

UAE and Musandam 29. March–7. April 2009



Birding at Dubai Pivot Fields. Foto: BOT.

PARTICIPANTS

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GENERAL

UAE proved to be a beautiful country with a lot of interesting birds, good food and friendly locals, all in all a very pleasant and highly recommended travel destination. The driving distances from Dubai to most birding areas are short and the main roads are of very high quality. Also, the general birding information and very accurate road directions on Tommy Pedersen's web site www.uaebirding.com makes it easy to find most of the sites and species on your own, although expansive road construction and unfamiliar sign-posting routines had us confused a couple of times. We birded every day from dawn 'til after dusk and spent the nights alternating between hotel rooms and camping in the wild in a tent/in the car. We took no special vaccines for the trip and encountered no serious hazards or difficulties. We did, however, feel that the extra money put into a 4x4 vehicle was worth it, although we probably, but just barely, would have made it to all our destinations without it. It also made us able to drive off-road (witch is a legal and very common past time activity down there) in order to get close to gull roosts on the beach and drive out in the desert searching for nightjars at night and larks during daytime. We arrived just after an unusually heavy rainfall for this area, and several dirt roads were damaged, but we experienced only a few raindrops ourselves. The weather during our stay was probably a bit more overcast and foggy than normal, but this probably just made it more pleasant to be

out birding during midday. We thought the overcast weather might prove good for falls of migrants, but the biggest fall we encountered happened after the sun broke through for real.

This being our first visit to UAE, we wanted to explore most important birding areas during our eight full days of birding, and also wanted to go to the Omani enclave Musandam, located on the northeastern tip of the Arabic Peninsula. However, we also wanted to spend some extra time studying and photographing a few target species and search for expected and unexpected migrants. The timing of our trip was aimed to yield a combination of wintering species and active migration, but the strategy only worked out partially for us. We did find some of the winter specialities, such as Blyth's Pipit, but we missed out on several more. And although we did experience some migration, we also experienced rather silent days without any visible movements or falls of migrants, as usually is the case at migration sites. But we did find a few surprises, the gem being UAE's fifth record of Black Scrub Robin.

ITINERARY

- 29.3 Overnight flight from Norway
- 30.3 East Coast, northern sites
- 31.3 East Coast, southern sites
- 1.4 Dubai and the north coast
- 2.4 Musandam (Oman)
- 3.4 East Coast, north and south
- 4.4 Dubai and Abu Dhabi
- 5.4 Sila Peninsula
- 6.4 Sila to Abu Dhabi
- 7.4 Flight back to Norway

DAY BY DAY DIARY

- 29.3 **Overnight flight** from Oslo via Istanbul with Turkish Airlines.



Masafi Wadi. Foto: BOT.

30.3 East Coast. Arrival in Dubai at 2 AM. We rented a 4x4 vehicle from Budget Car Rental, conveniently having their office in Terminal 1 open for nocturnal pick-up. Also, Budget allow for their cars to be driven into Oman, as opposed to some other companies. We drove straight to **Fujairah National Dairy Farm** at Dibba on the east coast, arriving in time to look for nightjars in the dark with our strong halogen torch. The morning was spent here, with a Blyth's Pipit and two Pintail Snipes as the best birds for us. Also one Eurasian Stone-curlew and a European Honey Buzzard. Then we went to **seawatch by Dibba**, and found that a good spot was from Holiday Beach Resort, where we rented a suite for the night. We immediately found Socotra Cormorants, and several terns and Arctic Skuas. After a while, we also found Persian Shearwaters. We also took a trip up in **Masafi Wadi**, only to find that we were too late for Plain Leaf Warbler and Red-tailed Wheatear. We didn't find Long-billed Pipit either. We did, however, manage to find Menetries' and Scrub Warblers. We also experienced that we should have spent more time in advance with recordings, learning the local bird songs.



The mangroves of Khor Kalba is a favoured spot for Syke's Warbler. This area is flooded during high-tide, but the warblers should even then be rather easy to find – although even harder to see well. Foto: BOT.

31.3 East Coast. We started out just before dawn at **Fujairah National Dairy Farm**, before heading south looking for roosting gulls and terns along the way. Our largest flock were just north of **Fujairah city**. It contained 2-3000 individuals of several species, but no Great Black-headed Gulls. We were scheduled to reach **Khor Kalba** before low-tide, in order to find Syke's Warbler, Collared Kingfishers, Indian Pond and Striated Herons on and around the mudflats. The kingfishers are large and vocal and proved to be rather easy to find. In order to find the herons, you need to check the mudflats from the children's playground by the bridge at the very lowest tide. We spent too much time with the Syke's Warblers, and by the time we were finished, the mudflats and the herons were gone, even though the tide was far from at its highest. We found a flock of 38 Crab Plovers here in stead. Afterwards, we headed west along **Huwaylat Road**, but was first stopped and escorted back to Kalba by a border patrol. We waited a few minutes, and headed back again, only to find that the road was closed due to flooding after the heavy rains that had hit the area a few days before we came. The only bonus being two Yellow-throated Sparrows on the border fence. We found a west-bound road further north, and ended up as planned at **Qarn Nazwa** outside Dubai two hours before dusk. Here we found Pale Rock Buntings and a clutch of Pharaoh Eagle Owls being fed by their parents. The adult often sit

on top of the ridges at dusk. This site is also famous for its abundance of snakes and scorpions. Even though we didn't see any, it is advised to wear proper shoes and not sandals when exploring the area. Later that night, we found ourselves in **Mushrif Park in Dubai**, looking in vain for Striated Scops Owls. We spent the night at the good standard Princess Hotel (cost standard room: EUR 63), conveniently located in the eastern outskirts of Dubai, allowing access to the hotel from Mushrif Park and Dubai Pivot Fields without engaging in the heavy traffic closer to the core of the city.



Huwaylat Road along the fence on the Omani border. Foto: BOT.

