrub Warbler**  
1  
4-5 (family group)

*Scotocerca (inquieta) saharae*  
21-06 Nebka Bitam  
22-06 Nebka Bitam



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**070 Cetti's Warbler**  
Common Istanbul area (*ssp orientalis*)  
1 (*ssp cetti*)

*Cettia cetti*  
20-06 El Mellah, Mila

**071 Western Bonelli's Warbler**  
3  
5

*Phylloscopus bonelli*  
20-06 Djimla forest  
22 and 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch

**072 Eurasian Blackcap**  
1-2 seen/heard daily around cafe's and hotels

*Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

**073 African Desert Warbler**  
1  
1

*Sylvia deserti*  
21-06 Nebka Bitam  
22-06 Nebka Bitam



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**074**    **Tristram's Warbler**  
1 juvenile

*Sylvia deserticola*  
21-06 Tazult



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**075**    **Sardinian Warbler**  
A few every day in shrubby areas

*Sylvia melanocephala melanocephala*

**076**    **Common Whitethroat**  
1  
1

*Sylvia ommunis communis*  
19-06 Istanbul area  
23-06 Djebel El Ouahch

**077**    **Western Olivaceous Warbler**  
1  
2-3  
2

*Iduna opaca*  
20-06 Djimla forest  
20-06 El Mellah, Mila  
21-06 El Kantra



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**078 Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**  
4-5

*Iduna pallida elaeica*  
19-06 Istanbul area

**079 Ambiguous Reed Warbler**  
2

*Acrocephalus baeticatus ambiguus*  
20-06 El Mellah, Mila



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**080 Zitting Cisticola**  
3  
1

*Cisticola juncidis cisticola*  
21-06 Daya  
23-06 Messali farm

**081 Algerian Nuthatch**  
3-5 20-06 Djimla forest

*Sitta ledanti*

Very noisy, but difficult to find high up in the trees without good binoculars. Currently, six isolated oak forests are known where this endemic species breeds, of which two were discovered only recently (in 2018).



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*Enno Ebels*



*Lodi Nauta*





Enno Ebels

- 082 Maghreb Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla mauritanica*  
Common in Djimla forest and Djebel El Ouahch



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| <b>083</b> | <b>Eurasian Wren</b><br>5                                 | <i>Nannus troglodytes troglodytes</i><br>20-06 Djimla forest         |
| <b>084</b> | <b>Spotless Starling</b><br>c 20<br>5                     | <i>Sturnus unicolor</i><br>20-06 north of Constantine<br>22-06 Batna |
| <b>085</b> | <b>Common Blackbird</b><br>5-10 every day in wooded areas | <i>Turdus merula mauritanicus</i>                                    |
| <b>086</b> | <b>Song Thrush</b><br>1                                   | <i>Turdus philomelos philomelos</i><br>19-06 Istanbul area           |

<b>087</b>	<b>Mistle Thrush</b> c 10 3-4	<i>Turdus viscivorus deichleri</i> 20-06 Djimla forest 22-06 Djebel El Ouahch
<b>088</b>	<b>Western Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin</b> 1 feeding young 3-4	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes galactotes</i> 21-06 El Kantra 22-06 Nebka Bitam
<b>089</b>	<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b> 1 5 1	<i>Muscicapa striata striata</i> 19-06 Constantine 21-06 El Kantra 22-06 Djebel El Ouahch
<b>090</b>	<b>European Robin</b> 1 1	<i>Erithacus rubecula rubecula</i> 19-06 Istanbul area 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch
<b>091</b>	<b>Common Nightingale</b> 4-5 1	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos megarhynchos</i> 19-06 Istanbul area 20-06 Djimla forest
<b>092</b>	<b>Atlas Pied Flycatcher</b> c 20	<i>Ficedula speculigera</i> 20-06 Djimla forest



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<b>093</b>	<b>Black Redstart</b> 1	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis</i> 20-06 hills around Djimla forest
<b>094</b>	<b>Moussier's Redstart</b> 5 2	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i> 21-06 Tazult 23-06 Messali farm



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- |            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| <b>095</b> | <b>European Stonechat</b><br>c 10             | <i>Saxicola rubicola rubicola</i><br>20-06 hills around Djimla forest         |
| <b>096</b> | <b>Western Black-eared Wheatear</b><br>1<br>1 | <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i><br>20-06 hills around Djimla forest<br>22-06 Timgad |
| <b>097</b> | <b>Black Wheatear</b><br>1<br>1               | <i>Oenanthe leucura riggenbachi</i><br>21-06 El Kantra<br>22-06 Timgad        |



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**098 House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus tingitanus*  
Common, but probably many hybrids/intergrades with Spanish Sparrow

-- **Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*  
Not well studied, presumed mainly hybrids; no pure birds seen with certainty, although the bird below could be a pure Spanish?



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**099 Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia barbara*  
5  
3  
20-06 hills round Djimla forest  
23-06 Messali farm

-- **yellow wagtail** *Motacilla sp*  
2  
20-06 RC Mellah

**100 Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea cinerea*  
2  
20-06 along the road to Djimla forest

**101 Atlas Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs africana*  
Common in wooded areas



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**102 European Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris chlorotica*  
Common in Algeria (but difficult to see properly, more heard than seen)

**103 Common Linnet** *Linaria cannabina mediterranea*  
2-3 every day in arid areas

**104 Atlas Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra poliogyna*  
1 female type 22-06 Djebel El Ouahch  
1 male 23-06 Djebel El Ouahch



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**105 European Serin** *Serinus serinus*  
Common in Istanbul and in Algeria

**106 Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*  
2-3 seen every day in the north

**107 Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*  
4-5 19-06 Istanbul area

**108 Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*  
2 20-6 Djimla forest



*Enno Ebels*

**109 House Bunting** *Emberiza sahari*  
5 21-06 El Kantra



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## Mammals

Near Istanbul we saw a Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*



*Bert de Bruin*



*Enno Ebels*