

United Arab Emirates February 18th – 28th 2005

By Vegard Bunes

This report covers a birding trip to the United Arab Emirates in late February 2005 made by the Norwegian quartet Gunnar Gundersen, Jarl Nystrøm, Ken A Jensen and Vegard Bunes. For Gunnar and Vegard this was the third visit to the Emirates since 2003, while Jarl and Ken visited the Arabian Peninsula for their first time. The total number of species recorded was 184 (but see comments to species list at bottom).

Like last year we stayed at the Princess Hotel in the Al Qusais area east of Dubai Intl Airport (Al Nahda Rd – D93). The Hotel is fairly cheap and is located a bit off the hasty Dubai downtown traffic. To our experience traffic had increased markedly since our last visit in late February 2004. Our flight was made with Lufthansa from Oslo via Frankfurt to Dubai. Car rental, a Honda CRV 4W drive, was arranged through Hertz after arrival in Dubai. Our intension of a day trip to the Musandam Peninsula (Oman) was dropped. After contacting several car rentals we were not able to arrange an Omani car insurance with a 4W drive. For European citizen a Visa is not necessary in the UAE. You get a 60 days tourist Visa (stamp in you passport) when arriving at the airport.

Dubai is the ideal base for birding in UAE as all important birding sites are less than 2 hours drive away. For information on recent bird observations we checked the excellent weekly *Twitcher's Guide* published on various mailing lists and on www.uaeinteract.com. Necessary literature is *The Shell Birdwatching Guide to the United Arab Emirates* (Richardson & Aspinall 1998) and *Emirates Bird Report No.20*. These two publications give detailed information on most major birding sites and detailed occurrence of birds in the UAE the last years. The *Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East* (Porter et al. 1996) and *Collins Field Guide to Britain and Europe* (Svensson et al. 1999) are also of good help. A good road map is important when driving in the UAE. We used the “satellite map” and *Dubai tourist map*.

The following section shows each birding site visited with date and time of day. The code in parenthesis refers to the locality code in the *Shell Guide*. For most sites a total species list is made. The number of individuals is usually counted, but sometimes estimates. Note that observations of Caspian Gull refer to either *barabensis* or *cachinnans*. Our impression is that *barabensis* is the most common of the two, at least on the east coast. Bird names are only given in English. Scientific names are also available upon request.

Al Mamzar Park, Dubai (A7). Feb 19th 0650 – 1145

After arriving in Dubai late the previous night we took a taxi from our Hotel to Al Mamzar Park in the north-eastern corner of Dubai. Unfortunately the gates didn't open until 8 o'clock so the first hour of birding was made outside the park. Entry fee is 5 Dhr pr person. The park is good for passerines and the seaside always produces gulls and terns. It is possible to get a hot bite at the main gate cafeteria.

Socotra Cormorant 1
Grey Francolin 20+

Grey Plover 1
Common Sandpiper 2

Sooty Gull 1
Black-headed Gull 1000+
Caspian Gull c.30
Sandwich Tern 10+
Feral Dove 10
Collared Dove 50+
Palm Dove 75+
Rose-ringed Parakeet 75+
Alexandrine Parakeet 4
Pallid Swift 7
Little Green Bee-eater 1
Indian Roller 5
Hoopoe c.20
White Wagtail 4
White-cheeked Bulbul c.200

Red-vented Bulbul 100+
Black Redstart 1
Song Thrush 1
Graceful Warbler 10
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 1
Chiffchaff 7
Purple Sunbird c.20
Isabelline Shrike 8
Masked Shrike 1 male
House Crow c.20
Pied Mynah 12
Common Mynah 40+
House Sparrow c.200
Indian Silverbill 10+

When returning to the Hotel we arranged car rental. It took less than 2 hours until the car was delivered at our Hotel!

Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 19th 1530 – 1745

The Pivot Fields has always been one of our favourite birding sites in the Emirates with numerous pipits, wagtails, larks and more. No disappointment this year either. The site is not mentioned in the *Shell Guide*. Follow the Hatta Rd (E44) from Dubai for 15-20 minutes and turn right towards the Sewage Treatment Plant (signposted) after passing the International City (and Dragon Mall). Turn immediately left after two speed bumps, following the numerous waste-water trucks, and another left at the end of the line of trees on your left hand side. Show your binoculars at the gate and the gatekeeper will happily let you in. They are used to birdwatchers.

Cattle Egret 10
Glossy Ibis 4
Marsh Harrier 1-2
Kestrel 1
Grey Francolin 15
Crake sp (unidentified) 1
Black-winged Stilt 3
Little Ringed Plover 5
Red-wattled Lapwing 15
Sociable Plover 2
White-tailed Plover 37
Temminck's Stint 10+
Jack Snipe 1
Common Snipe 4
Marsh Sandpiper 1
Wood Sandpiper 1
Common Sandpiper 5
Collared Dove c.50
Palm Dove c.40

Common Swift 1-2
Pallid Swift c.30
Hoopoe c.10
Short-toed Lark 8
Crested Lark c.40
Skylark 4
Swallow 1
Richard's Pipit 5
Tawny Pipit 4
Meadow Pipit 1
Red-throated Pipit c.40
Water Pipit c.50
Yellow Wagtail c.40 (ssp not counted)
Citrine Wagtail 10+
White Wagtail c.60
White-cheeked Bulbul 3
Bluethroat 4
Siberian Stonechat 2
Isabelline Wheatear 2

Song Thrush 1
Mistle Thrush 1
Graceful Warbler 5
Purple Sunbird 5+
Isabelline Shrike 2
Starling 7

Common Mynah 2
Bank Mynah 20
House Sparrow 500+
Indian Silverbill 6
Corn Bunting 3

Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 19th 1745 – 1830

Only a few hundred meters east of Dubai Pivot Fields. Not mentioned in the *Shell Guide* as the lake was man made in the late 1990's. When leaving E44 towards the Sewage Treatment Plant (see Dubai Pivot Fields) go straight ahead passing the workers village on your left and take one of the newly paved roads to the right when you see the lake. It is now possible to drive on paved roads all the way down to the lake. Only about a quarter is left of the lake compared to our first visit in 2003, but the rest will hopefully be saved. A superb site for grebes and ducks, and a good place for hirundines at dawn. Breeding site for Red-knobbed Coot and grey headed Purple Gallinule since 2004!

Little Grebe 200+
Black-necked Grebe 50+
Cattle Egret c.10
Little Egret c.30
Grey Heron 4
Glossy Ibis 1
Teal c.10
Mallard c.20
Pintail 2
Shoveler c.30
Pochard 65
Marsh Harrier 1
Moorhen c.30
Coot 50+
Black-winged Stilt 15

Kentish Plover 5
Red-wattled Lapwing 3
White-tailed Plover 10
Little Stint 1
Temminck's Stint 10
Common Sandpiper 5
Black-headed Gull 3
Chlidonias sp 2
Collared Dove 2
Palm Dove 5
Sand Martin c.20
Swallow c.50
Red-rumped Swallow 1
White Wagtail 5

Mushrif Park, Dubai (A6). Feb 19th 2115 – 2215

Along D89 crossing Emirates Highway (E311), well signposted. The park is famous for Striated (Bruce's) Scops Owl. Avoid Thursday and Friday nights as the park turns into a major picnic destination for locals. The park is open until 2330 and entry fee is 10 Dhr pr car. Park along the palm plantation in front of the Main Plaza and check the trees around the restroom area to the left. A good spotlight makes it all much easier.

Striated (Bruce's) Scops Owl 2
Collared and/or Palm Doves several flushed from the trees when spotlighting
Red-wattled Lapwing 1-2 heard

Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba (G8). Feb 20th 0715 – 1130

Follow the description in the *Shell Guide* to get there. Park along the administration office and check the whole area. The site is known for producing mega rarities! The rocky area along the Omani border fence to the left is good for wheatears and buntings while the gravel track along the fence to the right is good for warblers, shrikes and more. Check also the irrigated fields, cattle bins and small ponds. The area outside the Dairy Farm is also worth checking. Look out for raptors in the sky. For a hot meal try the Bon Burger on the way south towards Ras Dibba.

