

## Israel 4-11.11.1987

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4.11 Eilat

5.11 Eilat - Yotvata - Urim

6.11 Tel-Aviv - Ma'agan Mikhael

7.11 Hula - Newe Ativ

8.11 Hula - Genezareth - Bet Shean, Nir Dawid, Bet Alfa - Tirat Zevi - Ein Gedi

9.11 Ein Gedi - Jerusalem - Urim

10.11 Nizzana - Yotvata - Eilat

11.11 Eilat

### **Itinerary**

#### 4.11

Flight arrived late, leaving us only the afternoon to bird in. Spent the time at the salt pans.

#### 5.11

Left Eilat for Yotvata early in the morning. Spend some time trying to find the Houbara's but with no luck. Met two Australians who hadn't seen them either, despite trying twice. Continued towards Urim making a few stops at km 60, 100, a kibbutz and Hazeva.

Spent the afternoon (13-18) at Urim and discovered that one afternoon was too little time to see the whole area. We stayed on a rather small area. Raptors were everywhere, but when it was beginning to get dark, the birds came to rest on the telegraph poles. Unfortunately it was then too dark for photographing. Night spent in Be'er Sheva.

#### 6.11

In the morning we went to Tel-Aviv, to try and see some gulls, we'd heard they'd be easy to photograph in the harbour. Alas, the wind must have been wrong, we didn't see a single gull in the harbour.

Continued to Ma'agan Mikhael along the smaller road (can't stop to look at birds on the motorway). First we went to the Field School to secure a room for the night. Soon after it started raining really hard and the wind was very hard too. We drove around all the ponds and had good views at most ponds. (Some were not very accessible with a car and because of the rain and the wind, birding outside the car wouldn't have been easy, some birds were rather far off.) The southernmost part is some sort of reserve, one is not allowed to take a car in there. Fortunately it is a rather small area, with rather few birds.

#### 7.11

Left in the morning for Hula. It was still raining with a very beautiful mountain scenery with rainbows as a result. On the map there is one crossing where the roads have changed a bit, there is a new road, from which one came. When we arrived at Hula it had stopped raining. We did the Hula fishpond area first, driving in from the back (no locked gates). Just a few ponds, a larger dam, not very many birds. We did some raptor-watching from a mound and saw some eagles.

We took the road towards the north and soon drove to right along a small dirt road which took us to the middle of the fields. Here we had some raptors overhead and some perching on haystacks. We managed to locate a pair of Black Francolins which had been our aim. A farmer told us that they were common in the fields here. We also found a rather tame young Purple Heron of which we got good photos. Also a flock of Sociable Plovers.

We then drove towards Kefar Blum and had a quick look at the ponds on way, but they did not contain much. We had been advised of a field full of rodents and consequently loaded with raptors (1000 Black Kites and hundreds of eagles), but unfortunately the field was no longer in the same condition ( I suppose the farmer had done something to it) with only 19 Black Kites and 600 Collared Doves.

On the east side of the valley we had 30 Griffon Vultures driving up the ridge. We then took a road which followed the ridge towards the north but saw nothing much. We wanted to reach Neve Atiw (only the village) to try for Tristram's Serin, Rock Nuthatch and Sombre Tit. We walked around the village for an hour and managed to see two Sombre Tits. Then it got dark and we returned to Rosh Pinna and located the Youth Hostel with ease.

### 8.11

We wanted to try the breakfast for once, so we spent an hour in the morning at Hula, then breakfast and direction south. We spent some time at the Genesareth watching Whiskered terns flying along the shore.

Our next stop was the Bet Shean area. We started from the east and worked ourselves towards the west. There were birds in just a part of the ponds, a few had lots.

Our last stop for the day was Tirat Zevi where we spent some more time. One of the big ponds was completely dry and empty of birds, the other ones held a varying degree of birds. Here we finally we also managed to see Penduline Tits, which we had heard several times before. While we were watching the roosting night Herons a Pygmy Cormorant suddenly flew over the pond into the next and back and disappeared as mysteriously as it had appeared. We searched all the ponds but saw no more of them. We also drove round the kibbutz but had nothing there.