1.4 Dubai and the north coast. We started out just before dusk at **Dubai Pivot Fields**. We were walking around on our first visit, not realizing that most birders bring their cars inside. The smaller of the two pivot fields were partially flooded, providing nice habitat for Tringa-waders. The large pivot needs to be walked thoroughly in order to flush all the pipits and snipes hiding in the tallish grass. At this site, we found Black-eared Kite, a few Richard's Pipits, several White-tailed Lapwings, a Spotted Crake, Red-vented Bulbuls, Water Pipits, Yellow Wagtails and one male Citrine Wagtail. Afterwards we went the ten minutes drive to **Al Warsan Lakes** for a quick stop, providing the trip list with a few fresh-water species. Then we drove north along the coast, stopping at **Umm-al Qaiwain Beach** and **Khor al Beida**. We only found a few roosting gulls and terns at the first spot, and had a hard time figuring out the Little vs. Saunder's Terns. The latter was supposed to be common at this site, but we could only positively identify the former, just like we had done at the east coast on the two previous days. Birding Khor al Beida was nice and we had no problems regarding the security staff at the palaces. For the most part, however, we birded the eastern part of the area, away from the (abandoned?) construction site for the new palace. Here we found the greatest abundance of shorebirds on the trip, including several Great Knots. We had timed the visit to arrive just before high tide, but even when the tide was at its highest, the waders were pretty far away. So be prepared to walk out on the mud flats in order to see the peeps up-close (bare foot or rubber wellies needed). We made a quick stop by **Dreamland Beach**, but we didn't really fancy this construction site, and headed up towards Musandam, hoping to reach **Khor Khowair** before dark. We gave up finding it, however. The **border crossing into Oman** was quite tedious. We had to park the car and go in to the administration building, standing in one line to pay a fee, then in another line to have our passports checked, before we could exit out of UAE. Then, in order to get in to Oman, we had to show passports again, pay a new fee, and then show proof of a special insurance on the vehicle. Although having informed Budget in an email upon making the reservation of the car of our intention to visit Oman, it was not talked of when the vehicle was picked-up, and so I guess this special insurance was forgotten. At that moment, I was certain we would be kicked out of Oman, but – out of the blue – they had a

designated counter where you could buy insurance for your vehicle! How lucky can you get. The whole border crossing session took about an hour and costed a total of about 500 dirhams. You might add another hour if travelling during intensive periods. We drove the supposedly scenic drive up the **Musandam** coast in pitch darkness, noting a few rocks that had fallen down recently and crushed the road here and there. We aimed to camp in our tent at **Sall Ala**, where the Striated Scops Owls was said to howl at night and Plain Leaf Warblers should greet us in the morning, only to find that the whole area was flooded in a lake 2 meters deep. So we drove up in the mountain to the pass of **A'Saye**, on the narrow, winding gravel road that several places had been washed away by water. Thanks to our trusty 4x4 vehicle we made it without incidents. Even the A'Saye valley was flooded, however, and the road blocked by a large body of water, which we didn't have the nerves to cross in the middle of the night, so we camped roadside in the mud. A Little Owl sang us a lullabye. If not staying in Khasab about 1 hour drive back down to the sea, camping is the only alternative for this area as far we know – although the locals the next day invited us to stay with them for the night.



Camping road-side in the mud at A'Saye in Musandam. Note the flooded pastures and gardens in the background. Foto: BOT.

2.4 Musandam. Woke up before dawn and investigated A'Saye, which is a large green field attracting migrants at about 1500 m above sea levels surrounded by rather steep and arid mountains. This is believed to be a regular wintering site for Everman's Redstart, and it is a proven hotspot for vagrants. About half of the valley was flooded, but we checked the dried-up parts and the hillsides around it. No Plain Leaf Warblers and no Eversmann's Redstarts, but a lot of Hume's Wheatears, several Long-billed Pipits and a couple of White-throated Robins, and Chukars proved common in the mountain-sides. Pretty good birding actually, despite the partially flooded fields and gardens. We had planned to stay two nights, but headed in stead back to the UAE again the same way we came (the road was closed due to water damage south of the pass, the locals informed us). We went back to Sall Ala to see what it looked like in broad day light, and found several Trumpeter Finches and Striolated Buntings here as well as one of only two observations of Arabian Babbler. Along the scenic drive down the west coast of Musandam we had several roadside Hume's Wheatears, a Striated Heron and

a Steppe Eagle. We drove to **Fujairah National Dairy Farm** to search for nightjars after dark (no luck) and camped in **Musafi Wadi**.



Expect the unexpected, Sall Ala. Foto: BOT.



Sometimes not even a 4x4 vehicle will do the job. We met the unfortunate driver of this off-roader at Sall Ala, who had to flee his car when the flood came flushing a few days earlier. The car had been completely submerged. These trees are favoured by Plain Leaf Warblers in winter, and the ground beneath them is a popular camp ground. Usually, that is. Foto: BOT.

3.4 East Coast again. Up before first light as usual, and birded **Musafi Wadi** again. Even though we this time birded the wadi in the morning, as opposed to mid-day as we did the first day, it seemed much quieter now. Headed down the coast, hoping to find our great roost of gulls near **Fujairah**, but no birds remained due to the area being worked by fishermen. We rushed down to **Khor Kalba** in order to reach the low-tide, and this time we focused on the tidal flats and got lucky: The Indian Pond and Striated Herons were there, just as Tommy Pedersen had promised us. We couldn't resist spending some time with the Syke's Warblers again, and saw several Collared Kingfishers and heard an Eastern Orphee Warbler singing in the mangroves opposite the lagoon. We then drove west to check if the **Huwaylat Road** had re-opened, but was stopped and sent back again by an persistent border patrol. We didn't want to push our luck, so we left the area and drove north along the coast. Just south of the city of **Fujairah**, we found a few roosting gulls and terns. Here, we finally managed to confidently identify a couple of Saunders's Terns. We continued up to **Khor Fakkan**, and drove inland and up to the **Hutain Dam** close to the Omani enclave of Madha. This proved to be a popular Friday outing destination by the loud-speaking locals, probably due to the large fish that splashed about in what little was left of water in the bottom of the artificial lake. The locals left before dusk, however, just in time for us to enjoy a few Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse's coming down to drink. We also saw a few Sand Partridges on the cliff-tops and a Night Heron by the pool. We then drove back to Dubai and the Princess Hotel.



