

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**A report on the birds seen during a trip to the U.A.E. from
6 till 14 March 2004 by David Van den Schoor**

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers a 7-day trip to the UAE taken by Norbert Willaert, Tom Goossens, peter Collaerts, Erwin Collaerts and David Van den Schoor. Our main aim was to see all specialities for The Middle East like Socotra Cormorant, Crab Plover, Saunder's and White-cheeked Tern, Egyptian Nightjar, Hypocolius, Hume's Wheatear, Plain Leaf-Warbler, etc. Because of the few days we had available, and most of us had already good experience with most species, we did not give much focus on all the localities visited. The total number of species on this trip was 175, but could easily have been higher if this had been a priority. Except Persian Shearwater, which is much easier to see June - September, we managed to see all our target species during this rather short stay!

I'm not going to write a true "trip report", as good descriptions have been made in The Shell Guide (see references).

FLIGHT

We flew from Brussels to Abu Dhabi and Dubai via Frankfurt with Lufthansa for 540,00 EUR return, taxes included. Be sure to reconfirm your flight at least 72 hours before departure.

VISA

Information concerning visa requirements for those wishing to travel to the UAE has been listed below, however visa regulations and costs are subject to change and should always be checked with you travel agent or nearest UAE embassy before travelling. Do not overstay your visa as this will result in detention and fines.

The Cabinet has decided to reduce the visit visa period for citizens of 33 countries (updated 31/03/2003) who are allowed to enter the UAE without a prior visa to one month non-renewable instead of three months. The Cabinet also decided to impose a charge of Dh100 per visa to be collected on entry to the UAE through land, seaport and airport entry points.

The decision includes citizens from France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Finland, Malta, Spain, Monaco, Vatican, Iceland, Andorra, San Marino, Liechtenstein, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Citizens of the UK (with right of abode in the UK) will be granted a free of charge visit visa on arrival in the UAE: Passports will be stamped with the visit visa as you pass through Immigration at any airport in the UAE. Although the visa may be stamped for 30 days, it entitles the holder to stay in the country for 60 days and may be renewed once for an additional period of 30 days for a fee of Dh500.

Except for citizens of the Gulf Co-operation Council who do not require a visa and nationalities automatically entitled to visit visas on entry, all other visitors who wish to stay longer than 14 days in the UAE (see Entry Service Permit below) must obtain a visit visa in advance through a sponsor. The sponsor can be your travel agency, your hotel, the company or department with which you are doing business in the UAE, or an individual (eg. a relative or friend resident in the UAE).

You can pick up this visit visa on arrival at the airport, but there is a fee of Dh100 plus a Dh10 delivery charge for this service. In order to complete your application, your sponsor will require your date of arrival, flight details, and a photocopy of the first few pages of your passport, which should be valid for at least three months.

A hotel will only provide a visa if you are a guest. For an individual to sponsor a visit visa, he or she must earn over Dh4000 per month and hold a valid residence visa. Your visit visa must be deposited at airport immigration one hour before the arrival of your flight. Note that your airline may require evidence (e.g. a photocopy) before departure that a valid visa awaits you on arrival.

Please note that holders of British Overseas Citizens Passport who do not have the right of abode in the UK do need visas to enter the UAE.

A tourist visa is available for individual tourists from Thailand, South Africa and China who are not entitled to be issued with a visa on arrival. The tourist visa, which must be sponsored by hotels and tour operators, entitles its holder to a 30-day stay and is non-renewable. The fee is Dh100, with an additional Dh10 for delivery. Citizens of the EU will be granted a free of charge tourist visa on arrival in the UAE: Passports will be stamped for 30 days as you pass through Immigration at any airport in the UAE.

An entry service permit (sometimes referred to as a 14-day stay) is available to businessmen and tourists. The permit must be sponsored by a company or commercial establishment or a hotel licensed to operate within the UAE. The visa, which is non-renewable, is valid for 14 days from the date of issue and the duration of stay is 14 days from date of entry, exclusive of arrival and departure days. There is a fee of Dh120 plus Dh10 delivery charge for obtaining an entry service permit. Allow at least two weeks for processing of the permit.

If you are flying to or from Europe or the United States, to Asia or Africa and passing through UAE airports, you can obtain a special 96-hour transit visa. You must be sponsored by an airline operating

in the UAE and you must have a valid ticket for your onward flight. Your travel documents will be stamped with an entry seal and there is no charge for this visa.

An option for business visitors who are frequent visitors to the UAE and who have a relationship with a reputable company in the UAE. Valid for six months from date of issue, each visit must not exceed 30 days in total. This visa costs Dh1000. The visitor must enter the UAE on a visit visa and obtain the multiple entry visa while in the country.

German citizens (both tourists and business visitors) may apply to the UAE embassy in Germany for one or two year multiple-entry visa. No sponsor is required. The maximum duration of stay should not exceed three months a year. The visa fee is Dh1500.

US citizens may apply to the UAE embassy in the US for one to ten year multiple-entry visas. A sponsor is required and the visa will be granted free of charge. The maximum duration of stay should not exceed six months per visit.

Documents:

To obtain a visa from a UAE embassy, you will need the following:

- Passport
- 2 photographs
- Duplicate application form
- Letter or fax from the sponsor in the UAE to the embassy concerned
- A letter from the applicant's company plus photocopy

MONEY

The UAE operates a free, open economy and there are no currency regulations in operation. It is extremely easy to change money at banks at exchange houses throughout the country where the best rates are available. The Dirham (pronounced dir-ham) is the official currency of the UAE. Dirham notes are in 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1000 denominations. The Dirham is divided into 100 fils, coins include Dh1, 50, 25, 10 and 5 fils (10 and 5 fils are rarely used).

There are no currency regulations and foreign currency of almost any denomination is readily exchanged in the UAE. The dirham is index linked to the dollar and the official exchange rate is Dh3.671 = US\$ 1.00. The best exchange rates are generally available at private moneychangers found throughout the UAE, but especially in the more popular souqs and shopping centres.