It was getting dark again and we decided to take a small dirtroad towards the south instead of returning to the mainroad. Soon after leaving Tirat Zevi we had an Eagle Owl sitting on a rock. The road was rather bad and we were afraid it would become undrivable. There was a bad spot when it went down into a muddy stream. Fortunately we didn't get stuck, but if the stream would have contained water I'm sure one

couldn't cross there. We managed to reach the mainroad and drove towards Ein Gedi, where we arrived rather late, but found everybody still up at the Field School. We had to ask around a bit to locate the manager, who lived on the north side of the camp. After getting our room, we went up to the Amphitheatre and waited for the Hume's Owl to appear but to no avail. We also searched the small wood (from the road) below in the valley.

#### 9.11

We left for Jerusalem the next morning. Drove straight through to the spot for Long-billed Pipit. We had some trouble to get there because our map did not show the area in question and there are a lot of one-way streets which makes it difficult to go somewhere the shortest way. One gets lost easily if one has to turn into too many one-way streets when not being on the map. The area near the Pipit spot was also being built which made it more difficult to recognize the roads. We got there however and spent a few hours in the area. We saw no pipits however, also no Pine Buntings. We had a male Finch's Wheatear though, the only one on the trip. We also saw some Serins. We bought some nice warm bread (5 round and flat ones) for 1 shekel in a small shop.

Drove to Urim, but arrived there rather late and once again time was cut short by the night's arrival. Slept at the Be'er Sheva Youth Hostel.

#### 10.11

Left for Nizzana. Had a Little Owl on a telephone wire by the road. Arrived in time to see the sandgrouse coming to the waterhole (about an hour after dawn). Explored the wadi and the area along the border towards the south.

Drove towards Eilat. Spent some time in Yotvata but saw nothing. Tried for Sinai Rosefinch at the Amram's pillars but did not even find the trashbins. In the evening we went to see Mauri Leivo who was staying in one of the flats for those who worked for the Birdcenter and had some advice which we should have heard before, as always, since we would have to leave the hotel for the airport at 10.00.

#### 11.11

Spent the morning looking for the Black-headed Heron which had been seen at the salt pans, but with no luck. Went back to the hotel to pack after which I went to return the car. Because of a traffic-jam I had to drive through the North fields and finally had good views of a male Namqua Dove which had been eluding us so far. Left for the airport and that was that.

### **Flight**

We went on a regular chartertour which included hotel in Eilat. This we could not use more than for the first and the last night.

### **Car hire**

The car was hired from a smaller company in Eilat. We discovered that it was rather difficult to get a small car, they only had larger ones free.

The price for those being in the region of \$ 400 - 450. Our car had four doors, but almost no packing space. Price \$ 301 (~1200 FIM).

## **Hostels**

We stayed at Youth Hostels and Field Schools and discovered that although these are cheap for a group of four or five (in one room), it's rather expensive for two. The price for a room for one night was about 40-50 Schekels (/ \$ 30). At the Youth Hostels one could sleep in a larger room together with other people for about 17-18 Schekels per person. At the Youth Hostels the price includes breakfast, but since it is usually from 7 till 9, we only used it once.

At Be'er Sheva we spent two nights at the Youth Hostel. When driving from the south towards Urim turn left just before the Camel-sign hotel (it is on the Urim-side of the town), turn left again at the next crossing. The hostel is on your right.

At Ma'agan Mikhael we stayed at the Field School which was a little cheaper. After driving over the bridge to the ponds, take the first road to the left and drive as far as it goes. We also had quite a good meal here for 13 Schekels pro person. There is a bank in the village up in the mountains on the other side of the main road.