Waiting for nightfall at Hutain Dam, Khor Fakkan. Foto: BOT.



Local fishermen drying small fish on the salt pans just north of Fujairah. When they leave, large number of gulls will feast on the left-overs. Foto: BOT.



*Mixed flock of gulls at the salt pans just north of Fujairah. The large gulls was thought to be mostly *barabensis* and *heuglinis* (and probably *taimyrensis*), with a few *cachinnans* as well. Sooty, Black-headed and Slender-billed Gulls was represented too. Foto: BOT.*

4.4 Dubai and Abu Dhabi. We started off at the **Dubai Pivot Fields**, this time conveniently bringing our car in, like the locals do. We saw many of the same birds as before, but added 9 Rose-coloured Starlings and a Shikra to our list. Finding the latter here was a real surprise, and it made us skip our planned lunch-time destination of Safa park in Dubai, where the species breeds. We had a quick stop at **Al Warsan lakes**, yielding Caspian Tern to the trip list, and headed to **Ras al Khor** for high-tide. Here we found a couple of Greater Spotted Eagles. A large flock of Pacific Golden Plovers passed overhead and landed in the bay, out of sight. Actually we waited too long coming here, as the high-tide was at 7 am and the guarded hides didn't open until 9 am (closed on Fridays). However, you can perfectly bird this location without entering the hides, by just telescoping from the parking lots. The important thing is to be there on or just before high tide. Afterwards, we drove to **Ghantoot** down the west coast. We started out peering through the fence around the **polo club**, but asked after a while permission to enter the facility. We said we were going to the restaurant, as we had been advised to do, but the guard politely refused to let us in. We drove around peering through the fence for some time, but headed back to the guard to try a new approach – we said we wanted to do some bird-watching! The guard was very positive and said that we certainly could have done that, if it wasn't for the Sheik of Abu Dhabi staying at the facility at the moment. The guard asked us to please try again some other time. We then headed south to **Al Wathba Camel Race Track** outside the city of Abu Dhabi. The green grass field in front of the grand stand attracted a few pipits and wagtails, but the main thing here is the old fodder fields encircled by the immensely long (at least 10 km) race track itself. Although not being watered anymore, it was a nice place for larks, warblers and wheatears. It even had a small pool of water, attracting some waders, including a Red-necked Phalarope. After dark, we headed west to the **Sila peninsula**, three hours fast drive on a smooth highway from the Camel Tracks. We slept in our tent on the beach outside the town of Sila. One or two guesthouses do exist here, but we didn't check them out.



The Flamingo Hide at Ras al Khor. Foto: BOT.



Al Wathba Camel Racetrack. The lawn in front of the Grandstand stands out as a green island from the arid surroundings, such as the dry fodder field in the centre of the race track. Foto: BOT.



The lawn at Al Wathba Camel Racetrack attracts pipits, wagtails and such. But take heed of the racing camels passing by at high speed. These are just training and the riders enjoyed being photographed. Foto: BOT.

5.4 Sila Peninsula. A nifty site near the border to Saudi Arabia, consisting of very dry, sandy desert, with a few man-made green areas. We searched in vain for Hypocolius, as a flock had overwintered here this year, but found quite a few migrants instead. The biggest surprise was a Black Scrub-Robin, the fifth for the UAE. We also had a Spotted Crane, plenty of Barred Warblers, Greater Short-toed Larks, Pale Rock Buntings, Ortulan Buntings, Namaqua Doves, and a White-throated Robin in the city park and the small stands of trees and plantations close by. We searched in vain also for Bar-tailed Larks out on the peninsula, finding only a few of the pale and small-billed desert form of Desert Lark – *insularis*. The well on the very tip was contaminated, smelling of sulphate, probably not worthy a drink even for vagrant Sandgrouses. Still, it attracted a peculiar wheatear, first thought to be of the white-throated *vittata*-form of Pied Wheatear, but realized that it also had a completely white back – perhaps a hybrid Black-eared x Pied? The very interesting gardens at the tip of the peninsula held a male Masked Shrike and a pair of Menetries' Warbler. A flock of 30 Bridled Terns and a few Socotra Cormorants passed outside the tip. Eurasian Stone-curlew displayed at dusk. We followed the road back in to the town of Sila in the dark, searching with the spot-light for nightjars all the way, only to surprise a roosting female Pallid Harrier. We slept in the tent on the same spot at the beach again.



One of the two plantations out in the desert in the middle of the Sila peninsula. Foto: BOT.



The garden at the tip of Sila, with its extremely hospitable resident, serving tea and inviting us on a boat trip around the tip. Foto: BOT.



The water dripping from the deserted well at the extreme tip of the Sila Peninsula smelled and looked bad and is probably not drinkable for any living creature. It may look tempting from a distance, though. Foto: BOT.

6.4 Sila to Abu Dhabi. We spent the first half of the day around the town of **Sila**, still dipping on the Hypocolius, but finding the Black Scrub-Robin where we left it the day before. Then we headed back towards Dubai, hoping to find a few gull-roosts on the way, and the last chance of Great Black-headed. On the way, we were contacted by Tommy Pedersen, who informed us of a site in the desert inland from Ghantoot where a local birder had just found a pair of Bar-tailed Larks. We increased our average travelling speed from very fast to even faster and managed to reach the area just an hour before dusk, thanks to Tommy's accurate descriptions, which included a couple of empty diet coke tins he had inserted into his tire tracks amongst the dunes in order to direct us to the exact spot. Still, we had to search a while in a state of panic, but found the pair just in time before the sun set. In addition, we had several Greater Hoopoe-larks and a Cream-coloured Courser at this site, and were amazed to find a hundred or so Pin-tailed Sandgrouse by a well. They proved to be introduced by hunters, however. The last thing we did before delivering our car at Dubai airport, was to drive back to **Al Whatba Camel Race Tracks** to search for nightjars in the dark for about an hour, still without luck.

ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST

183 category A species, 8 category C species, and 2 category E species were recorded. Categorization is based on Birds of the United Arab Emirates - annotated checklist (<http://www.tommypedersen.com/UAE.htm>). An asterisk * follows species name of cat. C species, while ** follows name of cat. E species.

Chukar *Alectoris chukar* – Berghøne

Several groups seen and heard in the hillsides of A'Saye, Musandam. We logged 50 2.4.

Sand Partridge *Ammoperdix heyi* – Beduinhøne

Small groups seen at Masafi Wadi and Hutain Dam 3.4.

Grey Francolin *Fracolinus pondicerianus* – Gråfrankolin *
Noted on six dates with up to 30 ind. Common in dry, bushy terrain.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* – Vaktel
3 birds flushed from Fujairah National Dairy Farm 30.3.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* – Gravand
Two seen at Ras al Khor 4.4.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – Stokkand
A couple seen at Dubai Pivot Fields were probably not entirely wild.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* – Skjeand
Up to four seen on two occasions in the pools at the rubbish dump just west of Khor Kalba.

Common Pochard *Aythya farina* – Taffeland
A pair seen on two occasions at Al Warsan Lakes.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* – Toppand
Up to 5 seen at Al Warsan Lakes.

Persian Shearwater *Puffinus persicus* – Perserlire
At least 12 seen far off-shore from our motel resort south of Dibba on 30.3.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – Dvergdykker
Up to 25 at Al Warsan Lakes.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* – Flamingo
Seen several places on four dates, with up to 200 outside the Flamingo Hide at Ras al Khor.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* – Stork
One seen road side on top of a power mast in the desert 4.4. Also, one found long-dead at the Dairy Farm, Dibba.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* – Bronseibis
Up to five at Dubai Pivot Fields.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* – Skjestork
One by the gull roost north of Fujairah 31.3.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – Natthehre
Singles noted on two days, notably also by the Hutain Dam up in the dry mountains.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* – Krabbehegre
One roadside along the coast in Musandam 2.4 and 3 at Khor Kalba 3.4.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* – Topphegre
Up to 2 seen on three dates.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* – Mangrovehegre
One adult and one immature seen on the mudflats of Khor Kalba on our second visit to the spot 3.4.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – Kuhegre
Seen on five days, with up to 30 individuals.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* – Gråhegre
Seen on five days, with up to 25 individuals.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* – Purpurhegre

Seen on three days, with up to 4 individuals, at Dubai Pivot Fields and Al Warsan Lakes.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – Egretthegre

Seen on four dates, with up to 4 ind.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* – Silkehegre

2 seen at Ras al Khor.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* – Strandhegre

Seen seven dates with up to 50 birds.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* – Storskarv

5 ind. logged four days.

Socotra Cormorant *Leucocarbo nigrogularis* – Araberskarv

Seen on four dates with up to 80 ind. Most birds seen when sea-watching at Dibba.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* – Rødfalk

Two birds logged 6.4.



A young male Lesser Kestrel at Sila. Foto: BOT.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – Tårnfalk

Individuals noted on four dates.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – Fiskeørn

Noted on three dates, including a couple calling at Khor Kalba.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* – Vepsevåk

One at the Dairy Farms 30.3.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* – Svartglente (linaetus)

Singles at Dubai Pivot Fields both days there.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* – Sivhauk

Up to 5 noted on four dates.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* – Steppehauk

An adult male at the Dairy Farm, Dibba, and up to four females at Sila, including one found roosting on the ground out in the desert at night, while searching with a torch for nightjars.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* – Shikrahauk *

One at Dubai Pivot Fields 4.4 was an unexpected find here. We had planned to go to Safa Park, where it breeds, to find it later the very same day, but was no longer in need to go there!

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* – Spurvehauk

One and two noted on three dates.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* – Storskrikørn

Two immatures at Ras Al Khor, spending a lot of time sitting in the treetops.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* – Steppeørn

One 3 CY chased by a Brown-necked Raven along the coast at Musandam.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* – Myrrikse

Singles seen Dubai Pivot Fields 1.4 and by the small pond at Sila 5.4.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – Sivhøne

Up to 3 noted on four dates.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* – Sothøne

Up to 8 seen Al Warsan Lakes.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedipnemus* – Triel

One seen at the Dairy Farms 30.3 and one displaying at dusk on the tip of the Sila Peninsula 5.4.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* – Tjeld

8 noted along the coast north of Dubai 1.4.



Crab Plovers at Khor Kalba. Foto: BOT.

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* – Krabbeeter

A flock of 35 at Khor Kalba 31.3, two flocks totalling 25 individuals at Khor al Beida 1.4, and still 7 individuals left at Khor Kalba 3.4.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* – Stylteløper

Up to 40 noted on six dates.

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* – Brillevipe

Noted all days, with up to 40 ind.

White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus* – Sumpvipe

Up to 20 noted at Dubai Pivot Fields, both days.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* – Sibirlo

This being one of our target study species, only finding a fly-by flock of 150 ind. at Ras al Khor was a great disappointment.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* – Tundralo

Up to 3 noted on three dates.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* – Sandlo

Up to 20 ind. on four dates.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* – Dverglo

Up to 3 ind. on five dates. A couple displayed eagerly by the small lake at Sila.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* – Hvitbrystlo

Up to 100 seen on six dates. A pair with chicks found at the Bar-tailed Lark site east of Ghantoot. A colour-ringed adult was seen at Al Whatba Race Track on 3.4 (green ring left tibia, metal ring right tibia) as well as a nest containing 3 eggs there.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* – Mongollo

Noted on five dates with up to 100 individuals at Khor al Beida. We were not able to pick out any definite Greaters.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus* – Rødbrystlo

A couple – or perhaps two males – were found together at an abandoned camel yard in the Sila desert 6.4.



Male Caspian Plover at Sila. Foto: BOT.