Moneychangers are open later than the banks. Opening hours are usually from 8.30h. a.m. till 1.00h. p.m. and 4.30h. p.m. till 8.30h. p.m. Saturday to Thursday. Most are open on Friday afternoons. Check the local newspapers for the closing dirham and dollar exchange rates.

Hotels offer a bureau de change service, however the rate is usually less favourable than that available at moneychangers.

Although there have been major changes in recent years, the UAE is still a cash-driven society and personal cheques are not readily accepted.

Most travellers' cheques can be cashed at hotels, some moneychangers and banks. You should enquire about the commission before exchanging your cheques. Banks usually charge about Dh10 per transaction.

Most internationally recognized credit cards (e.g. VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Diners) are accepted by car rental companies, larger shops, hotels and some restaurants, however you should carry some cash for general shopping and eating out at smaller establishments.

The exchange rate at the airport during our stay was 3.05 Dirham to the US Dollar.

CLIMATE

Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, the UAE is warm and sunny in winter and hot and humid during the summer months. Winter daytime temperatures average a very pleasant 26°C, although nights can be relatively cool, between 12–15°C on the coast, and less than 5°C in the depths of the desert or high in the mountains. Local north-westerly winds (*shamal*) frequently develop during the winter, bringing cooler windy conditions. Summer temperatures are in the mid-40s, but can be higher inland. Humidity in coastal areas averages between 50 and 60 per cent, touching over 90 per cent in summer and autumn. Inland it is far less humid.

Rainfall is sparse and intermittent. In most years it rains during the winter months, usually in February or March, but occasionally earlier. Winter rains take the form of short sharp bursts, which, if occurring in the Hajar Mountains, run off rapidly into wadis and onto the downwashed gravel plains. Localised thunderstorms occasionally occur during the summer. Generally appearing over the mountains of the south and east of the country, these rumbling cloudbursts can give rise to severe flash floods.

Some years are totally dry and it is only through the regular formation of dew that vegetation and wildlife can survive. This applies even to those places that experience a relatively high annual rainfall: at the Hajar Mountain town of Masafi, for example, 350 mm may fall in a 'wet' year, whereas as little as 30 mm may be recorded in a 'dry' year.

Most of the time during our stay the weather was good, with temperatures at the coast around 30°C and up to 35°C inland which was to much! We had a few foggy mornings at the West Coast and inland. Daylight hours were generally 06.15h. – 18.40h.

CAR RENTAL

At Dubai International Airport, we rented a F-class car (Chevrolet LUMINA - 4DR/5PSGR – automatic) for 616 US Dollar for 7 days (including all taxes, assurances and unlimited mileage). Drivers must be fully licensed and 21 or older.

Cars drive as on the right. Petrol was cheap, around Dh1 per litre.

All the roads we travelled on were in very good condition.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in the UAE is of a very high standard and many of the world's top hotel chains run five-star hotels in the major emirates, the piece de resistance being the seven-star Burj al-Arab in Dubai. There are also a number of excellent locally run properties suitable for both tourists and business travellers. Several of the hotels are outstanding examples of modern architecture. Swimming pools, tennis courts and fully equipped health centres are the norm. Most waterfront hotels have excellent beaches and extensive watersports facilities. If your budget does not extend to a five-star hotel, there are alternatives, most also of a high standard. There are a number of youth hostels for which a HI card is required, however you can buy a yearly membership for Dh75 if you do not have a card. Your choice of hotel will depend on the options on offer by your tour packager or the location and type of facilities that your require. The UAE is not by and large a budget destination, however inexpensive accommodation in hostels is available in most of the emirates. The hostels are networked, i.e. they do co-operate as far as advance bookings and other issues are concerned. You will need a membership card for Hostelling International (HI), however if you do not have one, you can purchase a yearly membership at the hostels in the UAE for approximately Dh75. The hostels primarily cater for male travellers.

We stayed at following inexpensive places:

Al-Ain Palace Hotel

Corniche Street

P.O. Box 93

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Phone: ++971-2-679-4777

Fax: ++971-2-679-5713

e-mail: aphsales@emirates.net.ae

Web-site: www.alainpalacehotel.com

Price: Dh150 including breakfast per person/night



Youth Hostel Association

39 Al Nahada road, Al Nahada area 2

P.O.Box 94141

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Tel. 00-971-4-2988161

Fax 00-971-4-2988141

e-mail: uaeyha@emirates.net.ae

Price: Dh60 including breakfast per person/night

FOOD AND DRINKS

Meals are relatively inexpensive, even at the capital's city. For the most part, meals are likely to average no more than Dh15 per person. We frequently did our own breakfasts and lunches. Visitors from many parts of the world along with a multi-ethnic resident community have ensured that a sophisticated and innovative food culture has developed in the UAE. Almost any type of food is available, from classic European to Pacific Rim. You can eat Mexican, Polynesian, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Persian, Italian and French cooking, and more, at some of the finest restaurants in the Middle East. International fast-food chains, serving the standard fare of hamburgers, chips, pizzas etc. (McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Pizza Inn, Hardee's, Wimpy, Dunkin' Donut) are also located in the larger cities. Kentucky Fried Chicken seems to be a particular favourite. International theme restaurants such as TGI Friday's, Planet Hollywood, Fashion Café, Hard Rock Café and Henry J Bean's are all represented in the Emirates. If you cannot find anything to suit in that list, small ethnic cafés and corner stalls are ubiquitous. *Shisha* cafés offer an opportunity to smoke a *shisha* (hubble-bubble pipe) and serve food, coffee, tea and fruit juices and corner stalls serve *sharwamas* and other sandwiches.

Gulf and Middle Eastern food is also available in a wide variety of venues, from expensive restaurants to local cafés. Fresh fish from the Arabian Gulf is always good – try lobster, crab, shrimp, or grouper, tuna, kingfish, red snapper, grilled, stuffed, or fried with spices. But it is not just a question of variety, make no mistake the food is generally good and the standard of service is high.

Muslims are prohibited from eating pork so it is not included in Arabic menus. Hotels frequently have substitutes such as beef sausages and veal rashers on their breakfast menus. If pork is available, it is clearly labelled as such.