At Hula we stayed at the Youth Hostel in Rosh Pinna. When coming from Hula, after the petrol station, take to your right and drive up the slope. The hostel is just where the road gets worse, on the left side. The proprietor may not be in (when we came there was a sign on the door in Hebrew, which didn't help us much), but he lives across the road (there is a sign). Because they had few visitors, we only had to pay 18 Schekels pro person, even though we had the room to ourselves.

The next night was spent at Ein Gedi, where there is both a Youth Hostel and a Field School. We stayed at the Field School, because it had been recommended, but it was the most expensive place of them all (for two). Also there was no shower in the room, but a shower which was in common use for a couple of rooms.

## **Meals**

We bought bread and youghurt to eat in the morning since the hostel breakfasts were so late. In the evening we ate a proper meal at some small restaurant. The prices varied considerably, but one with a little searching one could get a good meal for a reasonable sum. The resaturants were usually all situated along the road where people spent the evening and a bit difficult to find in cities, but easier in the smaller towns when they were by the mainroad.

## **Weather**

It was not hot, we didn't go around in shorts at any time. In Ma'agan Mikhael it rained almost the whole day, and also some the next day towards Hula. The wind was also rather strong in MM so we didn't leave the car much. It was too dark to take photos, though we tried a little. (64 ASA 5.6 10-30 part of a second). The rest of the week the weather was ok. Dawn at about 6.00 and dusk at about 17.10.

## **Places visited**

### Hula

We started at the fishponds near the reserve. When coming from Rosh Pinna, take the second small road after the one to the reserve. It splits into two almost at once and then comes together again some 50 m ahead. There is a small pond on the left and in this area, we saw several Cetti's Warbler and both Clamorous and Great Reed Warbler.

Drive round the hill and you will come to the ponds. On the south end of the ponds are some trees where there are Spotted Eagle and White-tailed Eagle (although we saw none of the latter). You can also get there by driving along the reserve road 200-500m.

We continued along the main road to the north and then took a small road to the right, here we were able to drive around the fields. This is a good area for Black Francolin and we did manage to see a pair. Some raptors were also flying above and sitting in the fields. We also saw the Sociable Plovers here.

When continuing along the main road towards the north take the ~second road to the right. There are some ponds at the corner (here we saw most of the Black Kites). Continue along this road. When you come to the bridge, just before there is a small road to the right. Drive past the wood. If you're lucky the fields will be full of rodents and there will be lots of raptors, especially eagles, about. (We weren't lucky, it depends on how they farm the land I guess.) After that cross the bridge and drive towards the south. There are some ponds here as well. When following the road there is a sideroad that goes up in the mountains. We drove up about halfway, and had spectacular views of the Griffon Vultures as they took high along the slope. The nearest were only about 20 meters above us.

We also inspected the ridge by driving from the south to the north end, but there wasn't much to be seen here (except some Corn Buntings).

### Ma'aghan Mikhael

A collection of fish-ponds which probably vary a great deal, some being dried out and others with more water. Consequently it is difficult to say in which ponds the birds will be. But the whole area is very good, as is the beach as well. To get there drive along the smaller road (not the motorway) from Tel Aviv. Take to the left (there is a sign), drive over the bridge and you can see most of the ponds. Some are to the north of the bridge, these are worth exploring for waders, we had several Marsh Sandpipers here. The main ponds are to the right of the road after crossing the bridge. Look for ponds in every direction until you're sure there are no more. We did no seabird-watching since the wind was so hard and it rained. We viewed the whole place from inside the car which was very good for photography. Only the southern part is a sanctuary and one is not allowed to drive there, otherwise nobody seemed to mind us driving around. The area is quite large, it takes a whole day to do it thoroughly.

Egrets, Herons, Gulls, Pelicans, Moorhens and Waders were the most

common groups with very large numbers. We also saw two Whiskered Terns.

