



A birdwatching trip to

# OMAN

30<sup>th</sup> October – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022

*Dave Astins*

*with Ian Beggs & Steve Woolfenden*

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## Our reflections on the trip

My fourth visit to Oman, and every bit as good as all the others. The birding is just brilliant, the people are friendly, and you always feel safe. It is very difficult to do Oman justice in two weeks, but we gave it our best shot! Very hard to single any place or bird out, but Barr Al Hikman is just amazing, and you have to see Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak, it is simply mythical! Finally, the experience of Verreaux's Eagle at Jabal Samhan is hard to convey, just an amazing bird at an amazing location.

*Dave Astins, Dale, Pembrokeshire, UK*

I am not new to Middle East birding. I have birded to a greater or lesser extent in the UAE, Egypt, Turkey and Israel. I think Oman has it all! It is an excellent country for a birding trip. The sites are well described in the previously mentioned site guide and there is a lot of information available on social media. Having said that, having a top-quality tour guide brings it all together. Dave is just that. His local knowledge combined with high level birding skills made for a brilliant trip which more than delivered on my expectations. If you are thinking about a trip having read this report I recommend Oman and Dave as an ideal combination.

*Ian Beggs, Harlech, Gwynedd, UK*

A fantastic well put together trip ably guided by West Coast Birdwatching. The Omani scenery alone is worth going for, but throw in an impressive variety of birds and consistently superb views of most species we encountered, made for many unforgettable experiences. Dave's experience of Oman and birding knowledge was superb. Can't wait to go back!

*Steve Woolfenden, Tooting, London, UK*

***Al Mughsayl (Steve Woolfenden)***



## 1. Introduction & strategy

This two-week trip to Oman was organised by me (Dave Astins) for Ian Beggs and Steve Woolfenden, friends who I met through our mutual links to Skokholm Island off the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales, UK. I run West Coast Birdwatching in Pembrokeshire ([www.westcoastbirdwatching.co.uk](http://www.westcoastbirdwatching.co.uk)), and venture overseas to lead a couple of trips each year, usually in the winter months. This was my fourth trip to Oman, following my first visit in November 2018. I also lead trips for Wise Birding (<https://www.wisebirding.co.uk/>), including Oman in November 2023.

The basic aim was to take in as wide a range of species in Oman as reasonably possible in two weeks, including Salalah in the far south. We opted to drive from north to south and back again so that we could enjoy the desert and the coast at Barr Al Hikman / Masirah rather than fly between Muscat and Salalah. As Sooty Falcon was one of the agreed key targets, we went slightly earlier than most birders go (mid-November), to increase our chances of catching the final birds before they left for the winter. This proved to be a good decision.

Ian and Steve were brilliant company and helped make the trip run very smoothly by being relaxed, accommodating, communicating their needs clearly and, above all, great fun!

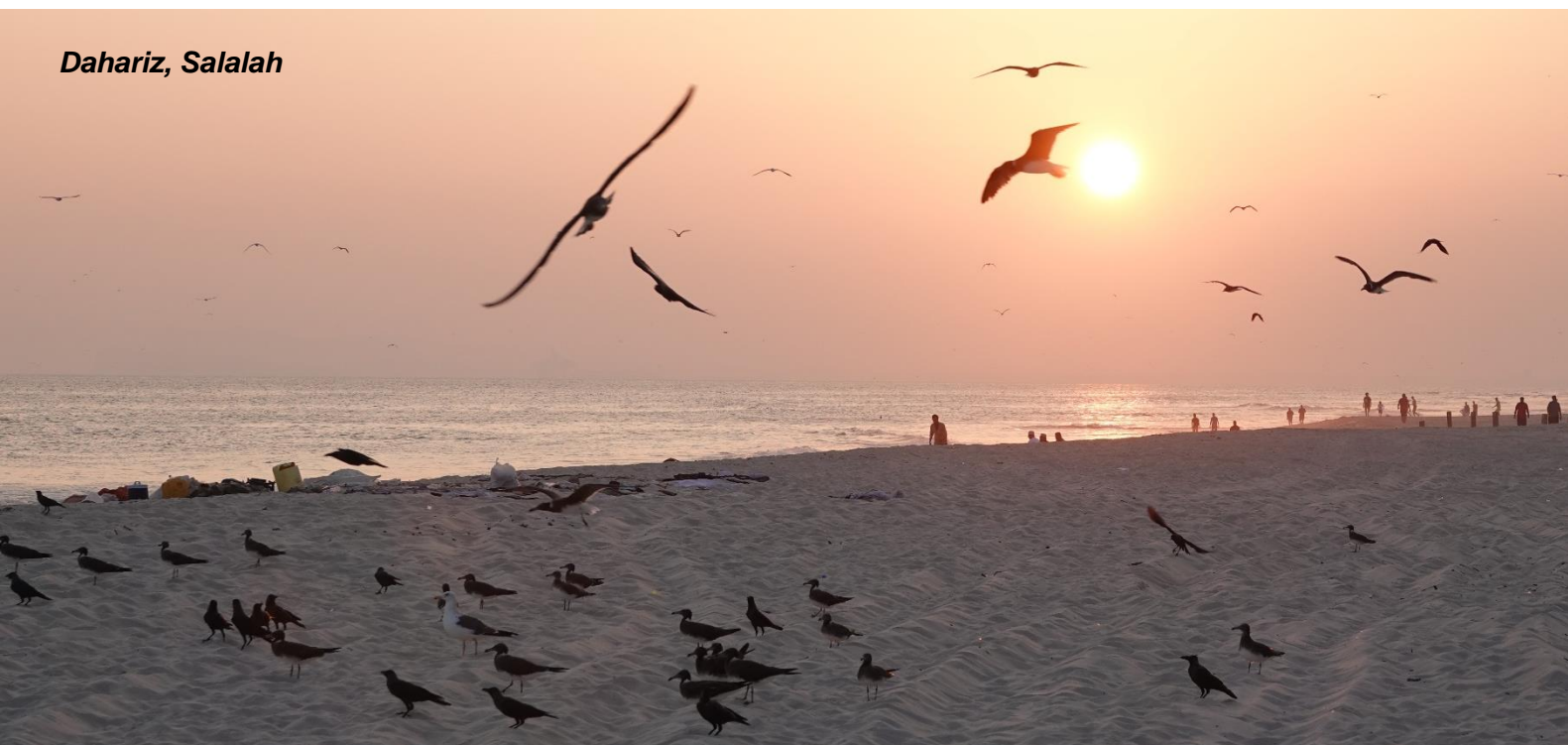
Oman is an amazing destination for a birding trip, and is a very welcoming and safe country. You will not be disappointed with a birdwatching trip there.

If you would like any further information about birding in Oman, please feel free to contact me:

E-mail: [info@westcoastbirdwatching.co.uk](mailto:info@westcoastbirdwatching.co.uk)

Telephone: +44 7766 911069 (I am on WhatsApp)

**Dahariz, Salalah**



## **2. Practical arrangements**

### ***Before travelling***

You need a visa to enter Oman (although apparently not so for trips of less than 14 days, but I have never risked it). We purchased a single entry tourist visa which covers you for up to 28 days (type 26B). Cost is Omani Rial (OR) 20 and you get it from the Royal Oman Police e-visa website (<https://evisa.rop.gov.om/en/home>). From approval, you must enter Oman within 28 days, so don't apply until there is less than 28 days before you travel, as the approval usually comes quickly (sometimes the same day). You must also have at least six months remaining on your passport to enter Oman.

Whilst many places in Oman accept credit cards, some hotels and many local cafes and restaurants only deal in cash. So plan well in advance and take enough OR cash to cover accommodation that deals in cash only, plus enough for the local cafes etc. Take a credit card that you can use to withdraw cash whilst you are in Oman (this is fairly easy to do but can take time to locate an ATM). I took two credit cards, both of which do not charge for cash withdrawals abroad.

### ***Getting to Oman***

We flew from London Heathrow to Muscat using Oman Air who cannot be faulted. The outbound flight was just over seven hours long, departing London at 20:50 on 29<sup>th</sup> October and arriving in Muscat at 07:15 (local time – GMT+4) on 30<sup>th</sup>. The flight back to the UK left Muscat at 14:10 on 12<sup>th</sup> November, arriving back in London Heathrow at 18:25 GMT (Ian flew to Dubai to visit family). The return flight cost £723.56 per person, which included pre-booked seats.

### ***Travel within Oman***

I booked a medium sized 4x4 (so that we could access Sayq Plateau in the Al Hajar Mountains, Barr Al Hikman, and also some of the wadis which do not have paved roads e.g. for Desert Owl – you cannot get to these sites without a 4x4, and they are also very useful for some of the desert sites e.g. Muntasar and Shisr). At the time of booking Europcar had the best rate (of the larger companies) and the cost for the trip was £1,253.46 (pre-paid online) which included zero waiver and personal accident insurance. We had a problem with our first car (poor brakes) which Europcar rectified very easily when we got to Salalah with a replacement car (which was much nicer than the first one!).

Driving in Oman is generally very easy on good roads with little traffic. Muscat and Salalah are busier, and driving in the dark through the desert requires added concentration because the roads are so straight it is hard to work out just how far away oncoming vehicles are when you need to overtake a slow lorry! Our car ended up extremely dirty so we had it cleaned at one of the many roadside garages for OR2 near Muscat on our last day to avoid any excess charges.

Fuel is cheap, approximately 50p per litre (OR0.24 per litre, same price everywhere). We drove a total of 4,687km around Oman, and in total the fuel cost OR120 (around £270 at the current exchange rate).

I had intended to buy an Omani SIM at Muscat airport so that I had data to use for navigation using my mobile phone. For some reason my phone didn't like the Omani SIM, but luckily I had downloaded Omani maps for offline use on Google maps and that, combined with me

having saved all the key locations in Google and using GPS, enabled us to navigate without needing mobile data.

One final thing on travel – speed bumps! You will probably learn the hard way, but most villages, towns and cities have speed bumps, some of which are marked, but many are not. Some are obvious, but many are not. You have been warned....

### **Accommodation**

Most accommodation was booked in advance through Booking.com, a few nights we organised via WhatsApp whilst in Oman, and the latter stages of the trip were reorganised whilst in Oman to give us more time in Salalah (easy to do either directly with accommodation providers or Booking.com if you opt for free cancellation).

