

# BIRDWATCHING IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

## DIARY

961226 - 970109

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This is a try to write down the most important details of our trip to UAE. We had very good help from other people's travel reports made by Joakim Djerf, Tim Earl, Annika Forsten, Henk Hendriks and Erik Hirschfelt - we thank them. We hope that someone someday will have good help from this report. We also have to thank Colin Richardson who gave us useful information during the trip.

Two books we used very much were Colin Richardson's "The Birds of the United Arab Emirates" and R F Porter, S Christensen and P Schiermacker-Hansen's "Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East" (The excellent 1996 edition).

Here follows a chronological view of what happened, which sites we visited, what birds we saw and perhaps some good advice. For a complete list of noted birds see the list of species at the end of the report.

### **961226.**

We arrived at Dubai airport around 4 p.m. At the airport we saw LAUGHING DOVE and PALLID SWIFT. We got our car, a little white Toyota, from Budget (195 dollars/week) immediatly at the airport and we drove to Dallas Hotel and checked in. Dallas Hotel was OK, situated in central Dubai. Most of the birding sites we visited during our trip were located one or two hours from Dubai, and therefore we found it suitable and convenient to stay at the same hotel during the whole trip.

After checking in we took a walk down town. Dubai is a very friendly town, and many things are rather cheap. Food for example. We had dinner at different restaurants every evening, and it did never cost more than seven dollars, often not more than four dollars. The least expensive restaurants are the indians, here you eat for less than two dollars. Chinese and Pakistanian food is also good. Pizzas and hamburgers are fairly cheap, compared to swedish prices anyhow. This evening we ate at The Golden Fork, not far from Dallas Hotel, and here you can eat almost anything cheap.

We didn't do any shopping this first night, but we learned that the stores are open between about 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. They are also open before 1 p.m. but at that time you should birdwatch or sleep...Anyhow, the stores are mostly closed between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. because the people have siesta. On fridays they have siesta all day... The restaurants often don't open until 6 p.m.

### **961227.**

Today we visited two sites. Khor al Beidah and Ramtha tip. Both places are pretty hard to find so you'll probably have to ask, but it's no problem, people are very friendly (almost too friendly sometimes, actually).

Driving car in UAE is sometimes difficult. The traffic in the cities is quite busy at some times, and it is sometimes difficult to follow the signs, if there are any signs at all. In Dubai it's OK but

in Sharjah, which you have to go through to get to Khor al Beidah, there are hardly any signs at all. To get to **Khor al Beidah** you have to get on the road between Sharjah and Ras al Khaimah and you won't find it if you don't ask! Well on the way you follow the signs to Umm al Quwain. After turning left to Umm al Quwain you drive a few kilometers and turn right, towards a quite obvious red and white water tower. Then you turn right again in the next round-about. You are now on a little sand road in the semi-desert and very soon you'll see the beach - go there!

Good advice #1: If you don't have a jeep, be careful.

Good advice #2: The best time to visit Khor al Beidah is when the tide is low. You can get information about the tide on the radio.

We finally arrived to Khor al Beidah at dawn (i.e. 7 a.m.) and were not disappointed. We saw about 100 GREAT CORMORANTS, 5 SOCOTRA CORMORANTS, about 50 WESTERN REEF HERONS, a few LITTLE EGRETS, 3-4 GREAT EGRETS, 2 SPOONBILLS, at least 150 GREATER FLAMINGOS, 3-4 MARSH HARRIERS, OSPREY. Thousands of WADERS; OYSTERCATCHERS, a flock of 350 CRAB PLOVERS(\*\*) plus quite a few lonely individuals, COMMON RINGED PLOVERS, about 500 KENTISH PLOVERS, between 300 and 400 LESSER and GREATER SAND PLOVERS (more Lesser), 50 GREY PLOVERS, 10 GREAT KNOTS(\*\*), up to 50 LITTLE STINTS, TEMMINCK'S STINT, 5 CURLEW SANDPIPERS, 100-200 DUNLINS, about 500 BAR-TAILED GODWITS, 15 WHIMBRELS, 50-100 CURLEWS, REDSHANKS, GREENSHANKS, 100-200 TEREK SANDPIPERS and 10 TURNSTONES.

We also saw about 100 SLENDER-BILLED GULLS, and 50 GULL-BILLED TERNS, and some other GULLS and TERNS. In the adjacent semi-desert we saw i.a. about 10 BLACK-CROWNED SPARROW-LARKS, 9 HOOPOE LARKS, 10 DESERT WHEATEARS and 4 DESERT WARBLERS.

(\*\*) This is/was the only known place in UAE where Crab Plovers and Great Knots are regular.