Alcohol is generally only served in hotel restaurants and bars (but not in Sharjah). Exceptions are some clubs (e.g. golf clubs) and associations. Restaurants that are not associated with hotels are not permitted to serve alcohol.

LANGUAGE

Most people in the UAE speak good English, particular in the big cities.

TIME ZONE

CET Time + 3 hours

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Contact details for visitors to the Emirates, and for submission of reports and information:

Twitchers' Guide (Simon Aspinall & Peter Hellyer) P.O. Box. 45553, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Tel: (Mobile): Abu Dhabi 971-(0)-50-642-4357 or 971-(0)-50-642-4358. Fax: 971-(0)-2-445-0458.

E-mail addresses: hudhud10@emirates.net.ae or hellyer@emirates.net.ae

All observations should be copied to Colin Richardson, Tel: (Mobile): 971 (0)-50-650-3398. P.O.Box. 50394, Dubai, UAE, e-mail address: colinr@emirates.net.ae, for inclusion in the UAE records and use in the annual bird report. For birding information on Dubai and the Northern Emirates, also please contact Colin Richardson or Dave Diskin.

Rare bird reports should be submitted to the Secretary of the Emirates Bird Records Committee, David Diskin Tel/Fax: (971)-(0)4-2887457 Mobile: (971)-(0)-50-567-9104 (dadiskin@emirates.net.ae), from whom a full listing of species requiring formal descriptions can be obtained. Please note that NO records will be included in the national record unless they have been formally submitted to the EBRC for adjudication.

ITINERARY

6 March:

Departure at Brussels at 11.25h. with some delay for a 1 hour and 35 minutes flight to Frankfurt (Lufthansa-flight) were we had to board immediately and again with a little delay we left here at 13U40 for the connection flight towards Dubai (Abu Dhabi was cancelled) which took 5 ½ hours. Landed at 22.20h. and after some time consuming at the customs we took a taxi sponsored by Lufthansa towards the Al Ain Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi where we arrived close after midnight. Tom, who flew with British Airways was already arrived in the hotel and had already arranged the renting car at Abu Dhabi International Airport.

7 March:

Start birding at the Al Wathba Camel race track till 10U30, than a visit at the nearby Al Ghar lake (now renamed Al Wathba lake) till 11.15h. Returned to Abu Dhabi where we visited the Mushref Palace gardens (12.00h till 13.00h) following by the Abu Dhabi Golf & Equestrian Club (13.30h till 14.30h). Finally back to the Al Wathba Camel race track till 20.50h and again a short visit to Al Ghar lake (17.30h till 18.00h). Overnight again in the Al Ain Palace Hotel.

8 March:

Drive towards Dubai where we had a stop along the highway at Ghantoot Polo Club. Explored the nearby plantations till noon for our target-species of the trip, the Hypocolius. It took some time, but finally everybody had great views of at least two birds. The rest of the day was spending at the Dubai Pivot fields (14.30h till 18.30h) and a visit to the Wimpey pits (15.30h till 16.30h). Checked-in the Dubai Youth Hostel Association for a 5-night stay.

9 March:

Today, we started with the Shorebirds. So, first we visited Khor Al Beidah (7.30h till 8.15h) but had low-tide, and later on we drove to Dreamland Beach (8.30h till 9.30h). From here we continue our way via Ras Al Khaimah to Masafi where we explored a wadi 3 kilometer North of town along the Dibba Road in the heat of the day (11.15h till 13.00h)! Then we continue for Dibba Beach and harbour (14.00h till 15.00h), Fujairah National Dairy Farm (15.30h till 17.00h) and Ras Dibba (17.15h till 18.30h).

10 March:

Again to Masafi (7.30h till 9.00h), but strange enough the wadi was more birdless than yesterday-noon. Then we drove to Khor Kalba port Beach (10.00h till 12.45h) and Fujairah Port Beach till 13.30h. Returned in time for Qarn Nazwa (15.30h till 19.00h) but failed to see Pharaoh Eagle-Owl, but had good hope for the next day because we heard one from close range.

11 March:

Start with the famous Dubai Pivot fields (7.00h till 8.15h) and then drove a long journey to Jebel Hafeet where we had great views of another wanted-species, Humes Wheatears, in the gardens of the Mercure Hotel (10.30h till 11.40h). Returned via the Al Ain Road E66 and had a stop at a private Soccer-field on the corner of the turn-off for Margham (c.16.30h). The fields were full of birds but unfortunately they didn't give us permission to enter, a quick look was already enough to find a Blyth's Pipit. A promising place a think! Finally, our second visit to Qarn Wazna was successful (17.00h till 19.30h), we located the Owls just after dusk.

12 March:

Another day on the East Coast: Fujairah Port Beach (8.00h till 9.00h), Hilton gardens (9.15h till 10.00h), again Fujairah Port Beach (10.10h till 11.45h), Khor Fakkan (13.00h till 13.45h) and Fujairah National Dairy Farm (14.30h till 15.20h). Drove back to Dubai for Pallid Scops Owl at Mushrif National Park (18.00h till 19.30h) which we found too!

13 March:

Almost all specialities were seen, so we were focused again on Shorebirds, Gulls and Terns. Start at Khor Al Beidah till 9.30h, Dreamland Beach till 10.15h and finally Umm al Qawain breakwater till 12.15h. Returned to Abu Dhabi with a briefly stop at Jebel Ali Hotel gardens / Golf Course early afternoon. Our last few hours were spend again at the Al Wathba Camel race track (16.15h till 18.30h). Drove to the Al Ain Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi where we could take a quick shower and set-off to Abu Dhabi International Airport. We drove about 2850 Km. in the UAE.

14 March:

Flight Abu Dhabi – Frankfurt (01.05h – 06.40h) and Frankfurt – Brussels (09.14h – 10.10h)

REFERENCES

BOOKS

- BirdLife International (2000) Threatened Birds of the World.
Clements J.F. (2000) Birds of the World: a Check List, Fifth Edition.
Colin Richardson & Simon Aspinall (1998) The Shell Birdwatching Guide to The United Arab Emirates.
Grimmett R., Inskipp C., Inskipp T. (1998) Birds of the Indian Subcontinent.
Mullarney, K. *et al.* (1999) Collins Bird Guide.
Porter, R.F. *et al.* (1988) Birds of the Middle East and North Africa.
Porter, R.F., Christensen S., Schiermacker-Hansen P. (1996) Field Guide of The Birds of The Middle East.