We stayed in the following places:

| <b>Location</b>       | <b>Details</b>  |
|-----------------------|---|
| Birkat al Mouz        | Al-Sabah House Heritage Inn & Café (2 rooms, 2 nights). Amazing place, but they only had double rooms when we visited (which necessitated the hasty appearance of an additional single mattress). Breakfast provided, dinner can be ordered from a nearby takeaway to eat in. |
| Thumrait              | Thumrait Hotel (3 rooms, 1 night). Basic, but clean and good service. Room only, places to eat nearby.  |
| Salalah               | Dahariz Beach Building (2 bedroom apartment, 6 nights). Great location, fairly basic but had everything we needed. Room only, places to eat nearby.   |
| Mahout                | Mahout Hotel Apartments (3 apartments, 1 night). Spacious apartments, well placed for Barr al Hikman. Room only, places to eat nearby.  |
| Hilf (Masirah Island) | Maan Hotel Apartments (2 bedroom apartment, 1 night). Spacious apartment with a twin and a double room (other options available). Room only, places to eat nearby.  |
| Muscat                | Ramee Guestline Hotel (3 rooms, 2 nights). A decent and inexpensive hotel conveniently close to Qurum Natural Park. Breakfast included, also 3 restaurants within the hotel for evening meals.  |

Some hotels were paid for in advance, others when we checked in. Some took credit/debit cards, others were cash only. Check when booking.

### **Weather**

Wall to wall sunshine except for one partially cloudy day when there was a very small amount of light rain – which we barely noticed! Temperatures were generally in the low 30s, up to 38 in the desert, quite humid along the coast at Salalah and in Muscat. It was a bit warmer than usual for the time of year, especially around Muscat.

### **Food & drink**

Some of our accommodation provided breakfast, but most were room only. The problem with having breakfast provided is that generally you want to get out birding first thing when the temperatures are lower. Asking if your accommodation can provide a take-away breakfast is a good idea.



In general we ate out at fairly low cost, local cafes – plastic chairs on the street type places. They are usually good and provide a decent selection of basic dishes that are all very edible and filling. Occasionally we ate at slightly more expensive places in the evening, but this really wasn't necessary and we got in the groove of eating biryani, curry, breads, dhal, salad etc.

Alcohol is only available in some of the larger hotels, this didn't apply to us apart from our last night, and even then we opted for non-alcoholic. Water, fizzy drinks during the heat of the day, and fruit smoothies were the mainstay of our trip. In most places we stayed we had access to a fridge, so cooling water there and then putting as much as possible in insulated flasks meant we had cold water for most of the day.

### ***Islands & boat trips***

We hired a small fishing boat to take us around the Al Sawadi Islands for Sooty Falcon on our first day. We hadn't even parked the car and we had Sami asking us if we wanted a boat! We paid OR20 for around an hour which worked really well.

We booked a pelagic from Mirbat before travelling with Hatem. He is on Facebook ([Mirbat Pelagics Birding Oman](#)) or contactable via mobile/WhatsApp (+968 9908 8815). Highly recommended. The cost was OR25 per person, and we shared with four birders from the Netherlands.

To get to Masirah Island we used the National Ferry Company. Note that you can't book online without details of your car so it has to wait until you get to Oman and have your hire car (<https://www.nfconline.om/NFCLive/>). Even then, we had trouble booking online in Oman, so ended up sorting it out at their office in Shannah on the day of travel, luckily without problem. The cost was OR42.60 for the car and three people (return). There are other ferries that operate from Shannah but I am not sure how you book them, so if you want to guarantee a crossing I would use NFC.

***Pelagic trip from Mirbat with Hatem***



### 3. Site information

Over the past four visits to Oman I have referred a lot to the excellent *Birdwatching Guide to Oman* (Dave E. Sargeant, Hanne & Jens Eriksen, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) which was purchased via the Eriksen's website, but that has now ceased to operate it seems. There was also an update to the guide in PDF format available from that website (last update 1/9/2022) which was useful. Please drop me an e-mail if you would like a copy.

I also referred to a number of excellent trip reports, most obtained from the *Cloudbirders* website: <https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport>.

The sites we visited, with GPS co-ordinates, are in the table below (the reference numbers in brackets refer to Sargent & Eriksen, where applicable).

A note on English names for places: they can vary quite a bit between road signs, maps, and guide books. Where possible, I have gone for the spelling that appears on road signs or Google maps, but this may be different to the books and trip reports.

| Site   | Co-ordinates         |
|--|----------------------|
| Al Baleed Archaeological Site (Salalah)                    | 17.010275, 54.138720 |
| Al Balid Farms (7.5) (4WD essential)                       | 18.400326, 53.935717 |
| Al Ghaftayn (7.2)  | 19.610583, 55.517250 |
| Al Ghubrah Bowl (4.1) (4WD essential)                      | 23.277428, 57.701282 |
| Al Mughsayl / Wadi Ashawq (10.15) (4WD essential for wadi) | 16.881558, 53.782006 |
| Al Sawadi (2.1)  | 23.782597, 57.789838 |
| As Saadah Park (Salalah)                                   | 17.076400, 54.150528 |
| Atair Sink Hole (10.9)                                     | 17.118900, 54.557962 |
| Ayn Hamran (10.4)  | 17.097327, 54.281278 |
| Ayn Razat (10.3)   | 17.129468, 54.237164 |
| Ayn Tobruk / Ayn Athum junction                            | 17.090071, 54.332996 |
| Barr Al Hikman (8.1) (4WD essential)                       |                      |
| - East coast   | 20.679559, 58.629926 |
| - Filim  | 20.617318, 58.193434 |
| - Shannah (south)  | 20.744317, 58.715456 |
| - Shannah (north)  | 20.755115, 58.741468 |
| East Khor (10.2)   | 17.011819, 54.177441 |
| Hilf (Masirah) (8.2)                                       | 20.629300, 58.866048 |
| Jabal Samhan   | 17.107944, 54.698296 |
| Khor Raysut / beach (10.14)                                | 16.956250, 53.996630 |
| Mirbat Port (for pelagic)                                  | 16.986687, 54.686148 |
| Mudayy (10.19)   | 17.477074, 53.352348 |
| Muntasar (7.3) (4WD essential)                             | 19.453700, 54.620500 |
| Qatbit (7.4)   | 19.177067, 54.503017 |
| Qurum Natural Park (1.1)                                   | 23.618679, 58.492566 |
| Raysut settling pools (10.17)                              | 16.996284, 53.937298 |
| Sahnawt Farm (10.1)  | 17.036784, 54.195594 |
| Salalah Public Park  | 17.012833, 54.072850 |
| Sayq Plateau (4.3) (4WD essential)                         |                      |
| - Wadi Bani Habib  | 23.067537, 57.621288 |
| - Wadi al Mihaybis   | 23.147450, 57.541900 |
| Shisr Farms (7.6) (4WD essential)                          | 18.237858, 53.649815 |



|                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sur Masirah (8.3)                   | 20.426538, 58.719929 |
| Taqah (10.6)                        |                      |
| - Cliffs                            | 17.032432, 54.410313 |
| - Khor Taqah / Taqah beach west end | 17.034730, 54.371035 |
| Wadi Darbat (10.8)                  | 17.117670, 54.456339 |
| Wadi Kheesh                         | 17.114143, 54.267108 |

*Al Mughsayl beach*



*Jabal Samhan*





## 4. Day by day

### Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October

We met up at Heathrow airport around 1800 and flew overnight to Muscat.

### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October

#### *Al Sawadi – Wadi al Muaydin*

After sorting out the hire car at the Europcar desk (easy), and Omani SIM cards for Ian (successful) and Dave (not successful), we were on our way to Al Sawadi to try for Sooty Falcon on the islands that are just offshore. On the way we picked up a few birds from the car, including Greater Flamingo, Common Myna, **Indian Roller** and **Purple Sunbird**.

We arrived mid-morning after the drive of an hour or so, and were approached before even getting out of the car by a young man called Sammy who seemed to be one of the local fishermen. We soon secured him and a boat for 20 OR for an hour's trip around the islands that are just offshore. There then followed a frustrating and, at times, humorous sequence of events that eventually saw us onboard a boat with a working engine, via another boat which was launched via a decrepit 4x4 and a plank of wood!

It took a while for Sammy to realise that we were after one bird in particular, and that as nice as the Little Egret on the post was, it wasn't our aim. We went around the largest island first and before long Ian had located our quarry – a juvenile **Sooty Falcon** perched high up on the island. Not brilliant views, but we didn't care, the target had been seen!



*Sooty Falcon, Al Sawadi, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022*

We continued on around the other islands, adding some typical coastal species including Lesser Crested Tern, Greater Crested Tern, Sooty Gull, Western Reef Heron and single Striated Heron and Gull-billed Tern. Then things really picked up, as on one of the small islands to the west we located two more juvenile **Sooty Falcon**, and then Sammy spotted an adult very close to them! The views were superb and, after another juvenile flew in making five birds in total, we headed back to dry land after adding **Socotra Cormorant** (a single 1<sup>st</sup> calendar year bird).

We picked up some lunch and then drove the two hours or so to our accommodation for the first two nights at Birkat al Mouz on the southern side of the Al Hajar mountains, just east of Nizwa. After checking in and a relaxed coffee and cake, we headed into the nearby Wadi al Muaydin for a bit of birding before it got dark. A group of 22 Egyptian Vulture on a distant ridge was nice, and we added **Sand Partridge**, White-spectacled Bulbul and Pale Crag Martin. After dinner we came back to have a listen for owls, and were rewarded with a **Pallid Scops Owl** calling persistently and Ian glimpsed a **Barn Owl** as we walked to our accommodation. A great first day.

### **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October** **Sayq Plateau**

After an overnight flight and a long day yesterday, today was more relaxed with breakfast at the hotel, and not too much driving. Our destination was the Sayq Plateau, about an hour away, and a steep drive up from our base at Birkat past the police checkpoint – only 4x4 vehicles are allowed beyond this point. **Hume's Wheatear** was easily seen on the drive up, often perching on wires and posts as is typical for this species.

Our first stop was Wadi Bani Habib, where the hoped for **Plain Leaf Warbler** was easily seen and an **Upcher's Warbler** was a surprise here. The smart Eastern Black Redstart (*phoenicuroides*) showed well, and several Lesser Whitethroat (where the minimum six birds all seemed to be the pale and vocal *halimodendri*). Also in this area Common Redstart, our first Indian Silverbill, and Laughing Dove.