### Urim

Driving south from the village (along 234) there is a highpower electricity line over the road. Turn into the fields and continue along this power line, both to the left and the right of the road. The fields will be full of passerines, the raptors will perch on almost every highpower pole in vicinity. Especially in the evenings after they come to roost. We saw all four large species of falcon here in half an hour. Also about 10 Imperial Eagles of different ages. We did not see any of the more rare larks one is supposed to see, only common Skylarks. When it got dark we saw some Thick-knees. We did not have time to continue all around this area (by the mainroad) but it should be good. Sometimes the fields are green, sometimes very dry, so whether you can drive around on the fields have to be determined there. The locals use some roads on the fields, drive along those. We find a couple of spots where the rain had assimilated, you could get stuck with the car in those, so be careful.

### Nizzana

This area is the best for Sandgrouse and there are two waterholes where to see them. The amount of water in these vary a great deal (depending on how much water the military let flow there) and so does the vegetation. Stay in your car or otherwise hidden at some distance (20-50m) since the grouse are rather shy and quick to fly off if they detect disturbance. Apart from the sandgrouse, Chukars can be seen here. The area is also good for Cream-coloured Coursers, Pygmy owls and Houbara Bustards. We saw four species of Wheatear (six birds of each): Mourning, Desert, Isabelline and Finch.

I have heard that in spring -88 access was first restricted (by the military), and later totally forbidden. I don't know about the current situation.

Just along the border (see map) there is a good area for larks.

### Bet Shean

This is also an area with a lot of fish-ponds, but these are spread over a larger area than those of Ma'aghan Mikhael. To the east of the town there are a few ponds, where one can find some birds. When coming from the north take to the left just before the town and then when you see the ponds, take to the left just after that. From this road there are smaller roads to the ponds themselves.

To the west of the town there are other ponds, the best of these north of Nir Dawid and Bet Alfa. These were good for Whiskered Terns, Night Herons and waders (in large numbers). We also saw Glossy Ibis and Pelicans here. You are allowed to drive round the ponds, but not to fish.

Still to the west there is a lonely pond, where Purple Gallinule has been seen (1987).

### Tirat Zevi

When coming from the above mentioned ponds, there is a road that goes towards southeast and gets to the mainroad. Cross the mainroad and continue along the small road. When you come to the gates of the kibbutz, you've gone too far. Turn back and

take the first paved road to the right. This takes you straight to the ponds. The small ponds to the north holds waterfowl, the big ones to the south Night Herons (hundreds in one of the ponds, mostly hidden in the trees), other herons and egrets, pelicans, Spoonbills, and the occasional Pygmy Cormorant. These were more common before, now you're lucky if you see one.

### **List of species**

*Tachybaptus ruficollis* Common in the fishponds of the north and middle part of the country. Largest concentration: 40 Tirat Zevi.

*Podiceps nigricollis* Single at Ma'agan Mikhael and two at Genezareth.

*Phalacrocorax carbo* At Eilat and 5 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Phalacrocorax pygmeus* Single individual flew round us at the fishponds of Tirat Zevi.

*Pelecanus onocrotalus* ~1000 at Ma'agan Mikhael, ~800 at Hula, ~1000 at Nir Dawid (Bet Shean) and ~2000 at Tirat Zevi. They were usually driven away from the fishponds by firing some sort of noisy cannon.

*Nycticorax nycticorax* 16 at Ma'agan Mikhael, single at Hula, 3 at Nir Dawid (Bet Shean) and 200 at Tirat Zevi.

*Bubulcus ibis* Common in the north, singles here and there. Largest totals: 80 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 100 at Hula.

*Egretta gularis* 2 at Eilat 4.11. One of these had some dark feathers among the white, the other one was totally white.

*Egretta garzetta* Mostly at the fishponds, some singles at the beaches. Largest totals: 300 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 100 at Tirat Zevi.

*Egretta alba* At the fishponds. Largest totals: 200 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 80 at Hula, 200 at Tirat Zevi.

*Ardea cinerea* At the fishponds. Largest totals: 700 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 300 at Tirat Zevi, 250 at Hula, 200 at Bet Alfa (Bet Shean).

*Ardea purpurea* Singles at Ma'agan Mikhael and at Hula.