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura* – Sibirbekkasin

Two flew together past us at the Dairy Farm at Dibba 30.3, seen pretty well in the telescope, identified by lack of white trailing edge and dark underwings. We missed one bird identified by a local birder amongst Common Snipes while we were at Dubai Pivot Fields.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* – Enkeltbekkasin

Up to 20 birds noted on 4 dates, all of them checked very carefully for Pin-tailed.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* – Svarthalespove

One at Dubai Pivot Fields 1.4.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* – Lappspove

300 logged 1.4.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* – Småspove

Up to 30 on 3 dates.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* – Storspove

Up to 50 on 6 dates.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* – Sotsnipe

One at Dubai Pivot Fields 1.4 and 3 at Sila 5.4.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus* – Rødstilk

Up to 50 on three dates.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* – Damsnipe

15 at Khor al Beida 1.4 and one Dubai Pivot Fields 4.4.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* – Gluttnipe

Up to 10 birds on 6 dates.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* – Skogsnipe

One and two's on three dates.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* – Grønnstilk

Up to 25 on 6 dates.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* – Tereksnipe

Noted three dates, with up to 20 at Khor al Beida 1.4.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* – Strandsnipe

Up to 15 on 7 dates.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* – Steinvender

Up to 8 on three dates.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* – Sibirsnipe

12 individuals at Khor al Beida 1.4.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* – Sandløper

Up to 30 on 3 dates.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* – Dvergsnipe

Up to 150 on 4 dates.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* – Temmincksnipe

Noted on 3 dates, with estimated about 50 at Khor al Beida 1.4.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* – Tundrasnipe

Noted three dates, with 150 at Khor al Beida 1.4.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* – Myrsnipe

Noted three dates, with 200 at Khor al Beida 1.4.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* – Brushane

Noted three dates, with up to 20 at Dubai Pivot Fields 4.4. We also noted one bird killed very slowly and unprofessionally by a House Crow at the Pivot Fields. The crow sat on top of the bird, pecking it here and there for a long time until it finally died. We didn't see how it was first caught.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* – Svømmesnipe

One bird found by a local Abu Dhabi birder by the pool at Al Whatba Camel Race Track 4.4.

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor* – Ørkenløper

One by the Bar-tailed Larks east of Ghantoot, seen only by Eirik. None found at the Polo Club.

Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii* – Sotmåke

Noted on 4 dates with up to 400 ind. along the East Coast on 31.3.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* – Kaspimåke

Only identified confidently on 31.3, when 100 was logged. Adults identified by pale grey backs, large white spots on outer primaries, a smaller amount of black in primaries and pinkish legs. 2cy birds stood out from the crowd by white heads and snouty bills.

Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini* – Samojedmåke

Only identified confidently on three dates, at most with 1000 logged individuals 31.3. Adults identified by dark grey backs with small amount of white in primaries and yellow legs.

Steppe Gull *Larus barabensis* – Kasakhmåke

Identified on five dates, with up to 800 ind. 31.3. Adults identified by pale grey backs, yellowish legs and with solid black outer primary patch with small white mirrors.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* – Hettemåke

Noted five days with up to 1000 birds.

Slender-billed Gull *Larus geneii* – Smalnebbmåke

Rather more common than expected, outnumbering Common Black-headed Gull some places. Noted five days with up to 300 3.4 and 500 birds 31.3.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* – Sandterne

Two at Khor al Beida 1.4.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* – Rovterne

One and two's noted two days.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis* – Bengalterne

Noted four days with up to 400 ind. 31.3 along the East Coast.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* – Splitterne

Noted six days with up to 600 ind. 31.3 along the East Coast.

Swift Tern *Sterna bergii* – Hinduterne

Three at the Musandam west coast 2.4 and three at Khor Kalba 3.4.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* – Makrellterne

Noted six days with 1200 on 31.3 along the East Coast. Many were eastern *minussensis*, darker grey underneath and had darker bills than the birds we are used to back home, creating some confusion possibilities with White-cheeked Tern. The whole face was pale, though, contrasting with the darker breast beneath the cheeks, the bills were much longer and the rump still white on the Common Terns.

White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* – Hvitkinterne

Identified on 3 days, with maximum 30 along the East Coast on 3.4. They were often easier to spot flying at some distance, rather than when sitting amongst other terns on the beach. In the latter cases, they were often mistaken as Common Terns, being much less dark than expected, approaching the darkest grey Common Terns in colour underneath. Their cheeks were equally dark as their bellies, though, leaving only a narrow line of white between the grey cheeks and the black caps. Also, the bills of White-cheeked were shorter and more evenly pointed compared to Common.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* – Dvergtterne

Noted on 6 days with up to 100 ind. This included the many unidentified Little/Saunders's Terns we encountered.

Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi* – Araberdvergtterne

Despite searching a lot for this species, it was only noted on 3.4, when 10 was logged. We found it very hard to identify, and was not at all well enough prepared for the challenge. When finally finding it by Fujairah on the East Coast, we had been looking closely at several hundred 'Little Terns'. The Saunders's were identified by the shape of the black-and-white pattern on the lores and forehead, verified by having three black outer primaries. The first was very variable, probably amongst both species, and the latter was often hard to evaluate properly. We felt that Saunders's had a distinct look,

but did not get the opportunity to verify this notion on a sufficient number of safely identified individuals.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* – Tøyleterne

Only seen from the very tip of the Sila peninsula just before sunset at 5.4, when 40 passed by, including a flock of almost 30.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* – Tyvjo

A marked migration towards north took place on our seawatch at Dibba on 30.3. Most of them went far off-shore, but many of them were positively identified to this species. Although we were suspecting a few Pomarines, no one was claimed.

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* – Hvitbuksandhøne **

About 100 ind. encountered by the well at the Bar-tailed Lark site east of Ghantoot 6.4. This is the prime site for this introduced species, we later found out..

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* – Brunbuksandhøne

4 flew past Dubai Pivot Fields 1.4, several flocks totalling about 50 gathered around the pool inside Al Wathba Camel Race Track at Abu Dhabi on 4.4, and a flock of 7 flew past the pool at Sila on 5.4.