We took a walk along a good looking wadi (Wadi Qtm) which yielded our first **Red-tailed Wheatear** of the trip. Another wadi in the north-west side of the plateau yielded another Plain Leaf Warbler, more Black Redstart, Lesser Whitethroat and Red-tailed Wheatear.

*Red-tailed Wheatear, Sayq Plateau, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022*



Our final stop in a more open area next to some sort of farm produced our first **Common Rock Thrush** of the trip, a flock of **150 Brown-necked Raven**, and yet more White-spectacled Bulbul, Lesser Whitethroat, Black Redstart and a Collared Dove. We had a half-hearted (and fruitless) trip out nearby for owls after dinner, but an early-ish night was needed as we had a long drive south through the desert tomorrow.

## **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November**

### ***Al Ghaftayn – Muntasar – Qatbit – Al Beed Farm***

Today was a driving day to transfer from north to south, a total of around 800km from Birkat down to Thumrait. We left early with the intention of breaking the journey up with some of the well-known sights in the desert. Roadside birds were thin on the ground, but included regular **Brown-necked Raven**, **Desert Wheatear** and the occasional Barn Swallow.

Our first stop was a simple rest area with a play park in it, it looked good but the best we could find was a single Tree Pipit. Every stop along the way from here onwards held House Sparrow, Laughing Dove, and Feral Pigeon (Rock Dove).

Al Ghaftayn is a rest area with a rest-house, petrol station and restaurant. It also has a garden (of sorts) with trees and shrubs which are great for migrants. It wasn't jumping with birds, but over an hour or so walking slowly we recorded some great birds: **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** (not heard, but presumed to be this species on range), a brief **Green Warbler**, **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, Indian Roller, Tree Pipit, Common Chiffchaff, a Blackcap and a first-year **Isabelline / Red-tailed Shrike** (we did not see well, but did not attempt to separate first-years of these difficult species).

After some food we continued south, and left the main road to head to the oasis at Muntasar, seeing our first **Great Grey Shrike** of the trip (race *aucheri*, this would turn out to be the only one of these we saw). I had been to Muntasar once before, and there seemed to be less trees than my previous visit. There was still an overspill of water from the well here however, and this held 2 **Temminck's Stint** as well as our first **Citrine Wagtail** of the trip, and our only **Long-billed Pipit**. A wander around the oasis added 2 Red-breasted Flycatcher, **Pied Wheatear**, and **Eastern Stonechat** (presumably *maurus* but much warmer toned than I am used to seeing in the UK as vagrants), but it seemed pretty quiet (it was the heat of the day after all – we all agreed a visit here at dawn would be ideal).

Back to the main road and our next stop at the famous Qatbit rest-house, a run down looking place (it never even looks open) with another petrol station and a couple of restaurants. A more extensive garden than Al Ghaftayn, very overgrown in places, but relatively few migrants. We did record our first Spotted Flycatcher, another Common Redstart, Lesser Whitethroat and Brown-necked Raven.

We had made good progress, so we had enough time to try Al Balid (Al Beed on some signs) Farms to the north of the main road on our way to Thumrait. On the way up the road towards the farms we came across some sandgrouse on the road (!), a quick u-turn but they had moved off the road, as they lifted off in small groups we picked out both **Crowned** (8) and **Chestnut-bellied** (54). Great stuff! A little further on and we picked up 2 **Greater Hoopoe-Lark**, one either side of the road.

Around the farms, mainly to the west of the road, there were lots of birds. Highlights included 3 **Montagu's Harrier**, a **Namaqua Dove**, 20 **White Stork**, our first Marsh Harrier, Crested Lark, lots of Kestrel, Yellow Wagtail and at dusk we stumbled across a huge gathering of around 300 White Wagtail, which contained at least two birds that appeared to be *personata* (**Masked Wagtail** - first year males?).



As the sun set we continued south to Thumrait, a well-earned meal and a much-needed sleep.

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November**  
**Mudayy – Shisr Farms**

Another early start, this time to get to Mudayy, an hour or so west of Thumrait and the home of a couple of key target species, including Grey Hypocolius, Nile Valley Sunbird, and African Collared Dove.

We arrived at dawn (around 6am) and the day started with at least 50 **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** leaving their roost, really amazing to see and hear them out here in the middle of the desert. We positioned ourselves along the road at the south of the village near the small palm plantation and historically the best area for the hypocolius. We soon heard and saw **Nile Valley Sunbird**, the only site I ever see this species. Around mid-morning a **Grey Hypocolius** called close by on one side of the road, then the other (we did not see it cross) and then – nothing! Despite searching by us (and another group) we could not locate it. Frustrating, but at least there was a hypocolius here. **Blackstart** was easy to see here, and a few migrants were in evidence with **Barred Warbler**, Spotted Flycatcher, Blackcap and our first Green Sandpiper.

After some much-needed food and coffee at the truck stop, we tried out the camel farm nearby for **African Collared Dove**. We managed to locate two birds, but there were far fewer camels than previous years and consequently a lot less doves in general. We had good flight views of a **Crowned Sandgrouse** here, and a single **Sand Partridge**.

Late morning, we headed east back to Thumrait, recording a **European Roller** and a **Greater Spotted Eagle** along the way. We then headed north to Shisr, a farming area surrounded by desert about an hour north of Thumrait, that I had first visited in autumn 2019 and had been hugely impressed by.

We spent several hours driving the tracks either side of the road south of Shisr (the lost city of Wubar). The best areas for birds changes year to year depending on the cycle (and success) of farming. Desert and Isabelline Wheatear were widespread, and we picked up another two **Greater Hoopoe Lark** as well as 50 or so **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse**. At a small series of goat pens we noticed some **Rosy Starling** so we stopped the car for a closer look and some photos. Ian picked up an odd-looking bird with some yellow on the face and we quickly realised we were looking at a **Wattled Starling**, a new bird for all of us! It gave some excellent views right next to the car before disappearing with the Rosy Starlings.

*Wattled Starling, Shisr, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022*



Nearby some distant blobs in a field turned into 9 stunning **Sociable Lapwing**, one of our target birds at this remote site (I had also seen them here in 2019 so had half hoped to find them). Ian picked up a **Cream-coloured Courser** in flight which did the decent thing and landed not far away, allowing us some good views. We did well with harriers: at least five Marsh, a single Hen, a male **Pallid** and a stunning melanistic **Montagu's** completed the full set we were hoping for! In the same area we picked up a *pallidirostris* Great Grey Shrike (our only one of the trip), Common Rock Thrush, White Stork, **Black-crowned Sparrowlark** and four **Namaqua Dove**.



*Cream-coloured Courser, Shisr, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022*

To the east of the road, we checked some fields and trees that looked like they might hold some migrants. A **Sparrowhawk** gave us a bit of a run around and then we flushed a small dove at close range that could only have been a **Red Collared Dove**, apparently only the fifth record for Oman! Sadly we could not re-find it but did pick up our first **Red-throated Pipit** of the trip. We then drove south to Salalah, via the airport to change our hire car which by now had virtually no brakes! Excellent service though from Europcar who changed the car with no fuss (and the new car was better than the old one so we were happy).

#### **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** **East Khor – Salalah Public Park – Ayn Razat**

After quite a bit of driving to get us here, we decided on a day close to our base in Salalah. This started at the always excellent East Khor (Khawr) at the eastern end of Salalah. Always plenty of waterbirds to see here, and we enjoyed great views of birds including Glossy Ibis, Squacco Heron (lots of fun trying to sort these and Indian Pond Heron out), a single **Intermediate Egret**, Black-winged Stilt, Temminck's Stint, Garganey. Careful checking of the Coot found two **Red-knobbed Coot**, and birds of prey over here including Marsh Harrier, Osprey and a single **Eastern Imperial Eagle**.



The first **Graceful Prinia** for the trip were recorded here, along with a single **Clamorous Reed Warbler**, and we had fun with the winter-plumaged terns identifying seven species. Perhaps we missed White-cheeked amongst the Common Tern, but we were satisfied that all of the small terns were **Little Tern** (we did not record Saunders's Tern at all during the trip – the recent *Dutch Birding* article by Mullarney and Campbell helped massively. You can read a summary of it on the OSME website [here](#)). On the beach lots of **Sooty Gull** and plenty of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** to work through if you fancy a challenge – we identified both *barabensis* and *heuglini* but not easy to the untrained eye).

On the basis that some of the parks in Salalah have been good for rarities over the years, we decided to try out Salalah Public Park. It was pretty quiet, although we did see five **Grey-headed Kingfisher**, our first **Tristram's Starling** of the trip (they are very numerous at other sites) and best of all two **Arabian Chameleon** which dropped out of a tree in front of us! We also added **Scaly-breasted Munia** to the trip list.



*Arabian Chameleon, Salalah, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022*

After a nice lunch at a local café, we headed just out of Salalah to Ayn Razat (ayn means spring and there are several in the Salalah area in the Dhofar foothills that are excellent for



birds). We racked up a good list of birds here including **Black-crowned Tchagra**, **Cinnamon-breasted Bunting**, **Arabian Sunbird**, **African Silverbill**, **African Paradise Flycatcher**, **Ruppel's Weaver**, **Abyssinian White-eye**, **Indian Pond Heron**, the ubiquitous White-spectacled Bulbul, and plenty of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters overhead (a theme of the next week or so). We also surprisingly recorded our second **Upcher's Warbler** of the trip.



*Black-crowned Tchagra, Ayn Razat, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022*

#### **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November**

##### ***Mirbat Pelagic – Atair Sink Hole – Jabal Samhan – Wadi Darbat***

Up early and an hour or so east to the little harbour at Mirbat, to meet Hatem for a morning pelagic trip just off the coast. We were joined by four birders from the Netherlands. You generally don't have to go too far offshore to pick up the target species, and Hatem knows these waters as well as anyone. Before long we had been treated to great views of the top two targets, **Jouanin's Petrel** and **Persian Shearwater**. **Bridled Tern** was seen regularly in small groups, and we also record Common and Little Terns (we tried to convince ourselves a couple of these were Saunders's – but subsequent correspondence with Killian Mullarney proved that there were not). A couple of distant **Flesh-footed Shearwater** were frustrating, until a single bird ended up around the boat for an extended period and stunning views!