About 1.30 p.m. we left and went to **Ramtha tip**. Somewhere by the road we saw about 50 CURLEWS and 50-100 SLENDER-BILLED GULLS. Ramtha tip is situated in Sharjah by the road to Ras al Kaimah. You'll notice a large pool and then you just turn. A look at the map in "The Birds of the United Arab Emirates" should help you. At Ramtha tip we saw for example a LITTLE GREBE, about 10 CATTLE EGRETS, 10 WESTERN REEF HERONS, 10 LITTLE EGRETS, 10 GREAT EGRETS, a young LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (it had been there since november, the first record in UAE), a GREYLAG GOOSE (eastern race), an old GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE, various DUCKS, BLACK-WINGED STILTS, at least 5 RED-WATTLED LAPWINGS, a WHITE-TAILED LAPWING, some other WADERS, GULLS, one 1:st year MEDITERRANEAN GULL (very rare in UAE), about 40 WHISKERED TERNS, a WHITE-WINGED TERN, one INDIAN ROLLER, a few WHITE-EARED BULBULS, 3 PIED MYNAHS, BANK MYNAHS, COMMON MYNAHS, 50-100 STARLINGS and about ten ROSE-COLOURED STARLINGS.

### **961228.**

In the morning we went to **Masafi**. You can probably see lots of birds anywhere in the Masafi area, but we went to a wadi that we had been recommended to go to, located a few kilometers north/east from the Masafi mineral water-factory. We turned off the road to the right/east directly after a bridge in an ascent. In this wadi we saw 10 SAND PARTRIDGES, 2 LICHTENSTEIN'S SANDGROUSES, 5 DESERT LARKS or so, 5 ROCK MARTINS (= PALE CRAG MARTIN), at least 2 LONG-BILLED PIPITS, BLACK REDSTARTS (*semirufus*), at least 4 RED-TAILED WHEATEARS, a male BLUE ROCK THRUSH, 3 SCRUB WARBLERS, 2 ORPHEAN

WARBLERS (a male and a female), at least 4 PLAIN LEAF WARBLERS, at least 4 HOUSE BUNTINGS etc.

Along the road to Dibba we saw some INDIAN ROLLERS, DESERT LARK and 3 HUME'S WHEATEARS.

We went to **Fujeirah farm**, just outside Dibba. There is a road to the north-west in Dibba, and the farm, a national dairy, is on the right side of the road. There is a little pool, cow's stalls etc. and a lot of WHITE WAGTAILS (i.a. two *personata*-like males). We also saw at least 2 GREY WAGTAILS, 2 CITRINE WAGTAILS and 2 YELLOW WAGTAILS (showing *beema*-characters). Among a lot of other things we also saw an INDIAN POND HERON, a 1:st year BONELLI'S EAGLE, a flock with about 90 RED-WATTLED LAPWINGS, a BLUETHROAT and a RED-TAILED WHEATEAR.

After this we went to **Dibba bay** and saw an unidentified swimming JAEGER, about 15 SOOTY GULLS, and about 15 GREATER CRESTED TERNS. About ten kilometers south from Dibba along the coast we saw lots of GULLS and TERNS, including some SLENDER-BILLED GULLS and about 25 LESSER CRESTED TERNS.

### **961229.**

Today we went to **Al Ain camel race track**. The sun was shining as usual and it was hot as usual. To get to the camel race track from Dubai you have to drive into Al Ain and follow the signs to Abu Dhabi. It's quite easy to find the way - just follow the signs. The first signs to the camel race track you'll find when you have almost past through Al Ain. You can enter the area by driving to the Grand Stand. The area is rather big, and you can drive on small roads all over the area. The highlights today were 2 distant BLACK KITES, 2 PALLID HARRIERS, a pair of MONTAGU'S HARRIERS, a sub adult GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE, an unidentified FALCON (looked like a Peregrine...), some small flocks of CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSES. The best time for Sandgrouses is said to be in the morning, but we saw them both before and after noon, in all about 60 individuals. More highlights were at least six BIMACULATED LARKS, about 200 GREATER SHORT-TOED LARKS, at least four LESSER SHORT-TOED LARKS. We also saw TAWNY PIPITS, RED-THROATED PIPIT, WATER PIPITS, about 20 ISABELLINE WHEATEARS, some DESERT WHEATEARS, DESERT WARBLER and CORN BUNTING. Al Ain camel race track is a very nice place well worth visiting. One thing you should know, though, is that there are competitions at fridays. We went to such a competition the 3:rd of January, and it was really amusing. However, birdwatching is more suitable when they don't have competitions...

### **961230.**

This day we went to **Khor Kalba**. You'll find the way if you follow the map in "The Birds of the United Arab Emirates", don't be afraid to ask people along the way... The most famous species you can find at Khor Kalba is the endemic race of the COLLARED KINGFISHER. It's easiest to see them if the tide is low, and it was this morning. We saw one Collared Kingfisher perched in a tree. We also saw between five and ten COMMON KINGFISHERS, at least 10 INDIAN POND HERONS, some other species of HERONS, some MARSH HARRIERS, OSPREY, a GREY PLOVER, about 35 LESSER SAND PLOVERS, 15 GREATER SAND PLOVERS, 2 CURLEW SANDPIPERS and about 20 DUNLINS, REDSHANKS, GREENSHANKS etc., 10 BLACK-CROWNED SPARROW-LARKS, ISABELLINE WHEATEAR, between five and ten CLAMOROUS REED WARBLERS, at least five BOOTED WARBLERS and four ISABELLINE SHRIKES. At the adjacent beach some fishermen were collecting their nets in the afternoon and they were surrounded by lots of SANDWICH TERNS and about 50 LESSER

CRESTED TERNS. PALLAS'S GULL, some SOOTY GULLS and a few GREATER CRESTED TERNS were also present. Over the sea flew at least two LITTLE TERNS and about five distant Jaegers, one or two identified as POMARINE JAEGER.