*Ciconia nigra* 50 at Hula, 5 at Genezareth, 30 at Bet Alfa (Bet Shean).

*Ciconia ciconia* Largest concentration: 600 at Ma'agan Mikhael. Much smaller numbers at other fishponds.

*Plegadis falcinellus* 3 at Ma'agan Mikhael and 16 at Bet Alfa (Bet Shean).

*Platalea leucorodia* At the fishponds. 30 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 5 at Hula, 70 at Nir Dawid (Bet Shean), 200 at Tirat Zevi.

*Phoenicopterus ruber* 6 4.11 and 5 11.11 at Eilat.

*Anas penelope* Single at Ma'agan Mikhael, 5 at Bet Shean.

*Anas strepera* Pair at Bet Shean.

*Anas crecca* Evenly at fishponds, largest number: 350 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Anas platyrhynchos* Small numbers at fishponds.

*Anas acuta* 16 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 11 at Hula, 10 at Tirat Zevi.

*Anas querquedula* Female at Tirat Zevi.

*Anas clypeata* 35 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 200 at Hula.

*Aythya ferina* 15 at Hula.

*Aythya fuligula* 40 at Hula.

*Milvus migrans* Singles and small flocks. Largest concentration: 100 at Hula.

*Gyps fulvus* 30 at Hula area, 10 at Mezoke Deragot (Ein Gedi).

*Circus aeruginosus* Small numbers at fishponds (2-5), largest total: 15 at Tirat Zevi. The birds all seemed to be young or females.

*Circus cyaneus* Male at Urim 5.11 and a female plumaged at Eilat 10.11.

*Circus macrourus* Two males 5.11 and 9.11 at Urim, and young at Hula.

*Accipiter nisus* Singles at Yotvata 5.11, Urim 5.11, Jerusalem, Eilat 11.11 and 4 at Hula.

*Buteo buteo* 8 identified, 5 of those at Hula.

*Buteo rufinus* 19 identified, 10 of those at Hula. Others both in the south and the north.

*Buteo sp* 3.

*Aquila pomarina* Single at Hula.

*Aquila clanga* 5 7.11 and 1 8.11 at Hula.

*Aquila nipalensis* Subadult at Hula.



*Aquila heliaca* 10 5.11 and 6 9.11 at Urim, 10 at Hula.

*Aquila chrysaetos* Adult 5.11 between Zomet Ha'arava and Be'er Sheva, subadult 10.11 between Be'er Sheva and Nizzana.

*Hieraaetus pennatus* Two dark phase at Hula, one dark phase at Tirat Zevi.

*Hieraaetus fasciatus* 2 at Ein Gedi.

*Pandion haliaetus* Single at Eilat 4.11.

*Falco tinnunculus* Altogether 110 individuals. Largest total 25 at Hula. The numbers include F tin//nau.

*Falco columbarius* 2 young at Urim 5.11 and 9.11. One probable at Eilat 5.11.

*Falco biarmicus* 2 (1k, +1k) at Urim 5.11 and single 9.11 between Ein Gedi and Mezoke Deragot.

*Falco cherrug* 2 young 5.11 and one young 9.11 at Urim.

*Falco peregrinus* One (+1k) at Urim 5.11.

*Falco pelegrinoides* Single (+1k) 5.11 and 9.11 at Urim, 2 between Ein Gedi and Mezoke Deragot 9.11. One probable at Eilat 4.11.

*Alectoris chukar* In small flocks evenly, 10 + 9 at Hula, 7 at Jerusalem, 12 at Urim 9.11, and 14 + 10 at Nizzana.

*Ammoperdix heyi* 18 at Ein Gedi and single near Mezoke Deragot.

*Francolinus francolinus* Pair in the fields at Hula.

*Rallus aquaticus* Single at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Gallinula chloropus* Common at the fishponds, largest total 120 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Fulica atra* As the previous species, largest total 150 at Ma'agan Michael.