Cattle Egret 50+	White Wagtail 15
Western Reef Heron 1	White-cheeked Bulbul 2
Grey Heron 1	Yellow-vented Bulbul 5
Teal 4	Bluethroat 4
Greater Spotted Eagle 1	Black Redstart 1
Kestrel 1	Stonechat (ssp) 6-8
Quail 12	Isabelline Wheatear 3
Black-winged Stilt 2	Desert Wheatear 3
Red-wattled Lapwing c.20	Red-tailed Wheatear 4
Common Snipe 2	Graceful Warbler c.10
Green Sandpiper 2	Clamorous Reed Warbler 2
Feral Dove 50+	Ménétries' Warbler 5+
Collared Dove 20+	Eastern Orphean Warbler 1
Palm Dove 50+	Desert Lesser Whitethroat 1
Rose-ringed Parakeet 5	Arabian Babbler 1
Pallid Swift 15	Purple Sunbird c.10
Little Green Bee-eater 2	Isabelline Shrike 10+
Indian Roller c.30	Woodchat Shrike 1
Hoopoe 5	House Crow c.200
Desert Lark 7	Common Mynah 15
Crested Lark 15	Bank Mynah 3
Skylark 2-3	House Sparrow c.150
Tawny Pipit 5	Indian Silverbill 100+
Citrine Wagtail 5	House Bunting c.15

Ras Dibba (G5). Feb 20th 1145 – 1230

Drive south from Dibba for about 10 km and take left to the beach at Ras Dibba. The best site is on the small plateau in the northern end of the beach. One of the better seabird sites in the Emirates. Check the fish farms out at sea for potential rarities (we had a Common Noddy there in 2004).

Socotra Cormorant 5	Swift Tern 1
Western Reef Heron 5+	Palm Dove 2
Great White Egret 2	Pale Crag Martin 3-4
Grey Heron 5	White-cheeked Bulbul 1
Greenshank 1	Desert Wheatear 1
Sooty Gull 5+	Purple Sunbird 2
Slender-billed Gull c.15	House Sparrow 3
Caspian Gull 10	

Dibba Breakwater (G6). Feb 20th 1240 – 1300

A short stop at the Dibba breakwater to look for waders, gulls and terns. Not too exiting.

Western Reef Heron 2	Sooty Gull 2+
Osprey 1	Slender-billed Gull 50+
Kentish Plover 1-2	Caspian Gull 1
Lesser Sand Plover 5	Sandwich Tern 1
Greater Sand Plover 5	Short-toed Lark 1
Dunlin 6	
Spotted Redshank 1	Slender-billed / Black-headed Gull
Arctic Skua 1	at sea 700+

Masafi Wadi (G1). Feb 20th 1320 – 1615

A favourite site looking for Plain Leaf Warbler and Long-billed Pipit. Easily accessed from the Dibba – Masafi road by following the directions in the *Shell Guide*. The Wadis were a lot greener than on previous visits due to the unusual rainy (and snowy!) winter. Observations with ^{*)} were made along the Dibba – Masafi road further east.

Kestrel 1	Red-tailed Wheatear 1
Palm Dove 5	Scrub Warbler 1
Little Green Bee-eater 1 ^{*)}	Desert Lesser Whitethroat 1
Desert Lark 2	Plain Leaf Warbler 1
Long-billed Pipit 1 ^{*)}	Purple Sunbird 2
Black Redstart 1	Indian Silverbill 2
Hume's Wheatear 3 ^{*)}	House Sparrow 5

Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 20th 1730 – 1820

Another short stop before dawn on our way back to the Hotel.