Some further kilometers to the north we stopped at the beach because there were plenty of GULLS & TERNS; SOOTY GULLS, BLACK-HEADED GULLS, several SLENDER-BILLED GULLS, LESSER CRESTED TERNS, SANDWICH TERNS, 9 WHITE-CHEEKED TERNS, 1 adult WHISKERED TERN and two immature WHITE-WINGED TERNS. 16 SANDERLINGS as well...

### 961231.

First we drove up the road to the top of **Jebel Hafeet**. To get there you just follow the signs in Al Ain. Up there we saw at least six EGYPTIAN VULTURES, about ten SAND PARTRIDGES, ROCK DOVES, 25-30 DESERT LARKS, at least nine HUME'S WHEATEARS, three HOODED WHEATEARS (two adult males and one immature male), a singing BLUE ROCK THRUSH, about five BROWN-NECKED RAVENS and two HOUSE BUNTINGS. We also accidentally ran into Colin Richardson, whom we had spoken to two days ago, and some Italian birders. We got some complementary information.

From Jebel Hafeet we saw an interesting pool, which we later learned was **Ain al Fayidah**. We went there. The pool itself wasn't very special, but the adjacent semi-desert gave us a male MÉNÉTRIES'S WARBLER and a PLAIN LEAF WARBLER. Among some other things we there also noted a WATER PIPIT, BLUE THROAT, a RED-TAILED WHEATEAR, a DESERT WHEATEAR and a DESERT WARBLER. In the air we saw a NIGHT HERON, and at least 15 CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSES.

Colin said that the best area for raptors (a.i. Lapped-faced Vulture) is **between Al Ain and Mahdah**. Mahdah belongs to Oman, but there is no customs or frontier guard. You probably have to ask for the way, but if you see signs to Buraimi or Al Buraimi etc. you should follow them. We spent the afternoon in the area but we didn't see any raptors except from a KESTREL. We saw a LITTLE RINGED PLOVER, a female COMMON REDSTART (*samamisicus*), some BLACK REDSTARTS, 2 RED-TAILED WHEATEARS, a female or immature MÉNÉTRIES'S WARBLER, and at least 5 PLAIN LEAF WARBLERS.

We celebrated New Year's Eve at the hotel rooms. It's really expensive to visit the few nightclubs in Dubai this day - about 100 dollars. There are also some pubs in Dubai, but the one we knew was quite odd, so we avoided it. Otherwise it is virtually impossible to get alcohol in UAE for tourists, so it's wise to buy it before the trip.

### 970101.

New Year's Day we didn't birdwatch at all. We recovered in bed and on the beach. The beach in Dubai is free and alright.

### 970102.

Today's first birding site was the **Emirates Golf Course**. It's easy to find it if you follow the signs along the road to Abu Dhabi. You should phone the club before getting there to get permission to get in. They seemed to have met birdwatchers before, but nevertheless they first tried to stop us, although we spoke to a receptionist the night before. The problem is that receptionists don't have the authority to give birdwatchers permission... Somehow we got in and had a good time... We saw i.a. 3 NIGHT HERONS, 10 GREYLAG GEESE, SHOVELERS, BLACK-WINGED STILTS, some different waders, among these the trip's only MARSH

SANDPIPER. More than 30 COMMON SNIPES were flushed several times in a pool outside the fence, and among these we saw at least three PINTAIL SNIPES. In the area we also noted about 30 CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSES, three HOOPoes, a CITRINE WAGTAIL, 5 RED-VENTED BULBULS, 2 BLUETHROATS, STONECHAT, 2 ISABELLINE WHEATEARS, 2-3 ISABELLINE SHRIKES and 11 ROSE-COLOURED STARLINGS. Then we went to **Khor Dubai**. One often passes Khor Dubai on the way south so it's not hard to find. The map in "The Birds of the United Arab Emirates" will do fine. At Khor Dubai we saw about 20 WESTERN REEF HERONS, many FLAMINGOS (we were told that there was about 1000 of them, but we didn't count). An adult GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE, thousands of WADERS such as KENTISH PLOVERS, GREATER and LESSER SAND PLOVERS, DUNLINS, LITTLE STINTS, 30 TEREK SANDPIPERS, about 4 BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPERS and a SANDERLING.

At 3 o'clock we went to **Zabeel Fish Farm**, easily found with help from "The Birds of the United Arab Emirates". There is a palace close to the area and maybe that's why we were stopped by police. They decided that we could go in however, but don't be too sure... We saw at least 10 LITTLE GREBES, a BLACK-NECKED GREBE, lots of different HERONS, among those about 25 NIGHT HERONS, a GADWALL, two GREATER SPOTTED EAGLES (a 1:st winter and an adult, the latter probably the same individual as that at Khor Dubai), 5 CHUKARS, three adult and a 1:st winter PALLAS'S GULLS, 2 WHITE-CHEEKED BULBULS, 3-4 RED-VENTED BULBULS, 2 PIED MYNAHS and some other things.