At least 11 **Masked Booby** were recorded, but the star of the show (for me) proved to be non-avian: about half way in to the trip Hatem spotted a distant **Sperm Whale** tail as it dived, and over the next two hours or so we were treated to incredible views of at least 20 animals spread out over a wide area. At this point we were glad the boat had broken down, as we could enjoy them whilst we waited for Hatem's brother to come to our rescue and get the engine re-started! A single, but brief, **Brown Noddy** rounded off an excellent trip, one not to be missed if in southern Oman.



*Jouanin's Petrel, Mirbat, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

After the pelagic and some lunch in the harbour in Mirbat, we headed up into the mountains, first stopping at Atair Sink Hole. This well visited tourist spot (but quiet when we visited) is an impressive site even without the birds. From the parking area we initially visited the public viewing point, and had excellent views of the pair of **Bonelli's Eagle** that breed here. The sight and sound of **Tristram's Starling** is ever present here, and before long a walk across the open ground near to the sink hole produced our target bird, at least 10 **Yemen Serin** feeding close to some buildings. We heard **Arabian Partridge** (but never saw one the whole trip) and also recorded our only **Hooded Wheatear** of the trip, along with a single Rosy Starling and three Tree Pipit.

The next destination was the escarpment of Jabal Samhan overlooking the coastal plain at Mirbat. On the way we picked up the first **Arabian Wheatear** of the trip. At our destination we scanned diligently for our main quarry, Verreaux's Eagle, without success. But we were rewarded with two **Long-legged Buzzard** (our only ones of the trip), a **Short-toed Snake Eagle** and several **Fan-tailed Raven** along with another couple of Arabian Wheatear.

We cut our losses here and headed towards Wadi Darbat for dusk. On the way we had a surprise in the form of a **Golden Eagle** right over the road, also picking up a Steppe Eagle and another Short-toed Snake Eagle as well as a Hen Harrier. We arrived at the famous Wadi Darbat just before dusk, and as it got dark at least five **Arabian Scops Owl** started calling! Initially not close to us, but then one sounded quite close and with a little perseverance we were rewarded with excellent views in the torchlight. We also heard a **Little Owl** calling here, but it was some way off.



*Arabian Scops Owl, Wadi Darbat, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022*



**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November**

**Wadi Kheesh – Ayn Hamran – Ayn Razat – Raysut Settling Pools – Khor Raysut – West Khor – Al Baleed**

We started the day at Wadi Kheesh, adding **Palestine Sunbird** and Common Cuckoo to our trip list. Hundreds of swifts overhead appeared to be **Pallid Swift**, at least those close enough to see well did. But with Forbes-Watson's Swift also regularly recorded here, who knows?!

On the nearby Ayn Hamran which was pretty quiet compared to my visits here in previous years, African Paradise Flycatcher, Grey-headed Kingfisher, a single **Booted Eagle**, plus another Cuckoo, a Hoopoe and several Blackstart.

On a tip-off that there was a day roosting Arabian Eagle Owl to be seen at Ayn Razat, we headed there but despite looking carefully in the designated area we could not find it. We did locate two **Bruce's Green Pigeon**, and had good views of a Squacco Heron and an **Indian Pond Heron**. Once again, several **Arabian Sunbird** showed really well here, the males looking really smart even at this time of year.

We spent the afternoon on the west side of Salalah at Raysut. Sadly (for birding) the waste disposal site here is now closed, so the large number of eagles that used to winter here are a thing of the past (although a few do still come to Salalah for the winter, or at least are around at this time of year). The settling pools at the water treatment works were up to their usual high standard, with good numbers of storks, waders and ducks seen from the comfort of the car (if you get out of the car here, everything flies off). Highlights were at least 100 **Abdim's Stork**, four **Spur-winged Lapwing**, a dozen **Red-wattled Lapwing**, a single **Egyptian Vulture**, five **Marsh Sandpiper** and our only Little Ringed Plover of the trip.

Next stop the coast nearby, where Khor Raysut flows (well, when it rains) under the main road and out to the sea. One of my favourite spots, and for good reason: always lots of waders, gulls and terns, and the chance of something unusual. It started well with a **White-tailed Lapwing**, and before we reached the sea Citrine Wagtail, Red-throated Pipit and our only Sand Martin of the trip. On the beach a great selection of birds, with a single **African Sacred Ibis**, four **Greater Spotted Eagle**, 20 Caspian Tern, 150 Slender-billed Gull, 200 Little Stint and a first-year Isabelline / Red-tailed Shrike.



*White-tailed Lapwing, Raysut, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022*



A visit to West Khor was brief as there were so few birds, then on to Al Baleed Archaeological site to try for Spotted Thick-knee. We couldn't find any, but the favoured area was part-overgrown, and part-recently cleared, so perhaps not quite suitable for them (looking at subsequent reports they did return here). Opposite this site are massive palm plantations, and on a previous occasion I have seen **Bruce's Green Pigeon** on the wires here, and it proved good once again with nine birds along a 100m stretch of road. We also tried the nearby Crowne Plaza Hotel for the thick-knee but without success.

### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November**

#### ***Taqah – Jabal Samhan – Ayn Tobruk – Al Mughsayl***

Today's plan was a morning to the east of Salalah, with another try for Verreaux's Eagle, and then the afternoon to the west at Al Mughsayl, finishing with the mythical (for Dave in particular Desert Owl).

We decided to start above Taqah Cliffs for **Forbes-Watson's Swift**, which did not disappoint with excellent views below us and at eye level. We had a brilliant view across Taqah from here, and there were a number of **Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin** quite close in. The swifts were paler than we expected, how easy they would be to separate with poorer views I wonder? With our first target quickly seen, we then went to the beach to have a look through the large numbers of gulls and terns there. Amongst the Lesser Black-backed Gulls was a smart adult *fuscus*, and from here we also saw a distant **Black Kite** (a pale, contrasty looking bird) but not the hoped-for Crested Honey Buzzard. At the west end of Taqah adjacent to Khor Taqah we found a nice flock of 102 **Pacific Golden Plover** and a smart male **Isabelline Shrike**.

We then struck inland and to the higher elevations of Jabal Samhan. At the favoured viewing point, we had been there barely five minutes when a majestic **Verreaux's Eagle** cruised away from us to the west. Another bird appeared, and over the next hour or so we were treated to superb eye-level views of these two wonderful birds in the most amazing setting. Quite possibly the moment of the whole trip! On our way back west clocked another **Golden Eagle** as well as Short-toed Snake and Steppe, and as we passed Atair Sink Hole there was a large flock of storks overhead which proved to be around 200 **Abdim's** and a single White.

*Verreaux's Eagle, Jabal Samhan, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022*



As we had done so well in the morning we tried the water troughs at Ayn Tobruk junction for Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak but without success. It was now time to drive west to the coastal village of Al Mugshayl. The complexion of this place has changed since the storm in 2018 washed the main road away, but it delivered big style for us today. First a scan offshore produced at least five **Brown Booby**, and amongst the throngs of feeding birds at least 15 **Persian Shearwater**. We then turned our attention to the freshwater Khor by the remains of the old main road, where we located two **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** and nine **Red-knobbed Coot** but not the recently reported White-breasted Waterhen.

On to the beach where there were many gulls and terns, and we were in for a big surprise: a flock of 15 **Crab-plover** on the edge of a gull flock! Not a rare bird in Oman, but an enigmatic one, and we were not expecting to see them so far south. We moved slowly closer, the birds very happy on the edge of the water, picking up small crabs as they went. The views were outstanding! Yet another highlight to add to the growing list for this trip. Lots of Slender-billed Gull, Lesser Crested Tern, Greater Crested Tern and a single Caspian Tern, what a place.



*Crab-plover, Al Mughsayl, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

The final destination was inland from here at Wadi Mughsayl (Wadi Ashawq on Google maps). We were in search of Desert Owl, a bird I had heard here before, and also at another site, but never seen. We joined a Birdquest group, and after a discussion with their leader, Hannu Jannes, agreed to follow their lead so we worked as one group. This proved perfect: before it got dark a distant **Desert Owl** started to call, and then soon after one much closer. Within minutes it was on the cliff above us and we all got in position before a torch was switched on. Boom! There it was, sitting above us looking very settled. The views through the telescope were sensational! After everyone had a good look the torch went off and that was it, by 1900 we were leaving and heading back to Salalah.

On the way back to our accommodation and some food we went looking for **Spotted Thick-knee**, eventually locating one at the Crowne Plaza Resort. What. A. Day.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November**

**East Khor – Sahnawt Farm – Any Tobruq – Wadi Kheesh – Taqah – As Saadah Park – Khor Raysut – Ayn Razat**

After the wall to wall excitement of yesterday, we were prepared for a more sedate day today. Wrong! Our main quarry today was Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak, but we would have time to make a few stops along the way.

Early morning at East Khor delivered nice views of a **Clamorous Reed Warbler**, and 3 first-year **Greater Spotted Eagle** were created some havoc amongst the waterbirds and House Crow. Excellent views of a **Marsh Sandpiper** and we were off to the nearby Sahnawt Farm, where we had fairly distant views of at least three **Singing Bush Lark** through the farm fence, a load of Yellow Wagtail and another Greater Spotted Eagle.

We positioned the car at the Ayn Tobruq junction water troughs, which yielded **Wryneck** for our trip list and three Namaqua Dove. It was quite busy here with farmers coming and going, camels, and hardly any birds were visiting the troughs. So I decided we should cut our losses and head to Wadi Kheesh and stake out the water trough there. We arrived at 0945 and set ourselves up under a tree with a good view of the trough. 40 minutes later and bam! A cracking male **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak** was drinking at the trough, and spent perhaps 90 seconds giving superb views through the 'scope. It then flew into a small tree and preened for a bit, and then onto a big rock, before flying off north. Mission accomplished! We also added **Blue Rock Thrush** to our list, had good views of two **Arabian Green Bee-eater** (race *cyanophrys*) and a Bonelli's Eagle cruised over.

*Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak, Wadi Kheesh, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022*



Buzzing from our good luck, and ahead of schedule, we opted for a spin down to Taqah to check the beach and grab a fancy coffee from a little café on the seafront. The coffee (and cake) was ace, and we had some fun checking through the terns and gulls on the beach, including spending some time closely checking three Common Tern types for White-cheeked: still not convinced that at least one wasn't the latter! As we were doing well for time I decided we should check another Salalah park, this time As Saadah Park in the north-east of the city. It proved to be a good move, with no less than three **Crested Honey Buzzard** there, giving superb views perched up and flying between the trees. More Scaly-breasted Munia here along with two Grey-headed Kingfisher and both Yellow and White Wagtail.