REPORTS

No reports were used because you will find all needed information in the excellent Shell Birdwatching Guide to The United Arab Emirates. Before leaving, Colin had send me the last "Shell Guide updates". This are as follows:

THE SHELL BIRDWATCHING GUIDE TO
United Arab Emirates
(Richardson & Aspinall 1998)

2004 UPDATE
BIRDWATCHING IN THE EMIRATES

TELEPHONE NUMBERS IN THE UAE

All land-line phone numbers in the Shell Guide are incorrect as the telephone authorities changed the exchanges two times between 1999 – 2002. Now all are 7 digit numbers, mostly not recognisable from their previous number! Unfortunately they are too many to correct and mention here.

BIRD SITES SUMMARY

The BEST birdwatching sites in the UAE during winter 2003 were **Wimpey pits, Dubai pivot fields, Al Wathba camel track, Fujeirah National Dairy Farm, Dreamland beach, Fujeirah/Kalba beaches and Khor Dubai**. For more information please email colinR@emirates.net.ae or hudhud10@emirates.net.ae

WIMPEY PITS & DUBAI PIVOT FIELDS

The Dubai Pivot fields and Wimpey pits are two quite new sites, created by the water from the Dubai sewage treatment plant. Get there by travelling out of Dubai, heading for Hatta. Follow the E44, past the Dubai Country Club, long straight road, go straight for about 5km, then under three interchange bridges, signposted Hatta, after about 3 km., keep straight, past EPPCO petrol station, after c.3km turn RIGHT at signs for Dubai Sewage Treatment Plant and Tanker Discharge. Follow tankers, bearing left and following fence with trees on left. That is the Dubai pivot fields. The gate is at the end on the left after 500 metres.

Wimpey pits have been partially filled but large numbers of birds remain. These old quarry workings are located in the desert about 1km north-west of the sewage works. Instead of following the tankers along the line of the fence, after turning right, you must go STRAIGHT, there are signs for 'Tasjeel' and head for chimney-power station on hill. After about 800 metres, on left is a CCC construction camp (with an interesting marsh and reed bed!) - you turn RIGHT into the desert. The route changes daily, but the gravel lakes are quite big, about 300 metres away, set low in the desert. You may not be able to access the site without a 4WD.

A1. KHOR DUBAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Access is tricky due to Abu Khadra road interchange, and major highways. In addition the whole wetland site has been fenced. It is still possible to view the static lagoon from the elevated roadside opposite the rugby and cricket clubs, and you can drive around the site on the compacted sand outside the fence line. Birding is excellent, but police patrols are brusque and may ask you to leave at any time. Official permission might be granted from Dubai Municipality Sanctuaries Unit, P.O. Box 67, Dubai, fax Mr. Kais at +9714 227 0160 or phone at 206 4260.

A4. EMIRATES GOLF COURSE

The area outside the Emirates golf course is being heavily developed so the desert areas have been greatly reduced. The 'sandgrouse pools' have GONE and very few *Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse* still remain in the area. (There are few guaranteed sites for this species, except the Al Wathba camel track or flyover birds anywhere near the coast 8 - 9.30h). In addition the 'Wetland Sanctuary' (No.4) inside the course has been mostly filled in and few birds remain. Access to the Emirates golf course may require signing in at the gate, but often a wave to the security guard will allow entry. You should enter the nearby Montgomerie golf course, near the Emirates Golf Course and at the bottom of the main highway interchange ramp. The new fairways and lakes are full of birds.

A9. GHANTOOT

A major landmark, the big hotel on the hill at Ghantoot has now been demolished. To coincide with this, *Hypocolius* numbers have suffered a severe decline, with only a few reported in March 2003. Also access to the plantation is now only possible from the south side, adjacent to the canal. Park in the pull-in beside the huge covered bridge and walk between the chevron hill and the fence. The fence is open after 50 metres. This is the best corner for *Hypocolius*.

The Ghantoot Polo Club is still interesting, particularly for its wintering *Cream-coloured Coursers*. If you are stopped at the gate, ask to speak to the Marketing Department (Ms. Huwaida, tel +9712 5629050), who may give you authority to enter.

B4. KHALIDIYAH

Security has been stepped up in this wonderful birding area since September 2001 and there have been several instances of (temporary) arrest of birders and confiscation of their optical equipment. So be careful!

B5. FUTAI SI ISLAND

There is no longer any regular ferry service to the island.

B6. AL GHAR LAKE

Now renamed Al Wathba lake and completely fenced. Access to part of the lake, the marsh to the south-east is accessible from the truck road, west of the end of the fence line. Drive clockwise around the fence until you come to a square water tower and just after this point are the reed beds, which have many birds. The marsh, including a large area of open shallow water with ducks and waders, is visible through the fence. The police do patrol and may disturb you, but you are not on private land and there should be no problem.

B7. AL WATHBA CAMEL RACETRACK

By far the BEST birdwatching site in Abu Dhabi. The site has turned up dozens of rarities since 1999 and needs 4 - 5 hours solid exploration. However there are virtually no trees and it can be very hot or/and windy at times. The plantation between the grandstands has not hosted *Hypocolius* since 1998.

Refer *Richardson & Aspinall* for other details.

C1. RAMTHA LAGOONS.

Extremely saline and only attracting a scattering of waders, except in autumn when large White-cheeked and Saunders' Tern roosts can occur.

C2. KHOR AL BEIDAH

Access around the track at the Ruler's Palace is difficult due to new construction to the west of the palace and there may be 'no access' signs. We recommend access from the main Ras al Khaimah road opposite the rubbish dump. It is not muddy these days and is accessible with care by saloon car.

D4. WADI BEAH (BIH)

The dam has been dry several times since 1998, except for short periods after heavy rain.

E5. HATTA LAKES

Due to drought the lakes have been dry since 1998.