Little Grebe 200+	Moorhen c.100
Black-necked Grebe 50+	Purple Gallinule 1
Cattle Egret 30+	Coot c.200
Western Reef Heron 10	Red-knobbed Coot 2
Little Egret 15	Black-winged Stilt 15
Grey Heron 5+	Little Ringed Plover 1
Glossy Ibis 3	Kentish Plover 3
Wigeon 2	Red-wattled Lapwing c.10
Teal 30	White-tailed Plover c.15
Mallard 15	Temminck's Stint c.10
Pintail 4	Ruff 1
Shoveler c.20	Marsh Sandpiper 1
Pochard c.60	Green Sandpiper 4
Ferruginous Duck 1	Common Sandpiper 2
Marsh Harrier 3	Collared Dove 3

Palm Dove c.10
Pallid Swift 15
Crested Lark 2
Sand Martin c.20
Swallow c.30

Red-rumped Swallow 1
Citrine Wagtail 2
White-cheeked Bulbul 2
Reed Warbler (fuscus) 1
Striped Weaver 5

Khor al Beidah, Umm al Qawain (C2). Feb 21st 0830 – 1300

A major wader site known for Crab Plovers and wintering Great Knots. If entering the area driving around the Ruler's Palace show extremely caution if stopping at the first site close to the mudflats (with "No Stop & No Photography" signs, facing the Palace). A local birder was arrested a few weeks earlier by civilian police. They probably won't see the difference between a telescope and a camera lens. You get closest to the waders at high tide, but 2 hours before or after high tide is usually optimal for the good ones. A hot lunch is possible at KFC or Pizza Hut in Umm al Qawain city.

Great Cormorant 1
Western Reef Heron c.25
Little Egret 4
Great White Egret 1
Grey Heron c.10
Flamingo 100+
Marsh Harrier 2
Greater Spotted Eagle 3
Osprey 1
Oystercatcher c.200
Black-winged Stilt c.10
Crab Plover 260
Ringed Plover 6
Kentish Plover 500+
Lesser Sand Plover c.300
Greater Sand Plover 75+
Grey Plover 250+
Temminck's Stint c.30
Little Stint 2
Curlew Sandpiper c.20
Dunlin 700+
Bar-tailed Godwit c.75
Whimbrel 10
Curlew 60+
Spotted Redshank 5
Redshank 250+
Marsh Sandpiper 5

Greenshank c.80
Wood Sandpiper 1
Terek Sandpiper c.20
Common Sandpiper 5
Turnstone 100+
Slender-billed Gull 15
Gull-billed Tern 50+
Caspian Tern 1
Lesser Crested Tern 1
Collared Dove 1
Palm Dove 10
Rose-ringed Parakeet 2
Pallid Swift c.20
Little Green Bee-eater 3
Crested Lark c.20
Red-rumped Swallow 1
Desert Wheatear 2
Graceful Warbler 1
Clamorous Reed Warbler 2
Ménétries' Warbler 1
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 1
Chiffchaff 5
Purple Sunbird 2
Isabelline Shrike 1
Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris) 1
House Sparrow c.15

Dreamland Beach (C4). Feb 21st 1330 – 1400 and 1500 – 1630

Another good wader site a bit further north along the coast, just north of the Dreamland Beach Resort. Probably best on falling tide as the birds are active foraging.

Great Cormorant 4
Western Reef Heron c.10
Great White Egret 2
Grey Heron 5
Flamingo 50+
Crab Plover 15
Kentish Plover c.20
Lesser Sand Plover c.30
Greater Sand Plover 5
Grey Plover c.30
Great Knot 17
Sanderling 5
Temminck's Stint 15
Curlew Sandpiper 5
Dunlin c.200
Bar-tailed Godwit c.30

Curlew 10
Redshank c.30
Marsh Sandpiper 2
Greenshank 2
Terek Sandpiper 3
Common Sandpiper 5
Turnstone 10
Slender-billed Gull 5
Siberian Gull (heuglini) 2
Gull-billed Tern 10
Crested Lark 10
Short-toed Lark 1
Isabelline Wheatear 1
Graceful Warbler 1
Brown-necked Raven 2
House Sparrow 5

Khor Dubai (A1). Feb 21st 1730 – 1800

One of UAE's better wetland sites. A perfect pull off from E44 is constructed with a nice parking and a hide. The problem is that you won't get access to the hide without a permit (supposedly gained in a downtown (Deira) office, but we know of no one who has been able to get one!). We were even asked to leave the parking area by police guards since we didn't have a permit.