An **African Openbill** had been seen at Raysut a few days before (presumably the first for Oman found in November 2021 by Nick Bray) so that is where we headed next, and it didn't



take long to locate the strange looking stork on the beach. Nine **Terek Sandpiper** amongst the waders near the harbour were new for the trip, and a single Crab-plover was quite unexpected here.

Our final stop of the day was Ayn Razat, where this time we easily located the roosting **Arabian Eagle Owl**, showing superbly right above our heads and showing us some disdain as it did so. The usual good selection of birds at this excellent site was rounded off with a single **Arabian Warbler** close to the car park, our one and only of the trip and a great way to end our five days in Salalah. A more expensive meal at a beach front restaurant was called for and it did not disappoint!



*Arabian Eagle Owl, Ayn Razat, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022*



**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November**

**Mudayy – Qatbit – Muntasar – Al Ghaftayn**

Given the heard only Grey Hypocolius on our previous visit to Muntasar, Ian and Steve voted for a return visit and a slight re-jig of the final part of the tour. We arrived a little later than our previous visit around 0700, and it took just 40 minutes to connect when we located a male **Grey Hypocolius** on wires close to the palm plantation. Excellent 'scope views were had before it disappeared across the road. Half an hour later two males flew over the plantation and seemingly out into the desert! Sandgrouse were regularly flying over, at least 60 **Chestnut-bellied** and 40 **Crowned** in half a dozen flocks. Nile Valley Sunbird again put in an appearance.

Before setting off on the long drive to Mahout, we popped into the one and only restaurant in Mudayy for a late breakfast. As usual we were quite the attraction in such a remote location, but we were not expecting one of the other diners to pay for our food, which is exactly what happened. With a "welcome to my country" he was off, and we were left stunned. What an amazing gesture, but very typical of the warmth of Omani people.

After the customary egg sandwich (basically an omelette in a paratha bread) and a coffee, we headed off east and then north but with a few desert stops along the way. First up was Qatbit which held more birds than our previous visit, including **Pied Wheatear**, Spotted Flycatcher, half a dozen Chiffchaff (including some very pale/bright individuals), Common Redstart and Lesser Whitethroat.



Next stop was the oasis at Muntasar, once again we were here in the heat of the day, but we did add European Turtle Dove to our trip list, and there were some nice migrants there including **Eastern Stonechat**, Moorhen (!), Isabelline Shrike, two Pied Wheatear, Red-breasted Flycatcher and five Chiffchaff. Two **Black-crowned Sparrowlark** were drinking from the shallow water which also held a Citrine Wagtail, Temminck's Stint and a Dunlin.

Continuing north our final stop came at Al Ghaftayn. Song Thrush was added to our trip list, with yet another Pied Wheatear, a Red-breasted Flycatcher, a European Roller, four Rosy Starling and two Black Redstart. We continued driving north as the sun set, and just about made it to a petrol station on fumes when there hadn't been one for ages. Lesson learned in the desert: fill up at every fuel station!

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November**

***Barr Al Hikman – Shannah – Masirah Island***

After an early breakfast at a café across the road from our accommodation in Mahout, we first tried a small plantation in the village that had recently recorded **Asian Koel**. We drew a blank but picked up a likely looking bird flying towards some small trees some 400m away. We drove across to the spot, and there it was: a female type Asian Koel. Another one bites the dust!

Our main quarry today were waders at the shorebird mecca of Barr Al Hikman, a must visit site on any tour of Oman. The first stop was Filim, which I had only visited once before, and not sure why but it was quite disappointing – perhaps the tide was too high? With very few birds there we opted to head straight to a different spot on the east coast where I had previously seen Great Knot (March 2019). This proved to be a smart move, although in hindsight we should have gone to this spot straight away. Always learning!

The spot on the east coast was heaving with birds. Big clouds of waders on the horizon, wheeling around forced by the high tide (compared to the UK the tidal ranges were quite small, only a metre or so from high to low during our visit). The trick here is to position the car in the right place, and also be alert for any soft or wet sand (sabkha) as getting the car stuck is a real danger here.

The first big flocks we saw were mainly **Greater** and **Lesser Sand Plover**, the latter seemingly outnumbering the former. In amongst them were **Kentish Plover**, and at least 50 **Broad-billed Sandpiper**. Counting birds was just impossible! We latched on to a group of Bar-tailed Godwit, and knowing that **Great Knot** often associate with them we scanned them diligently, and there they were, five birds! Soon after we picked them up the flock was off and we never saw them again. **Terek Sandpiper** were in the hundreds and we were delighted to see over 200 **Crab-plover**, one sporting colour-rings (it turned out to have been ringed in Oman).

Alongside the waders we also picked up some new birds along the coastal scrub here, including a skulking **Asian Desert Warbler** and a **Tawny Pipit**. Hundreds of Western Reef Heron vied for position with similar numbers of Greater Flamingo, and large flocks of Slender-billed Gull had terns associating with them including Little, Gull-billed, Caspian, Sandwich and both crested terns. Stunning stuff! We made our way towards Shannah where I visited the National Ferry Company office to sort out our crossing to Masirah Island, whilst Ian and Steve enjoyed yet more **Crab-plover** along with thousands more assorted waders. Before catching the ferry at 1500, we checked the shoreline to the north of Shannah, counting another 60 Crab-plover including two more with Omani colour-rings.

The one-hour crossing to Hilf on Masirah Island was smooth and allowed us some rest in the comfort of an air-conditioned cabin. Upon leaving the ferry we drove a few miles south, and checked the park next to old sewage works and the wetland that has been formed by the water running out of the settling lagoons. At the wetland we added **Pin-tailed Snipe** to our list, at least two birds present, and also Avocet was new. The park across the road had changed since my last visit, less overgrown and more manicured and there were few passerines but we scored with another **Crested Honey Buzzard** and, best of all, a first-year **Amur Falcon** which buzzed around and eventually seemed to go to roost in one of the trees. There was a decent selection of birds at the old part of the sewage works, including four Red-throated Pipit, Greater Spotted Eagle, European Roller and four **Indian Silverbill**.





**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November**  
**Masirah Island**

We had a nice relaxed day ahead of us exploring Masirah, before leaving the island on the 1500 ferry. We started at the Natural Park on the edge of Hilf, where the Greater Spotted Eagle was still present, seven Tree Pipit were enjoying the watered grass, and a **Common Quail** flushed from the corner of the park adding another species to the trip list.

Across the road at the little wetland we had some excellent from-the-car birding. Waders included a single **Broad-billed Sandpiper**, three **Pacific Golden Plover**, and a **Pin-tailed Snipe**. We also had excellent views of Red-throated Pipit, and over the course of an hour or so over 200 **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** came in to drink at the seaward end, some even attempting a drink from the sea! A brilliant experience.

Heading south our next stop was Sur Masirah, an intertidal area that forms part of the great Barr Al Hikman on the mainland opposite. Stacks of waders included over 400 **Greater Sandplover**, 10 **Lesser Sandplover**, 40 **Kentish Plover** and 5 **Terek Sandpiper**. There were at least 200 **Little Tern** alongside over 300 **Slender-billed Gull**. Further south we stopped at Al Ghab beach where we were treated to amazing views of over 500 each of **Greater Crested** and **Lesser Crested Tern**. Along the west coast we also saw several **Black-crowned Sparrowlark** and an **Egyptian Vulture**.

Turning north at the southern tip of the island, we stopped at the first wadi we came to which had some scrubby vegetation and a couple of fenced cultivated gardens. It looked good for migrants and it was: a single **Menetries's Warbler** gave us the run around and caused us to scratch our heads for while, a **Green Warbler** appeared all too briefly (just like the previous one), and there was also a **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, two Common Chiffchaff and two Black Redstart. More **Egyptian Vulture** here, in the end we chalked up a total of 18 along the east coast and 11 Osprey.

Further north we came to a sandy beach by the road with a small flock of gulls on it, and we were rewarded with our first, and only, **Pallas's Gull** of the trip. Typically wary, it was the first gull to fly off and we were still in the car! Our final stop before the ferry and the drive to Muscat was at the Natural Park, where again saw yesterday's **Crested Honey Buzzard** and as the ferry pulled out of Hilf there were several close Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin.

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November**

**Qurum Natural Park – Al Ghubrah Bowl – Wadi Hadik**

Our final day's birding began in Qurum Natural Park on the coast in Muscat. A large park (with a fun fair!) has lots of trees, lawns, and flower borders as well as a large pond and on the coastal side mangroves and sand bars in the river than can be good for waders. A walk around the park enabled us to target some of the northern Oman species that were missing from our trip so far, and it didn't take long to find them: **Red-vented Bulbul**, **Delicate Prinia**, and **Grey Francolin** were fairly easily seen and very welcome.

At the pond were 15 **Red-wattled Lapwing**, at least 10 **Indian Pond Heron**, a **Striated Heron** and a **Whiskered Tern**, and two **Gull-billed Tern**. We also had nice views of **Indian Roller** and **Arabian Green Bee-eater** (of the form *muscatensis*) and we bumped into local birder Asad, who very kindly told us of a roosting **Eurasian Scops Owl** which he took us to see: our third scops owl and seventh owl of the trip! The park is also full of House Crow, Common Myna and White-eared Bulbul, so always makes a good start or end to any trip to Oman. There is a fabulous coffee shop in the park too!



*Arabian Green Bee-eater, Muscat, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

With our targets seen, late morning we headed off an hour or so out of Muscat to the Al Ghubrah Bowl, on the north side of the Al Hajar, in search of some species we had so far missed. We had a fantastic afternoon in simply incredible scenery, the highlight being the views from the hilltop village of Wakan, but the last part of the drive to the village was hairy (to say the least!) and can only be achieved with a 4x4. The views from there are very much worth it, even if it took lunch and a short walk to return my nerves back to normal levels for the drive down (which was far easier!). Al Ghubrah Bowl added **Arabian Babbler** to our list, and we also recorded **Plain Leaf Warbler**, **Sand Partridge**, **Red-tailed Wheatear**, **Desert Lark**, and migrants including Pied Wheatear, Black Redstart and Lesser Whitethroat.