### 970103.

Today was Friday, and we went to **Al Wathba camel race track** to see the competition and of course to watch birds. The entrance was free (like many other things in UAE) and the show really was amusing. At about 10 a.m. we thought the races were over, so we drove in to the middle of the track where most of the birds were, but at noon the competitions started again, and we were stuck in the middle until 5 p.m.... Not a bad place to be though... We saw 4 CATTLE EGRETS, GREYLAG GOOSE, a female PALLID HARRIER, a QUAIL (flushed), lots of CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSES (i.a. a 280-flock), about ten BLACK-CROWNED SPARROW-LARKS, HOOPoe LARK, 60 GREATER SHORT-TOED LARKS, one ORIENTAL SKYLARK, 2 RICHARD'S PIPITS, a MEADOW PIPIT, 30-40 RED-THROATED PIPITS, about a hundred WATER PIPITS, a BUFF-BELLIED PIPIT (*japonicus*), six STONECHATS, 10-15 ISABELLINE WHEATEARS, and at least six DESERT WHEATEARS.

### 970104.

At a place near **Quarn Nazwa** we searched and found a male and a female VARIABLE WHEATEAR (=EASTERN PIED WHEATEAR). Follow the road from Dubai towards Hatta. About 50 km from Dubai you'll pass a junction with a police station (Al Habah). On your right you will soon see some oil flares. When you see a petrol station on your left you turn right on a small road. Very soon you pass a bridge, then turn left and go about 200 metres. In this area we found them, often sitting on some stone piles. We also saw BLACK REDSTART, RED-TAILED WHEATEAR, BLUE ROCK THRUSH, 2 ORPHEAN WARBLERS, DESERT WARBLERS and two BROWN-NECKED RAVENS.

After this we drove against Hatta and soon after entering Oman we went south on **the road to Mahdah** (the road is lousy...). We stopped several times along the road and saw some interesting birds; 2 SHORT-TOED EAGLES, 5 SAND PARTRIDGES, lots of DESERT LARKS, TAWNY PIPIT, a LONG-BILLED PIPIT, BLACK REDSTART, RED-TAILED WHEATEARS, three males and one female HOODED WHEATEARS, about ten HUME'S WHEATEARS, 20-30 ARABIAN BABBLERS and about four HOUSE BUNTINGS.

### 970105.

Today we went back to **Khor al Beidah**, but in the morning the tide was high, so we left almost immediately after noting our only *PALLIDIROSTRIS*-GREAT GREY SHRIKE. We also lost some time getting the car stuck in the sand. We waited for the low tide at **Umm al Quwain**. There we saw about a thousand SOCOTRA CORMORANTS flying north, two STRIATED HERONS on a pier, six adult and an immature PALLAS'S GULLS and some other GULLS and TERNS.

At noon we went back to **Khor al Beidah** and saw among lots of other things four SPOONBILLS, two adult GREATER SPOTTED EAGLES, lots of WADERS including CRAB PLOVERS and four GREAT KNOTS, a hundred GULL-BILLED TERNS, two (SAUNDER'S) LITTLE TERNS, two or three HOOPOE LARKS, DESERT WHEATEARS and some BROWN-NECKED RAVENS.

### 970106.

**Ramtha tip** again. We saw some LITTLE GREBES, at least 50 BLACK-NECKED GREBES, some HERONS including a PURPLE HERON, 13 SPOONBILLS, the LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, lots of DUCKS, an old immature LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE, a SAKER FALCON with "jesses", WADERS (i.a. about 50 LITTLE STINTS and ten TEMMINCK'S STINTS), about 25 WHISKERED TERNS, 2 CITRINE WAGTAILS, ISABELLINE SHRIKE...

### 970107.

In the morning we went to **Khor Dubai** again. We saw about the same species as five days ago, but also 15 PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVERS, at least 33 BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPERS, about 80 BLACK-TAILED GODWITS, a flock of about 500 BAR-TAILED GODWITS and a flock of about 300 SLENDER-BILLED GULLS.

At ten o'clock we went to **Dubai camel race track**, but were rather dissatisfied. The area in the middle was just sand, nothing like the other camel race tracks. By the stand we saw a HOOPOE and an ISABELLINE SHRIKE.

In the evening we went to **Mushrif National Park** to look for PALLID SCOPS OWLS. We saw two individuals in the light of two very strong spotlights about 500 metres inside of the gate.

### 970108.

Our last birdwatching day. We went to **Oman**, the road between Al Ain and Mahdah. We ended up in **Hanging Gardens**, located in a wadi near (south-west from) a very obvious escarpment, about 25 kilometres past the Oman border. There is no good road to Hanging Gardens, we found some filthy tracks that finally led us there.

Between 10 and 11 a.m. we had the trip's one hour with many RAPTORS; at least four EGYPTIAN VULTURES, a SPARROW HAWK, a first winter STEPPE EAGLE, one or two SHORT-TOED EAGLES and some KESTRELS. Moreover we saw a BARBARY FALCON with "jesses", about 20 LICHTENSTEIN'S SANDGROUSES, 10-20 DESERT LARKS, BLACK REDSTART, DESERT WHEATEAR, RED-TAILED WHEATEAR, 5 DESERT WARBLERS, a PLAIN LEAF WARBLER, 5 BROWN-NECKED RAVENS and about ten HOUSE BUNTINGS. We also probably heard a SCRUB WARBLER.