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii* – Stripesandhøne

About 5 birds came down to drink singly at Hutain Dam, just before and after dark 3.4.

Rock Dove *Columba livia* – Bydue

Noted all days with up to 300 birds.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* – Turteldue

One at Sila 5.4.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* – Tyrkerdue

Noted six days, with up to 50 birds. Had a more patchy distribution compared to Laughing Dove, being particularly common at Khor Kalba, Quarn Nazwa, Dubai Pivot Fields and Sila.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* – Palmedue

Very common and widespread, noted all days with up to 400 ind.



Namaqua Doves were quite numerous at the Sila Fodder Fields. Foto: BOT.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* – Maskedue

Only noted on our two days at Sila, where it was particularly numerous at the Fodder Fields. 30 logged 6.4.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* – Halsbåndparakitt *

Noted on six dates with up to 50 ind. Common in city parks and at the Dairy Farm.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* – Gultoppkakdu **

One at Dubai Pivot Fields 4.4.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* – Gjøk

One heard singing at the Al'Saye , Musandam 2.4.

Pharaoh Eagle-owl *Bubo ascalaphus* – Ørkenhubro

A family consisting of two adults with three young was found on the south side of Quarn Nazwa an hour before dusk 31.3. The young was downy, but could fly, and begged with a hushing 'shhht' sound. The parents flew around and perched often up on the cliff-tops. The birds frequented the unaccessible part of the cliffs, west of the tall fence. At the same time, one of the same birds, or possibly a new adult, was seen from inside the valley.



Pharaoh Eagle-owl at Qwarn Nazwa. Foto: BOT.

Little Owl *Athene noctua* – Kirkeugle

One singing and calling at the A'Saye on the night to 2.4. Furthermore, one owl probably belonging to this species was heard giving unfamiliar calls at Musafi Wadi in broad day-light 30.3.

Egyptian Nightjar *Caprimulgus aegyptius* – Egyptnattravn

Despite searching a lot at night, driving around with a powerful torch at many suitable places both in the evening and in the morning, we could not find any nightjars. However, one bird flew under the road-side lamps close to Masafi city 3.4.

Common Swift *Apus apus* – Tårnseiler

Identified with confidence on five dates, with up to 40 ind. Some of the birds had very large pale head-patches, indicating the race *pekinensis*.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* – Gråseiler

Identified with confidence on seven dates, with up to 80 ind.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* – Bengalråke

Noted on six days, with up to 20 birds at the Diary Farm 30.3.

Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris* – Jadeisfugl

Found on both visits to Khor Kalba, with up to 8 birds logged the first and 5 the second time. The birds hide in the mangroves, but are big and not very shy and come out to perch in the open once in a while. They are very noisy, sounding like distressed woodpeckers. Birds at this site belongs to the Arabian endemic subspecies *kalbaensis*.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* – Isfugl

Up to three noted on both trips to Khor Kalba.

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* – Beryllbieter

Noted on 5 days with up to 10 ind.



Little Green Bee-eater at Qwarn Nazwa. Foto: BOT.



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater near Kalba. Foto: BOT.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* – Blåkinubieter
Noted on 6 days with up to 50 ind.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* – Bieter
Noted on 3 days with up to 50 ind.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* – Hærfugl
Noted all days with up to 20 ind.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* – Vendehals
One at Sila 5.4.



Isabelline Shrike. Foto: EG.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* – Rødhalevarsler

Noted all days with up to 30 ind. Most birds seen well thought to be of ssp. *phoenicuroides*.



Steppe Grey Shrike. Foto: BOT.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* – Krattvarsler og steppevarsler

The common resident subspecies *aucheri* was noted on seven days, with up to 5 birds 30.3. Steppe Grey Shrike *pallidirostris* was noted on three dates, with up to 3 birds 1.4. The latter was identified on

the poorly defined black mask, in particular in front of the eyes, and paler bills (several where 2cy birds).

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* – Rødhodevarsler

Three were found at A'Saye plateau 2.4, including a probable breeding couple.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus* – Hvitpannevarsler

One in the outermost garden on the Sila peninsula 5.4.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* – Huskråke

Noted on 6 days with up to 400 birds.

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* – Brunnakkeravn

Noted with up to 5 ind. on 4 dates.

Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* – Landsbystær *

A few found amongst Common Mynas, in particular at Dairy Farm, Dubai Pivot Fields and along the East Coast. Noted on three days with up to 50 ind.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* – Hyrdestær *

Noted on seven of eight days, with up to 200 ind.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* – Sandsvale

Noted with up to 10 ind. on 2 dates.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – Låvesvale

Noted with up to 25 ind. on 6 dates.

Pale Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta* – Ravinesvale

Noted with up to 20 ind. on 3 dates e.g at A'Saye plateau and Quarn Nazwa.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

2 ind. in Masafi Wadi 3.4.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropsis daurica* – Amursvale

2-5 ind. in Masafi Wadi 30.3, down by the highway (breeding behaviour?).

Greater Hoopoe-lark *Alaemon alaudipes* – Langnebblerke

About 5 individuals seen and/or heard singing at dusk 6.4 out by the Bar-tailed Larks east of Ghantoot.



Greater Hoopoe-lark east of Ghantoot. Foto: BOT.

Bar-tailed Lark *Ammomanes cincturus* – Mørkhalelerke

A pair seen out in the desert east of Ghantoot on 6.4. We searched a lot for this species, in particular at Sila, and was delighted to see these birds on Tommy Pedersen's directions. Compared to the desert form *insularis* of Desert Lark, these birds seemed smaller, paler and shorter tailed, with round heads and very small, Twite-like bills. The dark tail-bar was distinctive in flight. We also saw one of them in hovering song-flight.