With some time left, we decided to try a nearby wadi, Wadi Hadik, on our way back to Muscat as we were still missing Scrub Warbler and Striolated Bunting. We didn't find either, but we did see Sand Partridge, Red-tailed Wheatear, Hume's Wheatear, Desert Lark and Lesser Whitethroat.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November**

**Muscat**

Time to head home! Well, Ian was off to Dubai to visit family, so he left the hotel first to catch his flight. Steve went for a little wander down to Qurum beach whilst I spent the morning doing paperwork and editing photos. A smooth drop off of the hire car, and a relaxed few hours at the airport, and we were on our way back to London. It had been a superb trip!



## 5. Systematic list of birds

This list follows the IOC (International Ornithological Congress) World Bird List version 12.2 (<https://www.worldbirdnames.org/new/>) in terms of taxonomy and English names used. All of the species recorded can be found in an eBird trip report here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/81694>.

1 **Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* Recorded East Khor, Raysut settling pools and Khor Mughsayl.

2 **Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* Recorded Raysut settling pools, Khor Raysut and Khor Mughsayl.

3 **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* Recorded East Khor, Khor Mughsayl, Barr Al Hikman, Masirah and Qurum Natural Park.

4 **Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* 15 Raysut settling pools 5/11.

5 **Grey Francolin** *Francolinus pondicerianus* Introduced to Oman. 5 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

6 **Sand Partridge** *Ammoperdix heyi* Subspecies *intermedius* occurs. 8 Wadi al Muaydin 30/10, 1 Mudayy 2/11, 5 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11, 3 Wadi Hasik 11/11.

7 **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* 1 Hilf 10/11.

8 **Arabian Partridge** *Alectoris melanocephala* Heard only Atair Sink Hole 4/11.

9 **Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* Subspecies *pallidus* occurs. We recorded odd swifts here and there but always too distant or too high to specifically identify (including one in the north at Qurum Natural Park on 11/11 which may have been a Common Swift). A group of over 100 birds at Wadi Kheesh 5/11 appeared to be this species (at least the closer, lower, birds did) but other birders report Forbes-Watsons at this site, so who knows...

10 **Forbes-Watson's Swift** *Apus berliozi* Approximately 40 birds visiting a colony at Taqah Cliffs 6/11 were presumed to be this species (several birds with full crops seen).

11 **Asian Koel** *Eudynamys scolopaceus* A female/immature at Mahout 9/11.

12 **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Singles Wadi Kheesh 5/11, Ayn Hamran 5/11, Mahout 9/11.

13 **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus* Subspecies *erlangeri* occurs. Good number seen (often flying over) at Al Balid Farm, Mudayy, Shisr Farms, and Hilf where over 200 came in to drink from coastal wetland.



14 **Crowned Sandgrouse** *Pterocles coronatus* Subspecies *saturates* occurs. 8 Al Balid Farm 1/11, 1 Mudayy 2/11, 40 Mudayy 8/11.

15 **Rock Dove** *Columba livia* Feral birds recorded in widespread locations.

16 **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* 1 Muntasar 8/11.

17 **Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* Recorded at a number of sites, especially in the south.

18 **African Collared Dove** *Streptopelia roseogrisea* Subspecies *arabica* occurs. 2 Mudayy 2/11.

19 **Red Collared Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica* 1 Shisr 2/11.

20 **Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis* Subspecies *cambayensis* occurs. Recorded in widespread areas, especially in the south.

21 **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* 1 Al Balid Farm 1/11, 4 Shisr Farms 2/11, 3 Ayn Tobruk junction 7/11.

22 **Bruce's Green-Pigeon** *Treron waalia* 2 Ayn Razat 5/11, 9 Al Baleed (Salalah) 5/11.



23 **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Recorded at East Khor, Ayn Razat, West Khor and Muntasar.

24 **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* 4 East Khor 3/11.

25 **Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata* 2 East Khor 3/11, 1 East Khor 6/11, 9 Khor Mughsayl 6/11.

26 **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Seen at Raysut settling pools, West Khor, and Qurum Natural Park.

27 **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* Seen at a number of locations including East Khor, Khor Rayst, Khor Mughsayl and Barr Al Hikman.

28 **Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis* 1 Crowne Plaza Resort (Salalah) 6/11.



- 29 **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* 1 Khor Raysut 5/11, 50 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 30 **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus Himantopus* Recorded from East Khor, West Khor, Raysut settling pools, and Hilf.
- 31 **Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* 2 Hilf 9/11, 1 Hilf 10/11.
- 32 **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* 4 Raysut settling pools 5/11.
- 33 **Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus* 1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 12 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 1 Hilf 9/11, 15 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.
- 34 **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarious* 9 Shisr Farms 2/11.
- 35 **White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus* 1 Khor Raysut 5/11.
- 36 **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* 102 Taqah 6/11, 3 Hilf 10/11.
- 37 **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* 10 Khor Raysut 5/11, 50 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 38 **Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* 1 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 30 Khor Raysut 5/11 and 7/11.
- 39 **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* 1 Raysut settling pools 5/11.
- 40 **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* 3 Taqah 7/11, 10 Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 40 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 41 **Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* Large number (thousands) at Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 10 Hilf 10/11, 10 Sur Masirah 10/11. There is a proposed split of Lesser Sand Plover into two species: Siberian Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* (including *stegmanni*) and Tibetan Sand Plover *C. atrifrons* (including *pamirensis* and *schaeferi*). Presumably *pamirensis* Tibetan Sand Plover occurs in Oman.
- 42 **Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultia* Subspecies *scythicus* occurs in Oman. 1 Khor Raysut 7/11, large numbers (hundreds) Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 400 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 43 **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* 2 Khor Mughsayl 6/11.
- 44 **Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* 1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 1 Khor Raysut 5/11, 3 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.
- 45 **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius phaeopus* Subspecies *orientalis* occurs in Oman. 4 East Khor 3/11, several hundred Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 400 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 46 **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Several thousand Barr Al Hikman 9/11.
- 47 **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* 1 East Khor 3/11, 2 Khor Mughsayl 6/11.
- 48 **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* 1 Khor Raysut 5/11, present at Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 1 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 49 **Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* 5 Barr Al Hikman 9/11.

- 50 **Ruff** *Calidris pugnax* 2 East Khor 3/11, 3 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 3 Hilf 10/11.
- 51 **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris falcinellus* 50 Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 1 Hilf 10/11.
- 52 **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* Recorded at Raysut settling pools, Barr Al Hikman, and Hilf.
- 53 **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* Between 1 and 5 recorded at Muntasar, East Khor, Khor Raysut and Hilf.
- 54 **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* 9 Khor Raysut 7/11, hundreds Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 5 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 55 **Sanderling** *Calidris alba* 1 Khor Raysut 7/11, 1 Sur Masirah 10/11.
- 56 **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Recorded at widespread sites including East Khor, Raysut and Barr Al Hikman.
- 57 **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* Recorded at East Khor, with large numbers at Raysut and Barr Al Hikman.
- 58 **Pin-tailed Snipe** *Gallinago stenura* 2 Hilf 9/11 with 1 on 10/11.
- 59 **Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* 1 Khor Raysut 5/11, at least 5 Hilf 9/11.
- 60 **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* An estimated 100 from the pelagic off Mirbat 4/11.
- 61 **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Recorded at widespread locations in small numbers, especially in the south.
- 62 **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* Recorded at several locations, mostly singles e.g. Ayn Razat, Ayn Hamran, Mudayy.
- 63 **Common Redshank** *Tringa tetanus* Recorded at East Khor, Khor Raysut and Barr Al Hikman.
- 64 **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* 5 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 1 East Khor 7/11, 1 Hilf 9/11 and 10/11.





65 **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Recorded from Shisr Farms, Ayn Razat, Raysut settling pools and Khor Raysut.

66 **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* 1 Raysut settling pools 5/11.

67 **Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Recorded from several sites in Salalah area, Barr Al Hikman and Hilf.

68 **Crab-plover** *Dromas ardeola* 15 Mughsayl beach 6/11, 1 Khor Raysut 7/11, over 270 between Barr al Hikman and Shannah 9/11.

69 **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor* 1 Shisr Farms 2/11.

70 **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* 1 seen from the Mirbat pelagic 4/11.

71 **Slender-billed Gull** *Chroicocephalus genei* Seen at widespread locations and in good numbers, e.g. 400 Mughsayl 6/11, 300 Sur Masirah 10/11.

72 **Pallas's Gull** *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* An adult on Masirah Island 10/11.



73 **Sooty Gull** *Ichthyaetus hemprichii* Widespread in large numbers in coastal locations, e.g. Masirah, Shannah, Salalah and Taqah.

74 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* 3 races occur in Oman, the most widespread being *heuglini* and *barabensis* (very similar to the untrained eye), just 2 *fuscus* were noted.

75 **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* 1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 6 East Khor 3/11, 10 Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 2 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

76 **Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* 4 East Khor 3/11, 20 Khor Raysut 5/11, 1 Mughsayl 6/11, 2 East Khor 7/11, 1 Taqah 7/11, 1 Barr Al Hikman 9/11.

77 **Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* Widespread and numerous in all coastal areas, including recently fledged chicks.

78 **Lesser Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bengalensis* Regularly seen in coastal areas in small numbers, but a huge flock of 500 or so at Ghab Beach, Masirah 10/11.

79 **Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Recorded in small numbers at Taqah, Mughsayl, Barr Al Hikman and Masirah.

80 **Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* We looked hard at all the *Sternula* terns that we saw, and based on the recent article by Mullarney and Campbell (summarised on the OSME

website [here](#)) we are confident they were all Little Terns: 10 East Khor 3/11, 7 Mirbat pelagic 4/11, 1 Khor Mughsayl 6/11, 1 Taqah 7/11, 15 Barr Al Hikman 9/11, 200 Sur Masirah 10/11.

81 **Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus* Around 50 recorded on the Mirbat pelagic 4/11.

82 **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* 30 East Khor 3/11, 20 Mirbat pelagic 4/11, 3 Taqah 7/11 (it is possible that 1 or more White-cheeked Terns were involved here but views inconclusive).

83 **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* 50 East Khor 3/11, 1 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 20 Al Baleed 5/11, 1 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

84 **White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* 2 East Khor 3/11, 10 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 1 Al Baleed 5/11, 1 Khor Mughsayl 6/11.

85 **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Ardenna carneipes* 3 birds from the Mirbat pelagic 4/11, 1 seen very well.



86 **Persian Shearwater** *Puffinus persicus* Around 50 birds from the Mirbat pelagic 4/11, and 15 feeding close inshore off Mughsayl on 6/11.

87 **Jouanin's Petrel** *Bulweria fallax* An estimated 40 birds from the Mirbat pelagic 4/11.