Great Cormorant c.10
Western Reef Heron c.10
Little Egret 1
Great White Egret 1
Grey Heron c.10
Spoonbill 12
Sacred Ibis 2
Yellow-billed Stork 3
Flamingo c.400
Black Swan 1
Teal 20+

Mallard 80+
Pintail c.20
Shoveler 2
Marsh Harrier 6
Osprey 1
Black-winged Stilt 10
Red-wattled Lapwing 3
Common Snipe 15
Black-tailed Godwit 4
Turnstone 10
Caspian Tern 2

Al Wathba Camel Racetrack, Abu Dhabi (B7). Feb 22nd 0630 – 2130

One of the best birding sites in UAE and much visited by Abu Dhabi birders. When driving from Dubai stay on E11 towards Tarif until you have passed E22 (towards Al Ain). After a few more km take off on the "Truck Road" towards Al Ain and follow this for a few km until you pass the Al Wathba Lake on your left hand side. The Camel Racetrack is signposted right after you have passed the lake. Drive through the parking area and turn left after the main building (just before the small stores). Follow the gravel track crossing the racetrack. Be aware of camels, you don't want to hit one. Both the irrigated fields and the dry desert area inside the racetrack are worth checking. If looking for nightjars check all the tracks inside the

racetrack right after dark. The plantation between the Grand Stand and the Ladies Stand might also be good for warblers.

Mallard 4	Sand Martin c.30
Black Kite 1	Swallow 15
Marsh Harrier 3	Red-rumped Swallow 2
Pallid Harrier 3	Richard's Pipit 5
Greater Spotted Eagle 1	Tawny Pipit c.80
Lesser Kestrel 2	Long-billed Pipit 1
<i>Peregrine Falcon 1 (with straps)</i>	Meadow Pipit 8
Grey Francolin 50+	Red-throated Pipit c.40
Quail 8	Water Pipit c.40
Stone Curlew 3	Yellow Wagtail ssp 25
Pacific Golden Plover 66	Citrine Wagtail 1
Kentish Plover 20+	White Wagtail c.30
Lesser Sand Plover 1+	White-cheeked Bulbul 3
Red-wattled Lapwing 2	Bluethroat 10 (1 white-throated)
Curlew 6	Stonechat 2
Ruff c.30	Siberian Stonechat 2
Siberian Gull (heuglini) 1	Isabelline Wheatear c.30
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse c.70	Pied Wheatear 7
Feral Dove c.1000	Desert Wheatear c.30
Collared Dove 200+	Graceful Warbler 3
Palm Dove c.200	Ménétries Warbler 5
Egyptian Nightjar 10+	Desert Warbler 6
Syke's Nightjar 1 male	Purple Sunbird 2
Pallid Swift 15	Isabelline Shrike 10
Little Green Bee-eater 2	Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris) 2
Black-crowned Finch Lark 1	Woodchat Shrike 1
Bimaculated Lark c.70	Starling 12
Short-toed Lark 100+	Common Mynah 4
Lesser Short-toed Lark 100+	House Sparrow 200+
Crested Lark c.300	Indian Silverbill 10
Skylark 25	Corn Bunting 3
Hoopoe Lark 1	

Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 23rd 0730 – 1130

A note: Subspecies (ssp) of Yellow Wagtail at the Pivot Fields include mostly feldegg and beema, a few thunbergi and one lutea. We also had a male 'superciliaris' type.