That was that. In all we were very satisfied with the trip. Including introduced birds such as Rose-ringed Parakeet and Indian Silverbill, falcons with "jesses" etc. we saw 173 species. We didn't go to Abu Dhabi, which could have given us Hypocolius, Red-whiskered Bulbul and Masked Shrike. The only thing that felt like a failure was that we didn't see any Lapped-faced Vulture, although we tried really hard, spending a lot of time around the mountains near Al Ain. Colin Richardson told us that the road between Buraimi and Mahdah would be the best area to look for the Lapped-faced Vulture.

Anything else you need to know? The petrol is very cheap, about ten dollars for a full tank in our Toyota... When you go home you should visit the tax-free shops at Dubai airport - very cheap alcohol and lots of electronic stuff and clothes...

## List of Species.

### Target species:

The names follow the publication "Holarctis fåglar", a list made by SOF (the Swedish national birdwatching society) 1995.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. Noted at Ramtha tip 27.12 and 6.1, about five specimen, and at least ten individuals at Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*. One bird seen at Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1 and about 60 at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Seen at Khor al Beidah, Khor Kalba, Emirates Golf Course, Khor Dubai and Zabeel Fish Farm. Greatest number about 100 at Khor al Beidah 27.12.

**Socotra Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*. About 1000 Socotra Cormorants noted flying north near Umm al Quwain 5.1. Also seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12 and 5.1.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*. Seen near Ain al Fayidah 31.12, at Emirates Golf Course 2.1(3 specimen), Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1(about 25 individuals) and at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striatus brevipes*. Two birds on a pier in Umm al Quwain 5.1.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*. About ten birds seen at Ramtha tip 27.12 and four individuals seen at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii*. Noted at Fujeirah farm 28.12 and between 10 and 20 individuals at Khor Kalba 30.12. Some individuals maybe confused with Squacco Heron(*A. ralloides*).

**Western Reef Egret** *Egretta gularis*. Fairly common, seen at Khor al Beidah (about 50 specimen), Ramtha tip, Khor Kalba, Khor Dubai and Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*. Noted mostly in small numbers at Khor al Beidah, Ramtha tip, Fujeirah farm, Khor Kalba and Zabeel Fish Farm(about 35 individuals).

**Great Egret** *Egretta alba*. Noted mostly in small numbers at Khor al Beidah, Ramtha tip, Fujeirah farm, Khor Dubai(about 25 individuals) and Zabeel Fish Farm (at least 15 birds).

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*. Common. Noted a.i. at Khor al Beidah, Ramtha tip, Khor Kalba, and Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpur*. One Purple Heron flushed at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*. Seen at Khor al Beidah, Ramtha tip (13 specimen 6.1) and Khor Dubai.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*. Noted at Khor al Beidah (at least 150 individuals), Khor Dubai (about 1000) and Ramtha tip (30).

**Lesser White-fronted Goose** *Anser erythropus*. A young bird seen at Ramtha tip 27.12 and 6.1 together with a Greylag Goose. This bird was the first record in the UAE, it had been there since november.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*. (The Eastern race). Seen at Ramtha tip, Emirates Golf Course (about ten individuals) and at Al Wathba camel race track.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*. Noted at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*. Noted at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*. Noted at Ramtha tip (20 or so) and Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Common Teal** *Anas crecca*. Khor al Beidah, Emirates Golf Course, Khor Dubai, Zabeel Fish Farm and Ramtha tip (hundreds).

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*. Common anywhere where it is water.

**Nothern Pintail** *Anas acuta*. Noted in small numbers at Ramtha tip, Fujeirah farm, Ain al Fayidah and Khor Dubai.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*. Noted at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**Nothern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*. Noted at Ramtha tip (200 or so) and at the Emirates Golf Course.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*. About 10 individuals at Ramtha tip.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*. One seen at Ain al Fayidah 31.12 and four seen at Khor Dubai 7.1.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*. Two individuals flying near Al Ain camel race track 29.12. A rare winter visitor in the UAE.

**Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*. At least six birds seen in Jebel Hafeet 31.12 and at least four birds between Buraimi and Mahdah (Oman) 8.1.

**Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*. Two birds seen in Oman between the Hatta Road and Mahdah 4.1 and one or two birds seen between Buraimi and Mahdah (Oman) 8.1.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*. Seen almost everyday in different habitats, mostly young birds.

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus*. Two individuals seen at Al Ain camel race track 29.12 (one male and one female/immature), one male seen by the road between Al Ain and Dubai 29.12, one female noted at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1 and one female by the road between Dubai and Al Ain 8.1.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*. A male and a female seen at Al Ain camel race track 29.12.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*. Fairly common, single birds noted at Fujeirah farm, Emirates Golf Course, Zabeel Fish Farm, Al Wathba camel race track, Ramtha tip and in Oman.

**Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina*. An old immature seen at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*. An old bird at Ramtha tip 27.12, an old immature at Al Ain camel race track 29.12, an old bird at Khor Dubai and probably the same old bird plus a first winter bird at Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1 and finally two adult birds at Khor al Beidah 5.1.

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*. A first winter bird seen by the road between Buraimi and Mahdah (Oman) 8.1.

**Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*. A first winter bird seen at Fujeirah farm 28.12.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*. Seen at Khor al Beidah, Khor Kalba, and Khor Dubai (three individuals 2.1).

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*. Seen almost everyday.

**Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug*. A bird with "jesses" seen at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Barbary Falcon** *Falco pelegrinoides*. An old bird with "jesses" seen near the Hanging Gardens in Oman 8.1.

**Falco sp.**, probably a Peregrine or a Lanner Falcon seen at distance from Al Ain camel race track 29.12.

**Chukar** *Alectoris chukar*. Five birds seen at Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1. (Introduced?)



**Sand Partridge** *Ammoperdix heyi*. Seen in Masafi 28.12 (ten birds or so), about ten birds in Jebel Hafeet 31.12, five birds near Mahdah (Oman) 4.1 and two individuals seen near Hanging Gardens (Oman) 8.1.

**Grey Francolin** *Francolinus pondicerianus*. Common. Seen or heard a.i. at Ramtha tip, Zabeel Fish Farm and Al Wathba.

**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*. Flushed at Al Wathba camel tace track 3.1.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*. Noted at Ramtha tip and at Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*. Noted at Emirates Golf Course, Zabeel Fish Farm and at Ramtha tip.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*. Seen at Khor al Beidah (about 50 individuals) and at Khor Dubai.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*. Seen at Ramtha tip (between 25 and 50 individuals), at the Emirates Golf Course (about 20 specimen) and a single bird near Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Crab Plover** *Dromas ardeola*. We saw a flock including about 350 birds plus some lonely birds at Khor al Beidah 27.12. Also noted at the same place 5.1, not counted.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*. One bird seen near Mahdah (Oman) 31.12.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*. Seen in small numbers, a.i. at Khor al Beidah and Khor Dubai.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*. One of the most numerous waders, seen for example at Khor al Beidah (we estimated about 500 specimen), Ramtha tip (about 250 specimen) and Khor Kalba (at least 150 individuals).

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*. Common. Seen a.i. at Khor al Beidah (about 300 27.12), Khor Kalba and Khor Dubai.

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii*. Seen at the same places as Lesser Sand Plover, but in smaller numbers. Sometimes hard to separate from the latter, and therefore difficult to estimate numbers, especially when you have to examine hundreds of birds.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*. We counted 15 birds at Khor Dubai 7.1.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*. About 50 birds seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12 is the best record. Also seen at Ramtha tip, Khor Kalba and Khor Dubai.

**Red-wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus indicus*. Fairly common. About 90 birds flew over Fujeirah farm 28.12. Also seen at Ramtha tip, Ain al Fayidah, Emirates Golf Course and at Zabeel Fish Farm.

**White-tailed Lapwing** *Vanellus leucurus*. One bird seen at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*. We counted ten birds at Khor al Beidah 27.12 and at least four birds at the same place 5.1.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*. 16 Sanderlings noted near Khor Kalba 30.12, and one bird at Khor Dubai 2.1.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*. Fairly common, but we never counted more than 50 individuals. Khor al Beidah, Ramtha tip, Emirates Golf Course and Khor Dubai.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*. Small numbers noted at Khor al Beidah 27.12 and at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*. Almost always found in small numbers among Dunlins.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*. Common. About 500 individuals at Khor Dubai. Also seen a.i. at Khor al Beidah, Ramtha tip and Khor Kalba.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus*. We saw four individuals among the Dunlins at Khor Dubai 2.1. At the same place 7.1 we saw at least 33...

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*. One bird seen at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*. Some birds flushed at Ramtha tip 27.12 and 6.1. Seen at Fujeirah farm 28.12. At least 30 Common Snipes flushed several times in a pool by the Emirates Golf Course 2.1.

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*. At least three birds among the flushed Common Snipes at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*. 15 birds seen at Ramtha tip 27.12 and 6.1, and a flock containing about 80 birds seen at Khor Dubai 7.1.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*. We estimated 500 birds or so at Khor al Beidah, and one flock containing the same number at Khor Dubai.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*. About 15 specimen seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*. Seen at Khor al Beidah(100 or so) and Khor Dubai. Many birds were very long-billed, suggesting race *orientalis*.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*. Often seen, but not in very large numbers.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*. We did look for it, but we only saw one individual - at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*. Often seen, but not in very large numbers.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*. Single birds seen at Ramtha tip 27.12, Fujeirah farm 28.12 and near Al Wathba Camel Race Track 3.1.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*. Noted at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*. Common at Khor al Beidah, must have been at least 300 in the area. At least 30 individuals seen at Khor Dubai 2.1.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*. Single birds seen at Ramtha tip, Fujeirah farm, Emirates Golf Course and Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*. About 15 at Khor al Beidah 27.12 and three birds seen by Umm al Quwain 5.1.

**Pomarine Jaeger** *Stercorarius pomarinus*. Distant Jaegers seen at Dibba bay 28.12, Khor Kalba 30.12 (about five individuals) and Umm al Quwain 5.1, referred to as Pomarine Jaegers though we often only had statistical evidence. One or two birds near Khor Kalba clearly identified.

**Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii*. About 15 birds seen at Dibba bay 28.12 and about 30 specimen near Khor Kalba 30.12.