88 **African Openbill** *Anastomus lamelligerus* 1 Khor Raysut 7/11 was presumably the bird found in 2021 (which was the first for Oman).

89 **Abdim's Stork** *Ciconia abdimii* 100 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 200 Atair Sink Hole 6/11.

90 **White Stork** *Ciconia Ciconia* 20 Al Balid Farms 1/11, 100 Shisr Farms 2/11, 10 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 1 Atair Sink Hole 6/11.

91 **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* 11 from the Mirbat pelagic 4/11.

92 **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* 5 close inshore from Mughsayl 6/11.

93 **Socotra Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* 1 Al Sawadi 1/11, 300 Mughsayl 6/11.

94 **Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Present Al Sawadi 30/10 and Masirah 9/11.

95 **African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* 1 Khor Raysut 5/11.



96 **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* Only seen in Salalah at East Khor (up to 20), Raysut settling pools, and twice on the roundabout at the east end of Salalah early morning (including 200 on 4/11).

97 **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* 12 East Khor 3/11, 3 East Khor 6/11, 1 Barr Al Hikman 9/11.

98 **Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* 1 Any Razat 3/11, 3 Mirbat 4/11, 2 Ayn Razat 5/11 and 7/11.

99 **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* 1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 1 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

100 **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* Care needed to separate from Indian Pond Heron, it seems the loral pattern is the key feature in winter birds. Reliably recorded at East Khor, Ayn Razat, West Khor, Khor Mughsayl and Hilf (between 1 and 5 birds)

101 **Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* 1 at Ayn Razat 3/11 and 5/11, 10 at the ornamental pond at Qurum Natural Park 11/11 (the latter site seems to be nailed on for this species, have seen them every time I have been there).

102 **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* 2 Mudayy 2/11, 100 Raysut settling pools 5/11.

103 **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Seen at widespread coastal locations as well as Muntasar, Mudayy and Shisr.

104 **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* 1 Ayn Razat 3/11, 1 Hilf 9/11.

105 **Great Egret** *Ardea alba* 1 Taqah 6/11, 1 Khor Mughsayl 6/11, several Filim 9/11.

106 **Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* 1 East Khor 3/11 and 6/11, 1 Barr Al Hikman 9/11.

107 **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* 1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 1 East Khor 3/11.

108 **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* Widespread in coastal locations, hundreds at Barr Al Hikman.

109 **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Small numbers seen at a number of coastal locations, including East Khor, Khor Raysut, Taqah, Barr Al Hikman and Masirah.

110 **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* 22 Wadi al Muaydin 30/10, 1 Raysut settling pools 5/11, 19 Masirah 10/11.

111 **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* 3 Al Saadah Park (Salalah) 7/11, 1 Hilf 9/11 and 10/11.



112 **Short-toed Snake-eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* 1 near Atair Sink Hole 4/11, 1 Jabal Samhan 4/11, 1 Atair Sink Hole 6/11.

113 **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Clanga clanga* A total of 13 birds seen at Mudayy, Khor Raysut, Taqah, East Khor, Sahnawt Farm and Hilf.

114 **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* 1 Ayn Hamran 5/11, 1 Taqah 6/11, 1 Jabal Samhan 6/11.

115 **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* 1 near Jabal Samhan 4/11, 1 Khor Raysut 5/11, 1 Atair Sink Hole 6/11, 1 near Mudayy 8/11.

116 **Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* 1 East Khor 3/11.

117 **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* Subspecies *homeyeri* occurs in Oman. 2 different birds seen near Atair Sink Hole 4/11 and 6/11.

118 **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* 2 Jabal Samhan 6/11.

119 **Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata* 2 Atair Sink Hole 4/11, 2 Ayn Tobruk 6/11, 1 Wadi Kheesh 7/11.



120 **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* 1 Shisr Farms 2/11.

121 **Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* Recorded at a number of sites including Shisr Farms, East Khor, Khor Raysut and Taqah.

122 **Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* 1 Shisr Farms 2/11, 1 near Jabal Samhan 4/11.

123 **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* Male Shisr Farms 2/11.

124 **Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* 3 Al Balid Farms 1/11, melanistic individual Shisr Farms 2/11.

125 **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* 1 Taqah 6/11 (a pale bird, distant).

126 **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* 2 Jabal Samhan 4/11.

127 **Western Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* Subspecies *erlangeri* occurs in Oman. 1 Birkat al Mouz 30/10.

128 **Little Owl** *Athene noctua* 1 heard at Wadi Darbat 4/11.



129 **Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus scops* 1 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

130 **Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* 1 Wadi al Muaydin 30/10.

131 **Arabian Scops Owl** *Otus pamelae* At least 5 Wadi Darbat 4/11.

132 **Arabian Eagle-Owl** *Bubo milesi* 1 Ayn Razat 7/11.

133 **Desert Owl** *Strix hadorami* 2 Wadi Ashawq (Mughsayl) 6/11.

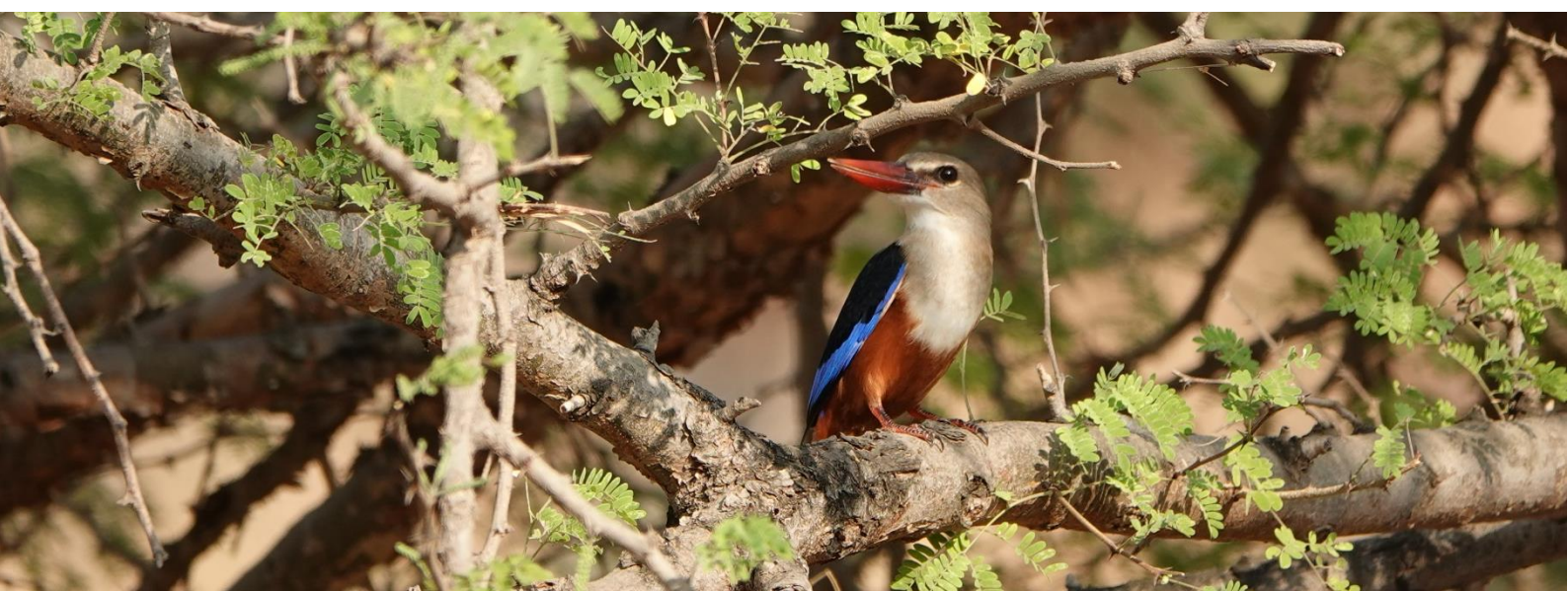


134 **Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* 1 Ayn Hamran 5/11, 1 Hilf 9/11.

135 **Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis* Several seen roadside in the north, 4 Qurum Natural Park 11/11, 1 Wadi Hasik 11/11.

136 **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus* 1 neat Mudayy 2/11, 1 Al Ghaftain 8/11, 2 Hilf 9/11.

137 **Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* Subspecies semicaerulea occurs in Oman. 5 Salalah Public Park 3/11, 1 Ayn Hamran 5/11, 2 As Saadah Park 7/11, 1 Ayn Razat 7/11.



138 **Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* 1 Ayn Razat 7/11, 1 Filim 9/11.



139 **Arabian Green Bee-eater** *Merops cyanophrys* Subspecies *muscatensis* occurs in northern Oman, *cyanophrys* in southern Oman. 1 Birkat al Mouz 31/10, 2 Wadi Kheesh 7/11, 1 Mudayy 8/11, 3 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

140 **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus* Lots of birds on the move especially in the Salalah area, e.g. 100 Wadi Kheesh 5/11, 100 Al Baleed 5/11.



141 **Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla* 1 Ayn Tobruk junction 7/11

142 **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Recorded at Al Balid Farms, Shisr Farms (50+) and Jabal Samhan.

143 **Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis* 1 Hilf 9/11.

144 **Sooty Falcon** *Falco concolor* 5 Al Sawadi 30/10.

145 **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* 1 Mudayy 8/11.

146 **Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameria* Introduced. 3 Al Baleed 5/11, 2 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

147 **Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus* 3 Ayn Razat 3/11.

148 **Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* Subspecies *isabellinus* occurs in Oman (Daurian Shrike). Males at Taqah 6/11 and Muntasar 8/11. We also recorded seven first-years (at Al Ghaftain, Khor Raysut, Taqah, Ayn Razat, Barr Al Hikman and Shannah) that were either this species or Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides* (we did not see any certain Red-tailed Shrike).

149 **Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor* 1 *aucheri* Muntasar 1/11, 1 *pallidirostris* Shisr Farms 2/11.

150 **African Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* 5 Ayn Razat 3/11, 3 Ayn Hamran 5/11, 1 Ayn Razat 5/11, 1 Ayn Tobruk 6/11.

151 **House Crow** *Corvus splendens* Common and widespread in both the north and south.

152 **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis* 150 Sayq Plateau 31/10, 1 Qatbit 1/11, 2 Muntasar 8/11, 2 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11 plus several seen along the desert road in the Empty Quarter between Adam and Thumrait.

153 **Fan-tailed Raven** *Corvus rhipidurus* Up to 4 together Jabal Samhan 4/11 and 6/11.