F1. JEBEL HAFEET

At the base of the mountain there is a large landscaped area – with a wasteful man-made river - known as Mubarragh Park. The indigenous species have all but gone, but you might find Desert Larks and a few wheatears, especially in spring.

Drive up the good mountain road and near the summit of Jebel Hafeet you must visit the small gardens around the Mercure Hotel – walk from the car park to the grassy area on the north side, a wonderful new site for Hooded and Red-tailed Wheatears and Blue Rock Thrush, plus other interesting migrants.

F2. AIN AL FAYDAH REED BEDS

Dry and birdless. The sewage pump station with overflow lake (marked '4' on the map) has gone.

F3. AL AIN CAMEL TRACK FIELDS

The irrigation was turned off in 2000 and the fields now attract very few birds.

F4. FOSSIL VALLEY

Very dry.

F5. HANGING GARDENS

Very dry and disappointing, but occasional rain brings some water to the spring. Still worth a trip for the dry winter warblers, such as Desert Lesser Whitethroat and Plain Leaf Warbler and a passing vulture.

G3. KHOR KALBA

The formerly productive foreshore with its scrub at Khor Kalba has been totally degraded by fishermen and their 4WD vehicles. The salt flats on the inland side of the mangroves are being heavily developed. However there are still wetland birds, kingfishers and warblers to be found in the mangroves.

G4. KALBA PLAIN AND POOLS

The inland plain is being developed and the pools are often dry or too saline to attract many birds.

Revised February 2004.

NOTES

Take note that conditions at all sites are changing weekly. Colin Richardson will provide an amended update free to anyone who buys a copy of the Shell Guide, and that way visitors will always get information right up-to-date.

Remember that that many (most) of the best sites we visited are actually private areas: Al Wathba camel track fields, the Dubai Pivot Fields, Fujairah Dairy Farm, Abu Dhabi golf & Equ Club, Umm al Quwain breakwater (most of the beach belongs to the Agricultural and Fisheries research station), the Jebel Ali Hotel, Mercure Hotel and Hilton Hotel gardens and even the Ghantoot plantation are all private and often sensitive, and we and other birders rely on the good will of the owners. So, ask permission before entering these places.

From personal experience and feedback from other visiting birders, police (sometimes in plain clothes) may ask you to leave Al Ghar lake, and also Dreamland Beach, Mushref Palace gardens and even

Khor Kalba. Local birders don't want to put people off, but these are sensitive times and birders who live here and enjoy their freedoms would not like to be banned from any sites due to the actions of visiting birders!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Colin Richardson for providing up-to-date information. Thanks are also due all the participants for their excellent company during this trip!

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRDS

This list follows the taxonomy, names and sequence of James F. Clements (Birds of the World, A Checklist, Fifth Edition 2000) with a few exceptions of recent taxonomic decisions and names changes (see www.ibispub.com/updates.html), updated till 15 December 2003. Some frequently used alternative names and some interesting subspecies (or potential taxonomic splits) are also mentioned. For some species no details are given about their abundance, this automatically indicates that the species was seen regularly, it does however not necessarily mean that it is common.

The following abbreviations are used in the note:

"R" require field descriptions before the species would be accept by the Emirates Bird Records Committee. "IS" means a introduced species and "FBS" means a feral breeding species.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 13/3.

2 birds at the Abu Dhabi Golf & Equestrian Club on 7/3 and c20 birds at Wimpey pits the next day.

Eared (Black-necked) Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A single at the Abu Dhabi Golf & Equestrian Club on 7/3 and c60 birds at Wimpey pits the next day.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

2 birds at Ras Dibba on 9/3, 3 birds at Khor Kalba Port Beach on 10/3 and a single bird on 12/3 at Khor Fakkan.

Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*

An unexpected group of no less than 818 birds just North of Dibba harbour on 9/3. 2 birds on 12/3 at Fujairah Port Beach and a total of 18 birds seen at Umm al Qawain breakwater on 13/3.

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Almost daily seen in small numbers.

Great (White) Egret *Ardea alba*

Singles were noted on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and on 13/3 at Dreamland Beach.

Western Reef-Heron *Egretta gularis*

Good numbers at both coasts, highest numbers on 9/3 with c50 birds in total at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach. Regular white-phases seen.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Small numbers throughout, highest count were 4 birds at Fujairah National Dairy Farm on 12/3.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Like previous species, small numbers throughout.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

Only a single noted on 10/3 in the mangroves of Khor Kalba.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Seen on both visits at Fujairah National Dairy Farm with respectively 5 birds on 9/3 and 6 birds on 12/3.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* "IS"

4 birds over the Dubai creek on 11/3.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

13 birds and 11 birds respectively on 8/3 and 11/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields. Another group of 7 was seen on 8/3 at Wimpey pits and 4 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm 12/3.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

A single observation at Khor Al Beidah on 9/3.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Except 11/3, daily seen with highest number of 200+ at Al Ghar lake.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

On 7/3 were 5 birds seen at Al Ghar lake.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

c10 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

c10 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

c30 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

5 birds at the Abu Dhabi Golf & Equestrian Club on 7/3 and c10 birds at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

c50 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

4 birds at Al Ghar lake on 7/3 and c100 birds at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

12 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca*

A single male at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

2 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

2 birds seen at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

"Black-eared" Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*

A single bird over the Ghantoot plantations on 8/3.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

An immature bird at Jebel Hafeet on 11/3.

Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

A total of 8 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3 with 2 birds there on 13/3. 3 birds and a single on the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3 and 11/3 respectively while another single was seen at the Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

A first-winter plumage at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3 and 13/3 (probably the same bird) plus a nice adult male there on the latter date.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

An immature bird in the mangroves of Khor Kalba on 10/3 was the only record.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Small numbers throughout.

Sand Partridge *Ammoperdix heyi*

2 birds seen on both visits (9 and 10/3) in the wadi near Masafi town.

Gray Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus*

A fairly common species throughout the country.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

6 and 7 birds seen on respectively 7/3 and 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track, more birds were heard. A single was flushed on 8/3 at the Ghantoot plantations.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

c20 birds on 8/3 at Wimpey pits.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* "R"

During our short visit, we found 2 birds at Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Fairly common at Wimpey pits with c50 birds on 8/3.