**Pallas's Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*. One adult noted near Khor Kalba 30.12, three adults and one first winter bird seen above Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1 and six adults and one immature seen outside Umm al Quwain 5.1.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*. One 1:st winter bird seen at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*. Abundant.

**Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*. Common. Often seen together with Black-headed Gull. Greatest record about 300 birds noted at Khor Dubai 7.1.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*. The *cachinnans*-race common. Birds showing *barabensis*-characters also seen in small numbers, for example at Khor al Beidah.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*. Seen at Khor al Beidah (about 100 birds 5.1) and in small numbers at Khor Dubai.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*. Seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12, and at Khor Dubai 2.1 (16 specimen) and 7.1.

**Greater Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii*. About five individuals at Dibba bay 28.12 and three or so near Khor Kalba 30.12.

**Lesser Crested Tern** *Sterna bengalensis*. About 25 specimen among Sandwich Terns ten kilometers south from Dibba 28.12. About 50 birds dogging fishermen near Khor Kalba 30.12, and a few birds seen at Umm al Quwain 5.1.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*. Most common tern, especially along the east coast. At least 200 at the beach near Khor Kalba (fishermen emptying nets) 30.12.

**White-checked Tern** *Sterna repressa*. 9 individuals seen a few kilometers north from Khor Kalba 30.12.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*. At least two individuals seen outside Khor Kalba 30.12 and two individuals observed at Khor al Beidah 5.1. The race appearing is *saundersi* (Saunders's Little Tern).

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*. Seen at Ramtha tip 27.12 and 6.1, about 40 birds, mostly adults. One adult bird also seen near Khor Kalba 30.12.

**White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*. 1:st winter birds seen twice; one individual at Ramtha tip 27.12 and two individuals 30.12 near Khor Kalba.

**Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles lichtensteinii*. Two birds seen in Masafi 28.12 and about 20 birds seen near Hanging Gardens (Oman) 8.1.

**Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** *Pterocles exustus*. We saw about 60 birds at Al Ain camel race track 29.12, at least 15 near Ain al Fayidah 31.12, 30 birds or so near the Emirates Golf Course 2.1 and a whole lot (i.a. one flock about 280 birds) at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia*. Some seen in Jebel Hafeet 31.12. Domestic Doves also often seen.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*. Common.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*. We had to live with them everyday...

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*. Single birds or small groups seen almost everyday.

**Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei*. Two individuals seen in lamplight in Mushrif National Park 7.1.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*. Often seen in Dubai in different numbers. Also seen in other places.

**Collared Kingfisher** *Halcyon chloris*. One individual of this endemic race seen at Khor Kalba 30.12.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*. Between five and ten specimen seen at Khor Kalba 30.12.

**Green Bee-eater** *Merops orientalis*. Common and seen almost every day.

**Indian Roller** *Coracias benghalensis*. Common, especially the eastern parts of the country (i.e. around Dibba and Khor Kalba).

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*. Four specimen seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12, three individuals at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1, one seen at Ramtha tip 6.1 and one seen at Dubai camel race track 7.1.

**Black-crowned Sparrow-lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps*. Abouts ten individuals seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12, one noted at Al Ain camel race track 29.12, about 20 individuals noted at Khor Kalba and ten or so noted at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti*. Common in Masafi, in Jebel Hafeet and in the visited areas of Oman.

**Greater Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes*. Noted at Khor al Beidah 27.12 (9 specimen) and 5.1 (2 or 3 specimen). One individual seen at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata*. At least six specimen noted at Al Ain camel race track 29.12.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*. We estimated about 200 at Al Ain camel race track 29.12 and 60 or so at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens*. At least four specimen seen at Al Ain camel race track 29.12.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*. Very common.

**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*. One individual seen at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*. A few individuals noted at Al Ain camel race track 29.12 and at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*. Seen at Al Ain camel race track 29.12, Al Wathba race track 3.1 and at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Rock Martin** *Hirundo fuligula (obsoleta)* (Pale Crag Martin). Often seen, mostly in mountains.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*. Noted at Al Ain camel race track 29.12 and at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*. Two specimen noted at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*. Very common in suitable habitats, a.i. at Al Ain and Al Wathba camel race tracks.

**Long-billed Pipit** *Anthus similis*. At least two birds seen in Masafi 28.12, and one individual noted between the Hatta road and Mahdah (Oman) 4.1.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*. Noted at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*. Noted at Khor al Beidah 27.12, at Al Ain camel race track 29.12 and at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1 (30 or 40 individuals).

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*. About 100 birds noted at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1. Also noted at Al Ain camel race track, Ain al Fayidah and Ramtha tip.

**Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*. One individual of the race *japonicus* seen at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*. At least two individuals showing *beema*-characters noted at Fujeirah farm 28.12.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*. Two birds seen at Fujeirah farm 28.12, one noted at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1 and two females seen at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*. At least two individuals noted at Fujeirah farm 28.12.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*. Common. Two *personata*-like males noted at Fujeirah farm 28.12.

**White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucotis*. Seen at Ramtha tip, Zabeel Fish Farm and Al Wathba camel race track.

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*. Seen at the Emirates Golf Course and at Zabeel Fish Farm.