154 **Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* 1 heard Mudayy 2/11, 2-3 males seen Mudayy 8/11.

155 **Greater Hoopoe-Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* Subspecies *doriae* occurs in Oman. 2 Al Balid Farms 1/11, 2 Shisr Farms 2/11.



156 **Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti* Subspecies *azizi* occurs in Oman. 1 near Mudayy 8/11, 8 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11, 1 Wadi Hadik 11/11.

157 **Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps* Subspecies *melanauchen* occurs in Oman. 2 Shisr Farms 2/11, 3 Muntasar 8/11, 8 Masirah 10/11.

158 **Singing Bush Lark** *Mirafrca cantillans* Subspecies *simplex* occurs in Oman. 3 Sahnawt Farm 7/11.

159 **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* 1 Al Sawadi 30/10, 10 Al Balid Farms 1/11, present Shisr Farms 2/11, 3 near Jabal Samhan 4/11.

160 **Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer* 6 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

161 **White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucotis* 2 Mahout 9/11, 10 Qurum Natural Park 11/11, 4 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11.

162 **White-spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos* Widespread and numerous, especially in the Al Hajar mountains and in the south.

163 **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* 2 Khor Raysut 5/11

164 **Pale Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta* Subspecies *obsoleta* occurs in Oman. Seen at widespread sites in both north and south Oman.



165 **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* A handful seen migrating through the desert e.g. Al Ghaftain and roadside.

166 **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus orientalis* A Bonelli's Warbler seen well at Al Ghaftain was presumably this species.

167 **Plain Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus neglectus* 5 Wadi Bani Habib 31/10, 1 Wadi al Mihaybis 31/10, 2 Al Ghubrah Bowel 11/11.

168 **Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* Recorded at widespread locations in both north and south Oman. *tristis* occurs, but some birds were very pale and white below, not like any *tristis* I have ever seen (more Willow Warbler like).

169 **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus* 1 Al Ghaftain 1/11, 1 Masirah 10/11.

170 **Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus* 1 East Khor 3/11, 2 East Khor 7/11, 2 Filim 9/11, 3 Shannah 9/11.

171 **Common Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 1 East Khor 3/11.

172 **Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida* 1 Wadi Bani Habib 31/10, 1 Ayn Razat 3/11.

173 **Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis* Subspecies *yemenensis* occurs in southern Oman. 3 East Khor 3/11, 1 Taqah 6/11.

174 **Delicate Prinia** *Prinia lepida* Subspecies *carpenteri* occurs in northern Oman. 4 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.



175 **Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* 1 Al Ghaftain 1/11, 1 Mudayy 2/11, 1 Qatbit 8/11.

176 **Barred Warbler** *Curruca nisoria* 1 Mudayy 2/11.

177 **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* Up to 6 recorded at widespread locations, all very pale with distinctive scolding calls and presumed to be *halimodendri*.

178 **Arabian Warbler** *Sylvia leucomelaena* Subspecies *leucomelaena* occurs in Oman. 1 Ayn Razat 7/11.





179 **Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* 1 Barr Al Hikman 9/11.

180 **Menetries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea* 1 Masirah 10/11.

181 **Abyssinian White-eye** *Zosterops abyssinicus* Subspecies *arabs* occurs in Oman. Numerous in the Dhofar foothills e.g. Ayn Razat, Wadi Kheesh, Ayn Hamran, Ayn Tobruk.

182 **Arabian Babbler** *Argya squamiceps* 4 Al Ghubran Bowl 11/11.

183 **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* Widespread, particularly in urban areas both north and south, e.g. Salalah, Ayn Hamran, Qurum Natural Park.

184 **Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus* 50 Shisr Farms 2/11, 1 Atair Sink Hole 4/11, 4 Al Ghaftain 8/11.

185 **Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea* 1 Shisr Farms 2/11.

186 **Tristram's Starling** *Onychognathus tristramii* 1 Salalah Public Park 3/11, hundreds Atair Sink Hole 4/11, 1 Ayn Tobruk 6/11.

187 **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* 1 Al Ghaftain 8/11.

188 **Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* 1 Qatbit 1/11, 1 Mudayy 2/11, 1 Ayn Razat 3/11, 2 Qatbit 8/11.

189 **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* 1 Al Ghaftain 1/11, 2 Muntasar 1/11, 1 Muntasar 8/11, 1 Al Ghaftain 8/11, 1 Masirah 10/11.



190 **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochrurus* Subspecies *phoenicuroides* (Eastern Black Redstart) occurs in Oman. Regularly encountered in the north (e.g. Wadi Bani Habib, Al Ghubrah Bowl), as well as at Al Ghaftain and Masirah.

191 **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 1 Wadi Bani Habib 31/10, 1 Qatbit 1/11 and 8/11.

192 **Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis* 1 Sayq Plateau 31/10, 1 Shisr Farms 2/11.

193 **Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* 1 Wadi Keesh 7/11, 1 Ayn Razat 7/11.

194 **Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* 1 Muntasar 1/11, with 2 there 8/11. Presumably subspecies *maurus*.

195 **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabelline* 1 Mudayy 2/11, 40 Shisr Fields 2/11, 1 near Jabal Samhan 4/11.



196 **Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monachal* 1 Atair Sink Hole 4/11.

197 **Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* Subspecies *deserti* occurs in Oman. Recorded at Al Ghaftain, Muntasar, Shisr and Masirah, with several seen roadside in various places.

198 **Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka* 1 Muntasar 1/11, 1 Qatbit 8/11, 2 Muntasar 8/11, 1 Al Ghaftain 8/11, 1 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11.

199 **Blackstart** *Oenanthe melanura* Subspecies *neumanni* occurs in Oman. Recorded from Mudayy, Ayn Razat and Ayn Hamran.

200 **Hume's Wheatear** *Oenanthe albonigra* 4 Sayq Plateau 31/10, 1 Wadi Hadik 11/11.

201 **Arabian Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugentoides* Subspecies *boscaweni* occurs in Oman. 2 near Jabal Samhan 4/11, 2 Jabal Samhan 4/11, 1 Atair Sink Hole 6/11.

202 **Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe chrysopygia* 3 Sayq Plateau 31/10, 2 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11, 2 Wadi Hadik 11/11.

203 **Nile Valley Sunbird** *Hedydipna metallica* 2 Mudayy 2/11, 1 Mudayy 8/11.

204 **Palestine Sunbird** *Cinnyris osea* Subspecies *osea* occurs in Oman. 2 Wadi Kheesh 5/11.



205 **Arabian Sunbird** *Cinnyris hellmayri* Subspecies *hellmayri* occurs in Oman, recently split from Shining Sunbird. 12 Ayn Razat 3/11, 1 Wadi Kheesh 5/11, 6 Ayn Razat 5/11, 8 Ayn Razat 7/11.



206 **Purple Sunbird** *Cinnyris asiaticus* Subspecies *brevirostris* occurs in Oman. 10 Qurum Natural Park 11/11.

207 **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Widespread and numerous, some birds very pale.

208 **Ruppell's Weaver** *Ploceus galbula* Recorded at Ayn Razat, Atair Sink Hole, Wadi Kheesh and Ayn Tobruk junction.

209 **African Silverbill** *Euodice cantans* Subspecies *orientalis* occurs in southern Oman. Recorded at Mudayy, Ayn Razat, Wadi Keesh, Ayn Tobruk and Ayn Tobruk junction.

210 **Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica* 2 Wadi Bani Habib 31/10, 4 Hilf 9/11, 8 Al Ghubrah Bowl 11/11.

211 **Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* Introduced. 20 Salalah Public Park 3/11, 30 As Saadah Park 7/11.

212 **Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* Recorded from a number of sites. All of the males seen were *beema* (Syke's), a few darker females and immatures may have been *feldegg* (Black-headed).

213 **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* 1-2 birds recorded at Muntasar, East Khor, Ayn Razat, Khor Raysut, and Ayn Tobruk junction.

214 **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* 1 Ayn Razat 3/11, 5 Ayn Hamran 5/11, 1 Ayn Tobruk junction 7/11.

215 **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Recorded from several desert and southern sites. Most appeared to be *alba*, but 2 birds (amongst a large pre-roost gathering of some 300 birds) at Al Balid Farms appeared to be *personata* (Masked Wagtail).



216 **Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* 1 Barr Al Hikman 9/11.

217 **Long-billed Pipit** *Anthus similis* Subspecies *arabicus* occurs in Oman. 1 Muntasar 1/11.

218 **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* 1 Al Ghaftain 1/11 (and another in the rest area to the north of there), 3 Atair Sink Hole 4/11 and up to 7 Hilf 9-10/11.

219 **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* 1 Shisr Farms 2/11, 1 Khor Raysut 5/11, 4 Hilf 9/11, 1 Hilf 10/11.

220 **Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak** *Rhynchostruthus percivali* A male at Wadi Kheesh 7/11.

221 **Yemen Serin** *Crithagra menachensis* 10 Atair Sink Hole 4/11.



222 **Cinnamon-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza tahapisi* Common at Ayn Razat, Wadi Kheesh and Ayn Tobruk.



## 6. Other wildlife

Many thanks to Steve for taking the time to sort most of these out for us!

### Butterflies

African Migrant *Catopsilia florella*  
Blue Pansey *Junonia orithya*  
Caper White *Belenois aurota*  
Common Evening Brown *Melanitis leda*  
Cream- bordered Charaxes *Charaxes epijasius*  
Desert Orange Tip *Colotis liagore*  
Diadem *Hypolimnys missipus*  
Joker *Byblia ilithyia*  
Lime Swallowtail *Papilio demoleus*  
One Pip Policeman *Coeliades anchises*  
Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*  
Pearl Charaxes *Charaxes varanes*  
Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*



White-edged Rock Brown *Hipparchia parisatis*  
Yellow Pansey *Junonia hierta*

### Dragonflies

Black Percher *Diplacodes lefebvrii*  
Bladetail *Lindenia tetraphylla*  
Broad Scarlet *Crocothemis erythraea*  
Desert Skimmer *Orthetrum ransonnetti*  
Epaulet Skimmer *Orthetrum chrysostigma*  
Violet Dropwing *Trithemis annulate*



## Spiders

Red-legged Golden Orb-web *Trichonephila sumptuosa*

## Reptiles

Arabian Chameleon *Chamaeleo arabicus*

Dhofar Desert Agama *Pseudotrapelus dhofarensis*



## Turtles

Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas*

## Mammals

Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin *Sousa chinensis*

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*