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti* – Ørkenlerke

Noted on five days, with up to 50 birds in the Musandam mountains, where they also were very confiding. The birds on Sila was of the form *insularis*, appreciably different from the mountain/gravel plain form *taimuri*, the desert form being smaller-billed and paler, appearing as a different species.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* – Dverglerke

Noted on four occasions, usually appearing in fairly large flocks: One flock of 16 at Khor Kalba 31.3, 15 on Al Wathba Camel Racetrack 4.4, and 80 noted on both April 5. and 6 at Sila, nearly all on the Fodder Fields together with Pale Rock Buntings, associating also with Namaqua Doves and a few Ortolan Buntings. A small party of three also in the desert outside the town of Sila. No Lessers were found amongst them, nor any Black-crowned Sparrow-larks, witch were seen at the Fodder Fields in the morning of the day we arrived at Sila. A supposed Greater at Sila was extremely rufous and dark.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* – Topplerke

Very wide-spread species, found in a variety of habitats, usually in pairs or small parties. Noted on all days with up to 40 individuals.

Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta* – Krattsanger

A pair with breeding behaviour at Masafi Wadi 30.3.

Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis* – Alveprinia

Noted on five days with up to 10 individuals 4.4.

White-spectacled Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos* – Araberbylbyl

Noted on six days with up to 30 individuals.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* – Hvitørebylbyl *

Noted on six days with up to 200 ind. Particularly numerous in Sila.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* – Rødgumpbylbyl *

Only found at Dubai Pivot Fields, where up to 20 ind.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* – Stentorsanger

Common in reeds and mangroves, noted on six days with up to 8 ind.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* – Sivsanger

One singing by the pool at Sila 5.4.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* – Rørsanger

3 singing by the pool at Sila 5.4. The birds was not seen, but sounded ordinary – although probably of the subspecies *fuscus*.

Sykes's Warbler *Iduna rama* – Ramasanger

Was easily found in the mangroves of Khor Kalba on both of our visits. The birds could be pushed into view, but they didn't stay for long before diving back into the mangroves where they could be heard singing and calling. The song was a complex, rather short warble, with a dry and thin tone quality, sounding somewhat like Common Whitethroat. The call was a thin, tongue-clicking 'tsk', thinner than Lesser Whitethroat. Syke's Warbler was the only small brown warbler seen by us in the mangroves of Khor Kalba.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida* – Bleksanger

Unexpectedly few seen, with just two at Diary Farms 30.3 and one at Sila 5.4. The tail-dipping action was distinctive, although in side-on views only, Upchers Warbler's tail movements may easily be mistaken for dipping.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* – Gråsanger

Common in dry areas with bushes, usually singles, sometimes pairs. Maximum 15 logged on 31.3. A rather large and pale hippo with distinctive rotating movement of tail, sometimes partially fanning it. Could be mistaken for Eastern Olivaceous' tail-dipping when viewed side-on only.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* – Løvsanger

Only seen during fall of migrants at Sila, when up to 10 were logged.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* – Gransanger

Seen on 7 days, usually only ones and two's, but on the fall of migrants at Sila, we logged 40 on 5.4. Many of the birds were a lot more brown-and-buff than back home, recalling the ones we have seen in Eastern Turkey, with some approaching Mountain Chiffchaff in appearance. Some were heard giving a typical *tristis* piping-call. None was heard giving the familiar huitt-call.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* – Munk

Noted with 4 birds on both 2. (A'Saye, Musandam) and 5.4 (Sila), and 2 birds on 6.4 (Sila).

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* – Hauksanger

Some seen during fall of migrants at Sila. One at Fodder Fields 5.4 and 5 in the city park the day after.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* – Møller

Rather common, but usually seen singly. Logged on six dates with maximum 10 ind. Most looked like the Lesser Whitethroats we were used to from back home, but some looked paler and browner. None looked really long-tailed, though, as we was expecting from the eastern forms. We lumped all birds not heard giving the rattle-call of *minula* in with *curruca*.

Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia minula* – Ørkenmøller

Identified with certainty on three dates with up to 3 individuals. Only birds giving the sparrow-like rattle call was identified, although we became more confident identifying silent birds (or birds only giving the ordinary check-call) as our familiarity with the taxon's visual appearance grew.

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris* – Sultansanger

One sang in the mangroves of Khor Kalba on 3.4.

Menetries' Warbler *Sylvia mystacea* – Steppesanger

Singles noted on four days, except for 5.4 at Sila, when three was logged. Most birds were females, identified by small size, long tail, pale gray cheeks resembling Common Whitethroat, dark iris with a complete, pale straw eye-ring, and very distinctive, sward-chopping tail movements.

Arabian Babbler *Turdoides squamiceps* – Araberskriketrost

A group of 4 at Sall Ala, Musandam 2.4 and a group of 5 at the rubbish dump west of Khor Kalba on 3.4. A noisy bird, sounding like toy rubber-duckies squeezed a little too hard and much too often.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* – Rosenstær

8 seen together at Dubai Pivot Fields 4.4.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* – Måltrost

2 at A'Saye, Musandam 2.4.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* – Sørnattergal

Two seen and heard at A'Saye, Musandam 2.4 and one at Sila 5.4.

White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis* – Hvitstruppenattergal

Two seen at A'Saye, Musandam 2.4 and one at Sila 6.4.



Male White-throated Robin at Sila. Foto: EG.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* – Hekkskvett

Noted on three days with up to 10 ind. Particularly common at Dairy Farms and Sila.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* – Svartkrattskvett

One found by Eirik near the pool at Sila on 5.4. The bird was seen again the day after. This was the fifth record for UAE. The bird was rather large and very distinctive, with a peculiar tail-movement, raising it quickly straight up, and then lowering it in a smooth, elevator-like movement. Very neat indeed.



Black Scrub Robin at Sila. Foto: MK.



Tommy Pedersen, the man behind www.uaebirding.com, enjoying the Black Scrub Robin. Foto: BOT.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* – Svartrødstjert

One male of the Common Redstart-like ssp. *phoenicuroides* was harassing Pharaoh Eagle-owls at Quarn Nazwa 31.3, identified on the black throat extending further down breast than on Common.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* – Rødstjert

Noted on three dates, with up to 25 ind. All birds were of the nominate ssp., except one bird at A'Saye, Musandam, with a white wing-patch characteristic of ssp. *samamasicus* ('Ehrenberg's Redstart').

