

Morocco trip March 2019

So with a personal target of 24 Western Palearctic ticks off we went. A group of 6 Yorkshire Birders, we decided to use **Gayuin Birding Tours** who came highly recommended, (indeed they are who all the tour companies use) and we weren't disappointed! All initial correspondence was through Brahim who organised everything on the ground in Morocco; we just organised our flights. We decided on the 14 day tour so we might hopefully clear up on all the target species, with the exception of Buttonquail and Atlas Flycatcher which arrive late!

Our driver\guide Hamid met us at Marrakech airport and proved to be a legend! Funny, polite, unbelievably helpful and knew exactly where we needed to be for every single one of our target species! We managed to not only see all our targets but photograph them all, with the exception of the Francolin! Hamid was a very solid and unflappable driver, some of the days involved journeys of up to 400 kilometres and he continued seemingly without fatigue!

All the hotels were clean, comfortable and especially well placed, indeed some of them we had new species from the balconies! The food was plentiful and delicious with Tagines, Berber omelettes and Meat Skewers being regular favourites but my personal favourite was Berber Pizza at Mezane Fossil Store in Rissani!

The whole trip was brilliantly scheduled, ending with a few days south of Agadir in a hotel near the beach, we were all exhausted by then and these last few days were much more laid back with later starts and earlier finishes, just what 6 tired birders needed!

We would all heartily recommend Morocco as a Birding destination and particularly **Gayuin Birding Tours** and without doubt Hamid our guide who was a star and as well as his brilliant knowledge of the birds and sites was keen to teach us about all aspects of Moroccan culture! He was always aware of our needs and made any stops as required for bathroom breaks, food and drinks, and emergency stops for birds on a regular basis!

BRIEF totals of our key species seen:

Ruddy Shelduck 800+, Marbled Duck 10, Ferruginous Duck 9+, White Headed Duck 300+,
Double Spurred Francolin 1 seen, 5+ heard, Barbary Partridge 7+, Night Heron 26, Cattle Egret 000`s,
Purple Heron 4+, White stork 00`s, Glossy Ibis 130+, Bald Ibis 78+, Spoonbill 150+, Greater Flamingo 1000+,
Osprey 4+, Short Toed Eagle 8, Booted Eagle 10+, Bonellis Eagle 2, Black Kite 40+, Montagus Harrier 2,
Long Legged Buzzard 15+, Black Winged Kite 3, Lesser Kestrel 150+, Lanner Falcon 5+,
Red Knobbed Coot 100+, Purple Swamphen 2, Black Winged Stilt 300+, Stone Curlew 15+,
Cream Coloured Courser 12+, Kentish Plover 50+, Little Stint 6+, Wood Sandpiper 5+, Spotted Redshank 1,
Slender Billed Gull 25+, Audouins Gull 200+, Gull Billed Tern 12+, Caspian Tern 2, Whiskered Tern 28+,
Black Bellied Sandgrouse 31+, Pin Tailed Sandgrouse 18, Spotted Sandgrouse 100+, Crowned Sandgrouse 6,
Laughing Dove 40+, Great Spotted Cuckoo 3, Marsh Owl 4+, Little Owl 20+, Egyptian Nightjar 2,
Pallid Swift 00`s, Alpine Swift 110+, Little Swift 60+, Hoopoe 25+, Bee-eater 380+, Blue Cheeked Bee-eater 3,
Levaillant Woodpecker 3 seen, 7+ heard, Thekla Lark 13+, Woodlark 3+, Short Toed Lark 440+,

Lesser Short Toed Lark 16+, Desert lark 7+, Bar Tailed Lark 20+, Calandra Lark 5+, Thick Billed Lark 8+,
Atlas Horned Lark 15+, Duponts Lark 7+, Hoopoe Lark 40+, Brown Throated Martin 25+, Crag Martin 120+,
Red Rumped Swallow 50+, Tawny Pipit 1, Moroccan White Wagtail 4+, Nightingale 1, Moussiers Redstart 40+,
Seebohms Wheatear 8, Isabelline wheatear 1, Black Eared Wheatear 45+, Maghreb Wheatear 5,
White Crowned Wheatear 90+, Black Wheatear 30+, Desert Wheatear 60+, Red Rumped Wheatear 22+,
Blue Rock Thrush 6+, Scrub Warbler 2, Western Orphean Warbler 2, Sardinian Warbler 100+,
African Desert Warbler 5, Dartford Warbler 2, Tristrams Warbler 4+, Zitting Cisticola 100+,
Western Olivaceous Warbler 23+, Western Bonellis Warbler 30+, Yellow Browed Warbler 1 heard,
African Blue Tit common, Short Toed Treecreeper 10+, Southern Grey Shrike 60+(2 races),
Woodchat Shrike 30+, Black Crowned Tchagra 3 seen, 4 heard, Common Bulbul 100+, Fulvous Babbler 10+,
Moroccan Magpie 150+, Common Chough 150+, Alpine Chough 100+, Brown Necked Raven 25+,
Spotless starlings 00`s, Spanish Sparrow 20+, Desert Sparrow 6, Serin 100+, Hawfinch 3, Crossbill 4,
Trumpeter Finch 34+, Crimson Winged Finch 3+, Cirl Bunting 11+, House Bunting 150+,

Sincerely

Tim Isherwood

On trip with:

Joanne Richardson

Adrian & Jeanette Johnson

Mark Robinson

Lesley Ball