**White-spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*. Noted in Masafi, at Al Ain camel race track, Ain al Fayidah, and near Mahdah (Oman).

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*. Noted at Fujeirah farm 28.12, a male at Ain al Fayidah 31.12, two birds at Emirates Golf Course 2.1, about four individuals at Al Wathba camel race track 3.1 and three or so at Ramtha tip 6.1.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. Noted in Masafi 28.12, near Mahdah (Oman) 31.12, 4.1 and 8.1 and near Quarn Nazwa 4.1. The males showed *semirufus*-characters.

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. A female of the race *samamisisicus* seen near Mahdah (Oman) 31.12.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*. One specimen seen at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1, and six specimen at and near Al Wathba camel race track 3.1.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*. Greatest number about 20 birds at Al Ain camel race tracks. Also noted at Khor Kalba, Emirates Golf Course and Al Wathba camel race track.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*. Common. At least ten individuals (about seven males) seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12. Also seen a.i. at Al Ain and Al Wathba camel race tracks.

**Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna*. Common at rocky grounds and in mountains. Noted i.a. in Masafi and in the visited mountains of Oman.

**Variable Wheatear** (Eastern Pied Wheatear) *Oenanthe picata picata*. A male and a female seen at Quarn Nazwa 4.1.

**Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha*. Two adult males and one 1:st winter male seen in Jebel Hafeet 31.12. Between the Hatta road and Mahdah (Oman) we saw one female, one adult male and two 1:st winter males 4.1.

**Hume's Wheatear** *Oenanthe alboniger*. Three individuals seen between Masafi and Dibba 28.12, at least nine specimen seen in Jebel Hafeet 31.12 and about ten birds seen between the Hatta road and Mahdah (Oman) 4.1.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*. One male noted in Masafi 28.12, one in Jebel Hafeet 31.12 and one 2:nd year male at Quarn Nazwa 4.1.

**Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis*. Abundant and noted nearly every day.

**Scrub Warbler** *Scotocerca inquieta*. Three individuals seen in Masafi 28.12. Probably heard near Hanging Gardens (Oman) 8.1.

**Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*. One seen at Khor al Beidah 27.12, five or ten noted at Khor Kalba 30.12, two individuals noted at Ain al Fayidah 31.12 and two individuals noted at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1.

**Booted Warbler** *Hippolais caligata*. At least five individuals noted at Khor Kalba 30.12. Probably *rama*-race.

**Ménétries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea*. A male seen at Ain al Fayidah 31.12 and a female/1:st year male seen the same day near Mahdah (Oman).

**Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana*. Fairly common in semi-desert, often seen at the same places as Desert Wheatear.

**Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensis*. A male and a female seen in Masafi 28.12 and two individuals noted at Quarn Nazwa 4.1.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*. Common. All the birds we studied were *minula*'s (Desert Lesser Whitethroat).

**Plain Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus neglectus*. Seemed to be fairly common in wadis and semi-desert. Four individuals noted in Masafi 28.12, one individual seen at Ain al Fayidah 31.12, at least five specimen noted near Mahdah (Oman) 31.12 and one individual noted at Hanging Gardens (Oman) 8.1.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*. Fairly common. Sometimes confusing calls different from european Chiffchaffs, but they looked like *abietinus*.

**Arabian Babbler** *Turdoides squamiceps*. Between five or ten birds seen in Masafi 28.12 and at least 25 birds seen between the Hatta road and Mahdah (Oman) 4.1.

**Purple Sunbird** *Nectarinia asiatica*. Common and noted almost every day.

**Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus*. Four birds seen at Khor Kalba 30.12, two or three seen at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1, two birds seen at Ramtha tip 6.1 and one bird seen at Dubai camel race track 7.1.

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*. The race *aucheri* very common. Greatest record about 50 individuals between the Hatta road and Mahdah (Oman) 4.1. We looked quiet hard for the race *pallidirostris* but we only saw it once - at Khor al Beidah 5.1.

**House Crow** *Corvus splendens*. Common around Dibba and Khor Kalba. Also seen at the Emirates Golf Course and Zabeel Fish Farm.

**Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis*. Seen in small numbers at Khor al Beidah, in Jebel Hafeet, Quarn Nazwa and between Buraimi and Mahdah (Oman).

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*. A flock with between 50 and 100 individuals seen at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus*. About ten specimen seen at Ramtha tip 27.12 and 11 individuals seen at the Emirates Golf Course 2.1.

**Pied Mynah** *Sturnus contra*. Three or four individuals seen at Ramtha tip 27.12, and the same number at the same place 6.1. At least two individuals seen at Zabeel Fish Farm 2.1.

**Common Mynah** *Acridotheres tristis*. Common in and around cities.

**Bank Mynah** *Acridotheres ginginianus*. Quiet a few birds seen at Ramtha tip 27.12.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*. Abundant.

**Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica*. Common and seen almost everyday.

**House Bunting** *Emberiza striolata*. At least four specimen seen in Masafi 28.12, two individuals seen in Jebel Hafeet 31.12, four specimen seen between the Hatta road and Mahdah (Oman) 4.1 and at least ten birds seen at Hanging Gardens (Oman) 8.1.

**Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*. Two singing birds noted at Al Ain camel race track 29.12.