*Grus grus* Young individual at the salt ponds at Eilat 4.11.

*Himantopus himantopus* Small flocks at the fishponds, largest total 70 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Recurvirostra avosetta* 2 at Ma'agan Mikhael, 28 at Nir Dawid (Bet Shean) and 70 at Bet Alfa (Bet Shean).

*Burhinus oedicnemus* 8 at Urim 5.11.

*Charadrius dubius* 3 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Charadrius hiaticula* Singles or small groups. Largest total 20 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Charadrius alexandrinus* Largest concentrations: 70 at Jaffa Beach (Tel-Aviv) and 80 at Ma'agan Mikhael.

*Charadrius morinellus* 25 at Urim 9.11.

*Hoplopterus spinosus* Small groups at fishponds and on the roadsides in the north.

*Chettusia gregaria* 14 in the fields at Hula.

*Vanellus vanellus* Largest concentration: 500 (migrating + resident) at Hula, elsewhere singles or small numbers.

*Calidris minuta* Larger flocks: 70 at Jaffa Beach, 400 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 120 at Nir Dawid and 450 at Bet Alfa (Bet Shean).

*Calidris temminckii* 4 at Ma'aghan Mikhael.

*Calidris alpina* 10 at Eilat 4.11, 30 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, and 2 at Nir Dawid (Bet Shean).

*Philomachus pugnax* 10 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 15 at Nir Dawid and 80 at Bet Alfa.

*Gallinago gallinago* 35 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 20 at Hula and 10 at Bet Alfa.

*Limosa limosa* 10 at Nir Dawid and a single at Bet Alfa.

*Tringa erythropus* 20 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 10 at Nir Dawid and 20 at Bet Alfa.

*Tringa totanus* 25 at Eilat 4.11, 250 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 10 at Hula and 20 at Nir Dawid.

*Tringa stagnatilis* 4 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 3 at Nir Dawid and 1 at Bet Alfa.

*Tringa nebularia* Single at Eilat 4.11 and 10 at Ma'aghan Mikhael.

*Tringa ochropus* 5 at Ma'aghan Mikhael and 2 at Hula.

*Tringa glareola* Single at Tirat Zevi.

*Actitis hypoleucos* 15 at Ma'aghan Mikhael.

*Larus ridibundus* Common at the fishponds, especially at Hula, some individuals at Eilat.

*Larus genei* 10 at Ma'aghan Mikhael and 2 at Tirat Zevi.

*Larus fuscus* 55 at the saltponds at Eilat 4.11, records elsewhere as well.

*Larus argentatus* Identified birds were all of the race *armenicus*. Common at the fishponds at Ma'aghan Mikhael, elsewhere singles or small numbers (Hula, Genezareth).

*Sterna caspia* Singles at Eilat 4.11 and 11.11.

*Chlidonias hybridus* 2 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 3 at Genezareth, 1 at Bet Shean and 20 at Nir Dawid.

*Pterocles coronatus* 9 pairs at Nizzana.

*Pterocles senegallus* 200 at Urim 5.11 and 11 at Nizzana.

*Pterocles orientalis* 300 at Nizzana.

*Pterocles alchata* 45 + 20 at Urim 5.11.

*Pterocles sp* 100 at Urim 5.11.

*Columba livia* Very common in towns and villages.

*Streptopelia decaocto* Large concentrations especially in the fields, one flock of 600 at Hula.

*Streptopelia senegalensis* In towns and villages. Mostly small numbers, 40 in Yotvata 4.11.

*Oena capensis* Male in Eilat 11.11.

*Bubo bubo* At dusk near Tirat Zevi.

*Athene noctua* 1 + 1 at Nizzana. 7.11 near Ramot Menashe a small owl flew up from the road at dawn, it was too dark to see colours, but the flight points to this species.

*Strix butleri* Futile search on the evening of the 8th at Ein Gedi. Dead bird found north of Ein Gedi next morning.

*Apus affinis* 10 identified and 30 probable at Hula.