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* – Buskskvett

One at the Fodder Fields, Sila, on 6.4.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* – Isabellasteinskvett

Noted all days, with up to 40 at Sila on 6.4.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* – Steinskvett

Noted on four days with up to 8 birds at A'Saye, Musandam 2.4.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* – Svartstrupesteinskvett

Noted all days, with up to 30 at Sila on 6.4. Females variable, but most were paler than depicted in Svenssons field guide. Many birds of both sexes (and also one male *vittata*) had a characteristic display behaviour after landing, sitting upright and quickly fanning out their wings a couple of times. We found two of the white-throated morph 'vittata', one at A'Saye, Musandam 2.4 and one at Sila 5.4. The latter also had a puzzling, white back, completely connecting the white neck and rump, bringing thoughts to both Finsch's and Black-eared Wheatears.

Hume's Wheatear *Oenanthe alboniger* – Nonnesteinskvett

Very common in Musandam, where 30 were logged 2.4. Also noted in Musafi Wadi on our second visit 3.4, when 6 birds were found. Remarkably, we found no one there on our first visit, perhaps because we spent most of the time high up in the wadi, while they seemed to thrive on the gravel plain down in the valley.

Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* – Steintrost

Very common in Musandam, where 25 were logged 2.4. Singles also noted on two other dates.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* – Blåtrost

One imm. Male at Sila 6.4.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* – Purpursolfugl

Noted on six dates with up to 30 ind. Very noisy birds, sounding a lot like calling Arctic Warblers. Female may also look a bit like a phylloscopus when seen briefly flicking through canopy.



Male Purple Sunbird. Foto: BOT.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* – Gråspurv

Noted all days with up to 400 ind. These birds look distinctly different from the House Sparrows we are used to, being much paler and more contrasting. Beautiful birds bringing pride to the species.

Pale Rockfinch *Carpodacus brachydactyla* – Bleksteinspurv

A couple seen at Quarn Nazwa 31.3. A large flock of up to 50 birds mingled with Greater Short-toed Lark, Namaqua Doves and Ortolan Buntings at the Fodder Fields at Sila on the two last days. The birds really call somewhat like bee-eaters, as described in the books. Their song is a wheezing che-che-cheeee, structurally recalling Corn Bunting, but tonally more like a dry Yellowhammer.



Namaqua Doves, Pale Rockfinches and Greater Short-toed Larks at the Sila fodder field. Foto: BOT.

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis* – Gulstrupespurv

Two were sitting on the fence along the Omani border at Huwaylat Road 31.3.

Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar* – Stripevever *

15 birds noted in the reeds at Nouakchott Street Marsh, by the Emirates Road opposite Dubai Pivot Fields.

Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* – Indiasølvnebb

Noted singly or in pairs on 6 days, with up to 6 birds logged on 30.3. Easily identified by distinctive call, slightly reminiscent of a Common Goldfinch call, but with notes more on a more even pitch.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* – Gulerle

Noted on six dates, with up to 20 ind. None were found at Dairy Farm, but several at Dubai Pivot Fields and at Sila, with stray individuals – often fly-bys – at other places. Of birds subspecifically identified, most were Syke's Wagtail *M.f. beema*, looking a lot like nominate *flava*, but with typical individuals having head and face paler grey. They had shrill calls reminiscent of *tshutschensis* and other eastern subspecies. We also had many thunbergi, birds with no supercilium and 'western-type' calls. A great deal of variation in both. Also, we had a few feldegg, mainly at Dubai Pivot Fields, where they seemed to breed.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* – Sitronerle

One male at Dubai Pivot Fields 4.4.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – Vinterlerle

Three noted in A'Saye, Musandam, 2.4.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – Linerle

Noted on four dates with up to 30 individuals at the Dairy Farm at Dibba on 30.3. We only found the nominate ssp, despite searching thoroughly for *personata* between the cows.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* – Tartarpiplerke

One at the Dairy Farm at Dibba 30.3, and then only found at Dubai Pivot Fields, where we had 10 the first time and 5 on the second visit.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* – Mongolpiplerke

One of our target species. A classic individual studied up-close in ideal conditions out on the fields at the Dairy Farm at Dibba.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* – Markpiplerke

Singles and a pair noted on three dates.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* – Langnebbpiplerke

Only encountered in A'Saye, Musandam, where 5 ind. were noted in the hillsides.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* – Trepiplerke

Noted on four dates with up to 5 ind.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* – Lappiplerke

Noted on six dates with up to 100 ind.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* – Vannpiplerke

Noted on four dates with up to 30 birds. All were at Dubai Pivot Fields, except for a couple at Sila.

Trumpeter Finch *Rhodopechys githaginea* – Trompeterfink

Only encountered in Musandam 2.4, where pairs or small groups of birds were found in both A'Saye and Sall Ala, totalling 10 individuals.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* – Kornspurv

Only found at A'Saye, Musandam, where 5 were noted 2.4.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* – Hortulan

Singles found in the dunes at Khor de Beida and in A'Saye, Musandam. At Sila, several small flocks were found, in particular at the Fodder Fields, totalling 16 on 5.4.

Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata* – Ravinespurv

Only found at Sall Ala, Musandam 2.4, where 4 ind. was noted in the village.

SPECIES WE MISSED

Species we expected/hoped for and searched for, but missed: Greater Sand Plover, Great Black-headed Gull, Black-crowned Sparrow-lark, Lesser Short-toed and Bimaculated Larks, Grey Hypocolius, Plain Leaf Warbler, Asian Desert Warbler, Eversmann's Redstart, Red-tailed and Desert Wheatears (at least – we hoped for several others as well!), and Buff-bellied Pipit.



The participants at sunset the last day, in the desert east of Ghantoot. From left: Magne Klann, Bjørn Olav Tveit and Eirik Grønningsæter. Foto: BOT.