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*

A total of c40 birds on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach and 13 birds on 13/3 on the latter location.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

4 and c6 birds at Khor Al Beidah on 9/3 and 13/3 respectively.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Good numbers seen; c30 birds at Al Ghar lake on 7/3, c50 in total at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach on 8/3 and c30 birds there on 13/3.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

A total of c10 birds at Al Ghar lake on 7/3.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

2 and a single bird at the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3 and 11/3 respectively.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Daily seen, especially common at Fujairah National Dairy Farm with up to 80 birds on 12/3.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*

c15 in total were counted on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields and the Wimpey pits.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

On 7/3 c40 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track, on 9/3 a single at Khor Al Beidah and on 13/3 2 birds at Dreamland Beach.

Black-bellied (Gray) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Respectively c10 and c5 birds on 9/3 and 13/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

On 7/3 c15 birds at Al Ghar lake, on 9/3 c20 birds at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach, on 10/3 2 birds at Fujairah Port Beach and on 13/3 a single at Dreamland Beach.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

c6 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3 and 4 birds at Fujairah National Dairy Farm on 9/3. A single was heard at the Al Wathba Camel race track, on 13/3.

Snowy (Kentish) Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

The commonest *Charadrius* on both coasts.

Mongolian (Lesser Sand) Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

c10 birds at Dreamland Beach on 9/3 and 13/3. At Khor Kalba were 5 birds counted on 10/3.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Still small numbers seen; 2 birds on 9/3 plus 13/3 at Dreamland Beach and 4 birds on 12/3 at Fujairah Port Beach.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Only 2 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields on 9/3 and a single on 11/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

c20 birds on both visits (9/3 and 13/3) at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A few birds almost daily seen, best number was c10 birds on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

“Eastern” Curlew *Numenius arquata orientalis*

c14 birds on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach, c5 birds on 9/3 and 12/3 at Fujairah Port Beach and again c10 birds at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach on 13/3.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Fairly common, maximum 100+ birds on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Singles on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields and at Wimpey pits. 2 birds on 9/3 at Dreamland Beach.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

On 7/3 c10 birds at Al Ghar lake, on 9/3 c20 birds at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach, on 10/3 2 birds at Fujairah Port Beach and on 13/3 c5 birds at Dreamland Beach.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

A few were noted; a single on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields, 3 birds on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm and another single there on 12/3.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

2 birds on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields, singles on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy and again at the Dubai Pivot fields on 11/3.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

4 and 7 birds in total on respectively 9/3 and 13/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A single at the Abu Dhabi Golf & Equestrian Club on 7/3, 2 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3, 2 birds at Khor Kalba on 10/3, 3 birds in the gardens of the Hilton Hotel at Fujairah on 12/3 and a single at Jebel Ali Hotel gardens / Golf Course on 13/3.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

c10 birds in total on respectively 9/3 and 13/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

4 and 7 birds in total on respectively 9/3 and 13/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Very common on 7/3 at Al Ghar lake and on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach. Small numbers were seen on 8/3 at Wimpey pits and Fujairah Port Beach. On 13/3 numbers were already much reduced at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

A total of 11 birds were counted at the Dubai Pivot fields and Wimpey pits on 8/3.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

c50 birds on 7/3 at Al Ghar lake and c6 birds on 9/3 plus 13/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

c20 birds on 7/3 at Al Ghar lake and c100 birds on 9/3 plus 13/3 at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach and c10 birds on 10/3 at Fujairah Port Beach.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

c5 birds on 9/3 and 7 birds 13/3 at Dreamland Beach.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

A total of c30 birds on 7/3 at Al Ghar lake plus the Al Wathba Camel race track. On 8/3 2 birds at Wimpey pits and on 9/3 2 birds at Khor Al Beidah with 20+ birds there on 13/3. Another 10 birds were seen on 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

A single observation on 7/3 at Al Ghar lake.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

2 birds at Khor Kalba Beach on 10/3.

Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*

Only seen at the East Coast; c30 birds at Dibba harbour on 9/3, c50 birds at Khor Kalba and Fujairah Beaches on 10/3 and c50 birds at Fujairah Beach and Khor Fakkan.

Heuglin's (Siberian) Gull *Larus heuglini*

Only a few seen, c6 birds at Khor Kalba Beach on 10/3 and a single on 12/3 at Fujairah Beach.

Caspian (Pontic) Gull *Larus cachinnans*

3 birds at Dibba harbour on 9/3, 200+ birds at Khor Kalba and Fujairah Beaches on 10/3, c10 birds on the latter location on 12/3 and 6 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater on 13/3.

Steppe Gull *Larus barabensis*

The commonest Gull during our trip, 1000+ birds at Khor Kalba and Fujairah Beaches on 10/3, 200+ birds on the latter location on 12/3 and c25 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater on 13/3.

Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

On 10/3 4 adults and a immature at Khor Kalba Beach, on 12/3 an adult at Fujairah Beach and on 12/3 3 adults and 3 immatures at Umm al Qawain breakwater.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Daily seen in good numbers on both coasts.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*

On 7/3 c10 birds at Al Ghar lake, on 9/3 c10 birds at Dreamland Beach, on 10/3 c50 birds at Khor Kalba and Fujairah Beaches, on 12/3 c100 birds at Fujairah Beach and Khor Fakkan and on 13/3 c15 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

Only seen at Khor Al Beidah and Dreamland Beach with c10 birds there on 9/3 and 13/3.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

2 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater on 13/3.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

On 9/3 c10 birds at Dibba harbour, on 10/3 c20 birds at Khor Kalba and Fujairah Beaches, on 12/3 c10 birds at Fujairah Beach and Khor Fakkan and on 13/3 c10 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

The commonest Tern during our stay; On 9/3 c20 birds at Dibba harbour, on 10/3 c200 birds at Khor Kalba and Fujairah Beaches, on 12/3 c200 birds at Fujairah Beach and Khor Fakkan and on 13/3 c40 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater.

Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*

c40 birds at Dibba harbour on 9/3, 2 birds at Khor Kalba on 10/3, 3 birds at Fujairah Beach on 12/3 and c10 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater on 13/3.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

On 10/3 5 birds at Fujairah Beach and c100 there on 12/3. c5 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater on 13/3.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

c10 birds at Fujairah Beach on 12/3.

Saunders's Tern *Sterna saundersi*

On 9/3 2 birds at Dreamland Beach, on 10/3 a single over Dubai creek, on 12/3 at least 2 identified at Fujairah Beach and on 13/3 3 birds at Umm al Qawain breakwater.

White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa*

Tom saw 5 birds on migration on 8/3 over the Ghantoot Polo Club while we all had good views on 12/3 of 10+ birds at Fujairah Beach. Some of the birds were almost in full summer-plumage.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

3 birds on 10/3 at Khor Kalba Beach and a single on 12/3 near the Hilton Hotel at Fujairah.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*

c50 birds, all in small groups at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3.

"Feral" Pigeon *Columba livia* "FBS"

Commonly seen in towns and villages.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common throughout.

Laughing (Palm) Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Like previous species, a wide ranged species in the UAE.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* "FBS"

2 birds on 7/3 at the Mushref Palace gardens.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* "IS"

Except on 10/3 daily seen in suitable habitats.

Pallid (Striated) Scops-Owl *Otus brucei*

Nice views of a single at Mushrif National Park on 12/3.

Pharaoh (Desert) Eagle-Owl *Bubo ascalaphus*

Only heard on 10/3 but a pair seen well next day at Qarn Nazwa just after dusk.

Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius* "R"

At least 4 birds on 7/3 were seen at the Al Wathba Camel race track, one giving us stunning views!

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Daily seen, maximum day-count c30 birds.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Singles on 9/3 at Khor Al Beidah and on 10/3 at Fujairah Beach.

"Kalba" Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris kalbaensis*

6 birds were observed in the mangroves of Khor Kalba on 10/3.

Green (Little Green) Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

Daily small numbers seen with maximum 8 birds on 11/3.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Small numbers on the West Coast and inland but fairly common around Dibba, we counted 70+ birds on 9/3.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Almost daily a few observations.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

A male at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3, a pair the next day at the Dubai Pivot fields and finally another male in the dunes at Khor Al Beidah on 13/3.

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*

3 birds on 10/3 at Masafi and 2 birds the next day at Jebel Hafeet.

Greater Hoopoe-Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*
c5 birds in the dunes of Khor Al Beidah on 9/3.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*
Good numbers at the Al Wathba Camel race track with c20 birds on 7/3 and c25 birds on 13/3. At the Dubai Pivot fields were c6 birds on 8/3 and c5 birds on 11/3 seen. A group of c10 birds was on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*
Very common in suitable habitats.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*
Small numbers.

Bank Swallow (Sand Martin) *Riparia riparia*
A few birds on 7/3 at Al Ghar lake and the Al Wathba Camel race track. c20 birds on 8/3 at Wimpey pits and c10 birds on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

Pale Crag-Martin *Hirundo obsoleta*
2 birds at Ghantoot on 8/3, a single at Masafi on 9/3 and 3 birds there on 10/3, c10 birds at Jebel Hafeet on 11/3 and c5 birds on 12/3 en-route.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Seen on most days with good numbers on migration 7/3 and 8/3. One rufous-bellied bird (subsp. *transitiva?*) was seen at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*
A single bird was noted at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3.

House-Martin *Delichon urbica*
2 birds at Dibba centre on 9/3.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Fairly common with good numbers at the Al Wathba Camel race track and the Dubai Pivot fields.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
A female on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track, the next day c18 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields and 12 birds at Wimpey pits. Another single female was on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm and 12 birds were counted again at the Dubai Pivot fields on 11/3.

"Black-headed" Wagtail *Motacilla flava feldegg*
c20 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3 and 11/3. Also a few were seen on the private soccer-field at the E66 turn-of for Margham. None *thunbergi* Wagtails were noted.

"superciliaris" Yellow Wagtail race/hybrid *Motacilla flava superciliaris* "R"
We had 2 birds on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track and the same single on 8/3 and 11/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

"Yellow-backed" Wagtail *Motacilla flava lutea*
A nice male on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

"Sykes's" Wagtail *Motacilla flava beema*
c10 and c7birds respectively at the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3 and 11/3.

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
A single bird on 7/3 at Mushref Palace gardens.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*
On 7/3 c5 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track, on 8/3 2 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields, on 9/3 2 birds at Fujairah National Dairy Farm, on 11/3 3 birds on the private soccer-field at the E66 turn-of for Margham, on 12/3 again the same 2 birds at Fujairah National Dairy Farm and on 13/3 no less than 20+ birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

On 7/3 c40 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track, on 8/3 c10 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields and Wimpey pits, on 9/3 a single at Fujairah National Dairy Farm, on 11/3 2 birds at the Dubai pivot fields and a single at the private soccer-field at the E66 turn-of for Margham, on 13/3 c20 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* "R"

3 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields on 8/3 and 11/3. Another single was seen at the private soccer-field at the E66 turn-of for Margham on 11/3.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

c5 and 3 birds on respectively 7/3 and 11/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track and a single on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

c5 and c20 birds on respectively 7/3 and 11/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track and c30 and c20 birds on respectively 8/3 and 11/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

c10 birds on both visits (8/3 and 11/3) at the Dubai Pivot fields.

"Buff-bellied" Pipit *Anthus rubescens japonicus* "R"

A single on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* "FBS"

A few birds at Mushref Palace gardens and the Dubai Pivot fields.

White-spectacled (Yellow-vented) Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

A single on 9/3 and c10 birds on 10/3 at Masafi.

White-cheeked Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys* "IS"

Common throughout.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* "IS"

Small numbers at Mushref Palace gardens, Ghantoot and Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus*

Good views of a male and a female on 8/3 in the Ghantoot plantations.

Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

At Masafi, a male on 9/3 and a pair the next day. Other single males were seen on 11/3 at the E66 turn-of for Margham and on 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

A male on 8/3 at the Ghantoot Polo Club.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

4 birds on 8/3 in the Ghantoot plantations, a single was heard on 12/3 at Mushrif National Park.

Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis*

Except on 10/3 daily seen in small numbers throughout.

Clamorous Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Singles were heard at Wimpey pits 8/3, at the Dubai Pivot fields 11/3 and Khor Al Beidah. Seen twice on 10/3 in the mangroves at Khor Kalba, more were heard.

Sykes's Warbler *Hippolais rama*

A single seen and heard in the mangroves at Khor Kalba on 10/3.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*

4 birds on 7/3 at Mushref Palace gardens.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*

A single bird at Qarn Nazwa on 10/3.

"Scandinavian" Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita abientinus*

A single birds on 7/3 at Mushref Palace gardens and 3 birds on 11/3 in the Mercure Hotel gardens at Jebel Hafeet.

Plain Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus neglectus*

Respectively 8 and 3 birds seen very well on 9/3 and 10/3 in the wadi just North of Masafi.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A single birds on 11/3 in the Mercure Hotel gardens at Jebel Hafeet.

Small (Desert) Whitethroat *Sylvia minula*

2 birds seen 9/3 in the wadi just North of Masafi.

Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*

A single observation on 13/3 at Umm al Qawain breakwater.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris*

A female on 9/3 in the wadi just North of Masafi.

Menetries's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*

On 7/3 c5 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track, on 8/3 2 birds at the Dubai Pivot fields, on 12/3 a single at Fujairah National Dairy Farm and on 13/3 another single at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

"White-spotted" Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica cyanecula*

A male at the Dubai Pivot fields on 11/3.

"Caucasian" Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica magna*

Also a single male, seen at the Dubai Pivot fields on 11/3.

"Red-spotted" Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica pallidogularis*

c4 birds at the Al Wathba Camel race track 7/3, 2 birds on 8/3 at Wimpey pits, 2 birds on 11/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields and a single bird on 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track. A few more birds were not identified on subspecies.

"Eastern" Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides*

3 males on 11/3 around the Mercure Hotel at Jebel Hafeet.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A female on 8/3 in the Ghantoot plantations.

European (Common) Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Only a single male seen on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*

A pair in the Mercure Hotel gardens at Jebel Hafeet on 11/3.

Hume's Wheatear *Oenanthe alboniger*

On 8/3 8 birds counted at Jebel Hafeet. Most birds were seen very well in the gardens of the Mercure Hotel.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

A female on 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

"Persian" Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrma chrysopygia*

On 8/3 a single bird seen in the Mercure Hotel gardens at Jebel Hafeet.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

On 7/3 and 13/3 were respectively c5 and a female seen at the Al Wathba Camel race track. A single male was seen on 8/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Best numbers at the Al Wathba Camel race track with c10 birds on 7/3 and 6 birds on 13/3. At the Dubai Pivot fields were 2 birds on 8/3 and at Fujairah National Dairy Farm were a single bird on 9/3 and 2 birds on 12/3.

Arabian Babbler *Turdoides squamiceps*
4 birds on 10/3 in the wadi just North of Masafi.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*
Daily seen throughout the country.

Rufous-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
Unidentified subspecies were seen at the Al Wathba Camel race track with 4 birds there on 7/3 and 3 birds there on 13/3. 2 birds were at Qarn Nazwa on 10/3.

"Turkestan" Shrike *Lanius isabellinus phoenicuroides*
2 single males were identified; on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track and on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

"Daurian" Shrike *Lanius isabellinus speculigerus*
The commonest subspecies; a single male on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track, a single male on 8/3 at the Dubai pivot fields, 2 males were on 9/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm, more singles were seen on 10/3, at the private soccer-field at the E66 turn-of for Margham on 11/3 and on 12/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm. Finally, we counted 4 birds on 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

"Isabelline" Shrike *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*
One grey-backed male was seen on 13/3 at at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* "R"
This nice male was seen twice on 9/3 and 12/3 along the eastern fence of the vegetable farm opposite the dairy farm.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* "R"
Another long-staying bird, seen on 9/3 and 12/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

Southern Gray Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*
Almost daily seen in small numbers; a single at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3, 2 birds at the Ghantoot plantations on 8/3, a single at Masafi on 9/3, 2 birds at Qarn Nazwa on 10/3, a total of 3 birds during journeys on 11/3 and another single on 13/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

"Steppe" Gray Shrike *Lanius meridionalis pallidirostris*
A single observation on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*
Only seen around the Fujairah National Dairy Farm with 4 birds on 9/3 and 2 birds on 12/3.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*
Good numbers on the East Coast, up to c150 birds on 9/3.

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*
More seen than expect; a single at Masafi on 9/3 and 10/3, 2 birds at Qarn Nazwa on 10/3, 2 birds at Jebel Hafeet and a single at Quarn Nazwa on 11/3, 2 birds near Dibba Ras on 12/3 and a single at the rubbish dump near Dreamland Beach on 13/3.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* "IS"
Common at the Dubai Pivot Fields and the Fujairah National Dairy Farm.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* "IS"
Daily seen in good numbers.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
A common species throughout.

Pale Rockfinch *Carpospiza brachydactyla*
On 8/3 13 birds at the Dubai Pivot Fields, on 9/3 4 birds at the Fujairah National Dairy Farm and on 10/3 a single at Qarn Nazwa.

Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar* "FBS"
c7 birds on 8/3 at Wimpey pits and c10 birds on 11/3 at the Dubai Pivot fields.

White-throated munia (Indian Silverbill) *Lonchura malabarica*

Seen at the Al Wathba Camel race track on 7/3 with 3 birds there, c10 birds the next day at the Dubai Pivot fields and seen on both visits (9/3 and 12/3) at Fujairah National Dairy Farm with respectively c10 and c6 birds.

"Striated" Bunting *Emberiza striolata striolata*

Only seen on 9/3 and 12/3 at Fujairah National Dairy Farm with respectively 3 and 5 birds.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Heard on 7/3 at the Al Wathba Camel race track and saw there 3 birds on 13/3.