*Halcyon smyrnensis* At the fishponds in the north and by the roadside. Largest numbers: 20 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 15 at Hula, 6 at Nir Dawid and 10 at Tirat Zevi.

*Alcedo atthis* 25 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, single at Hula and Nir Dawid, two at Bet Alfa and Tirat Zevi.

*Ceryle rudis* 50 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 25 at Hula, 8 at Nir Dawid and 15 at Tirat Zevi.

*Merops orientalis* Singles or small flocks here and there.

*Upupa epops* 28 altogether in the north. Largest concentration: 10 at Ma'aghan Mikhael.

*Dendrocopus syriaca* In the north, altogether 10 birds. 1-2 individuals in six places.

*Ammomanes cincturus* Single 60 km north of Eilat 5.11.

*Ammomanes deserti* Singles or small groups. Largest group 12 at Mezoke Deragot.

*Melanocorypha calandra* Single at Nizzana.

*Calandrella brachydactyla* 2 at Nizzana.

*Calandrella rufescens* Single at Nizzana.

*Calandrella bra// (ruf)* Single at Eilat 11.11.

*Galerida cristata* Evenly everywhere.

*Lullula arborea* Single in Jerusalem.

*Alauda arvensis* Seen in Eilat, Hula and other places. Largest concentration: 5000 at Urim 5.11.

*Riparia riparia* 2 at Yotvata 10.11.

*Hirundo rustica* Small numbers in the fields and at the fishponds, max 100 at Eilat 4.11.

*Hirundo obsoleta* Only recorded: 5 between Eilat and Hazeva 5.11, 5 at Ein Gedi, singles at Mezoke Deragot and Nizzana 10.11.

*Delichon urbica* 2 at Eilat 11.11.

*Anthus trivialis* Single in the north fields of Eilat 11.11.

*Anthus pratensis* Singles and small numbers everywhere.

*Anthus cervinus* Commonest pipit everywhere.

*Anthus spinoletta* 5 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 5 at Eilat 11.11, singles elsewhere.

*Motacilla flava* Singles at Yotvata 5.11 and at Nizzana, two at Tirat Zevi.

*Motacilla cinerea* 3 at Ma'aghan Mikhael, 5 at Hula and 2 at Tirat Zevi.

*Motacilla alba* Common Everywhere.

*Pycnonotus xanthopygos* Disburbing everywhere (Loud voice).

*Troglodytes troglodytes* 5 at Newe Ativ.

*Prunella modularis* 3 at Newe Ativ.

*Erithacus rubecula* Voice heard in the north rather commonly.

*Luscinia svecica* Common at most fishponds. Max 30 at Tirat Zevi.

*Phoenicurus ochruros* Altogether 16. Largest concentration: 10 in Jerusalem, singles elsewhere.

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 8 in Jerusalem, elsewhere singles.

*Cercomela melanura* In dry areas here and there. Colour-ringed bird at Ein Gedi.

*Saxicola rubetra* Single at Hula.

*Saxicola torquata* Very common in the whole country.

*Oenanthe isabellina* Total 10. Largest concentration: 6 at Nizzana.

*Oenanthe oenanthe* Singles at Urim 5.11, at Hula and at Eilat 11.11. Two birds at Ma'aghan Mikhael.

*Oenanthe deserti* 6 at Nizzana.

*Oenanthe finschii* Male in Jerusalem, 6 female-plumaged at Nizzana.

*Oenanthe lugens* In dry areas, for instance by the roadside evenly. Largest concentration: 6 at Nizzana.

*Oenanthe leucopyga* Singles at Hazeva - Zomet Ha'arava and at Eilat 11.11. 3 birds at Mezoke Deragot.

*Turdus merula* Rather common in the north.

*Turdus philomelos* Rather common in the north.

*Cettia cetti* 5 at Hula, 3 at Nir Dawid and 5 at Tirat Zevi.

*Cisticola juncidis* Single at Ma'aghan Mikhael and 3 at Hula.

*Prinia gracilis* Evenly everywhere. For instance 10 at Ma'aghan Mikhael.

*Scotocerca inquieta* Single at Mezoke Deragot.

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus* 2 at Nir Dawid.

*Acrocephalus stentoreus* Singles at Hula, Bet Shean and Tirat Zevi.

*Acrocephalus arundinaceus* Singlek at Hula.

*Sylvia conspicillata* 3 at Nizzana.

*Sylvia melanocephala* 6 alive, one dead (traffic victim).

*Sylvia atricapilla* Largest concentration: 10 at Hula.

*Phylloscopus collybita* 2 at Hula. Phylloscopus-warblers were mostly left unidentified.

*Phylloscopus trochilus* Single at Nir Dawid.

*Turdoides squamiceps* 5 at Ein Gedi, 4 at Eilat.

*Parus lugubris* 2 at Newe Ativ.

*Parus major* Singles in the north here and there.

*Remiz pendulinus* Voice at Eilat 4.11, Ma'agan Mikhael, Hula and Dead Sea. Male at Tirat Zevi + three voices.

*Nectarinia osea* Altogether 10, of which 3 at Rosh Pinna.

*Lanius collurio* Singles at Eilat and Yotvata.

*Lanius excubitor* Common on telegraph-lines in the south.

*Garrulus glandarius* Singles and small groups in the north.

*Corvus monedula* Small groups 10-50 between Hula and Tirat Zevi.

*Corvus corone* Common in the central and northern parts.

*Corvus ruficollis* Evenly in the southern and central parts in small numbers by the roadside. One larger group 45 between Nizzana and Mizpe Ramon.

*Corvus rhipidhurus* 120 at Ein Gedi.

*Onychognathus tristramii* 140 at Yotvata 5.11 and 3 10.11, 300 at Ein Gedi.

*Sturnus vulgaris* 150 at Urim 5.11, elsewhere small numbers.

*Passer domesticus* Common in towns and villages, but singles also elsewhere.

*Passer hispaniolensis* Male at Hazeva 5.11.

*Passer moabiticus* 40 at Yotvata 5.11.

*Fringilla coelebs* Common. Migrating flock 50 at Jaffa Beach.

*Fringilla montifringilla* Single at Tirat Zevi.

*Serinus serinus* Single at Newe Ativ and two in Jerusalem.

*Carduelis chloris* Small numbers here and there in the northern and central parts.

*Carduelis carduelis* 120 at Urim 5.11, 30 at Newe Ativ, elsewhere rather common.

*Carduelis cannabina* 10 at Urim 5.11, 3 in Jerusalem and 15 at Nizzana.

*Rhodospiza obsoleta* 2 at Tirat Zevi, 6 at Nizzana.

*Bucanetes githagineus* 2 + 5 at Nizzana.

*Miliaria calandra* Altogether 120 birds in six flocks. 20 of those migrating towards the north at Mezoke Deragot and 41 between Be'er Sheva and Nizzana.

176 + 1 species

Maps: We used 3 different maps of which the best was 'Nature Reserves and Excursion sites' (1:400,000) available from the BirdWatching Center in Eilat. There were some changes to roads, but nothing too difficult. For Jerusalem a street map is essential, because of all the one-way streets. One could easily get lost.

Choose an English Map, there is no real benefit in having a Hebrew one. Roadsigns only in Hebrew are to non-important places, we were told (private houses and such).

Litterature: Beforehand 'The Birds of Israel' by Uli Paz. In Israel we used 'The birds of Europe, The Middle East and North Africa', but now the best would be 'The Birds of the Middle East and North Africa' by Hollom, Porter, Christensen. Also Lars Jonsson's 'The Birds of the Meditarrenean and the Alps' was helpful. For the wheatears we had British Birds no 4-5//87 with us.

We mostly followed the guide 'Lintu-Matkat: Israel' by Hannu Jännes and Pekka J. Nikander for choosing our routes and visited areas.