Grey Heron 1	Collared Dove c.30
Cattle Egret c.20	Palm Dove 50+
Glossy Ibis 3	Pallid Swift 3
Kestrel 1	Hoopoe 5
Grey Francolin 15	Black-crowned Finch Lark 4
Red-wattled Lapwing 5	Short-toed Lark 10
White-tailed Plover 3	Lesser Short-toed Lark 5+
Sociable Plover 2	Crested Lark c.40

Oriental (Small) Skylark 1
Skylark 2
Richard's Pipit 2
Tawny Pipit 5
Red-throated Pipit c.30
Water Pipit c.20
Buff-bellied Pipit 1
Yellow Wagtail 50+ (ssp not counted)
Citrine Wagtail 5
White Wagtail c.20
White-cheeked Bulbul 3

Bluethroat 1
Siberian Stonechat 1
Isabelline Wheatear 3
Graceful Warbler 5
Purple Sunbird 2
Isabelline Shrike 1
Starling 7
Bank Mynah 2
Common Mynah 15
House Sparrow 300+
Indian Silverbill 10

Emirates Golf Club, Dubai (A4). Feb 23rd 1530 – 1815

Historically one of the prime hotspots in the Emirates, but seems like it's not as much visited nowadays. Easiest reached with taxi from Dubai due to lack of parking places. Remember to sign in with the gatekeeper at the main gate, and he'll help you with a taxi on your return. Don't disturb golfers in action. As last year, preparation for a major golf tournament made birding a bit difficult. They even shut off half the area the day after (Feb 24th). We found two (!) White-breasted Waterhen, a mega bird in the UAE. One bird was at the exact same pond as last winter, the second was in a pond right behind the main building.

Little Grebe 12
Black-necked Grebe 1
Great Cormorant 11
Night Heron 3
Little Green Heron 2
Cattle Egret 10
Grey Heron 3
Mallard 2
Shoveler 1
Teal 2
Shikra 1
Grey Francolin 10
White-breasted Waterhen 2
Moorhen 5
Coot 1
Black-winged Stilt 6
Red-wattled Lapwing 5
Curlew 1
Marsh Sandpiper 1
Common Sandpiper 5
Black-headed Gull 1
Collared Dove c.20

Palm Dove c.30
Rose-ringed Parakeet c.10
Pallid Swift 3
Indian Roller 5
Hoopoe 10
Crested Lark 5
White Wagtail 3
Grey Wagtail 2
White-cheeked Bulbul c.15
Red-vented Bulbul 2
Song Thrush 1
Graceful Warbler 5
Chiffchaff 5
Purple Sunbird 3
Isabelline Shrike 3
Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri) 1
House Crow c.200
Pied Mynah 1
Common Mynah 100+
House Sparrow 40
Indian Silverbill 2

Qarn Nazwa, Hatta Road (E2). Feb 24th 0600 - 0630

A short stop for the Desert Eagle Owl on our way to the East Coast. We spotted one before sunrise at the summit of the mountain near site 3 on map 11 (*Shell Guide*). We also heard it calling several times. After a while it flew down the hillside and sat behind a tree, difficult to spot. Other birds... nah!

Khor Kalba (G3). Feb 24th 0815 – 1300

Usually there are numerous gulls and terns on the beach when the fishermen are hauling their nets. Be careful driving on the beach as we almost got stuck with a 4W drive in the loose sand. Check the mangroves on low tide as the Indian Pond Herons hunt for crabs together with White-collared Kingfishers on the mudflats. Our favourite checkpoint site 3 on map 16 (*Shell Guide*) was still accessible even if the making of a huge lagoon seems to ruin parts of this site. Go to site 3 on map 16 and check a few hundred meters to the south. You're bound to find Syke's Warblers and White-collared Kingfishers in the mangroves.

Great Cormorant 10	Siberian Gull (heuglini) c.15
Socotra Cormorant 4	Caspian Gull c.100
Little Green heron 2	Gull-billed Tern 3
Indian Pond Heron 5	Lesser Crested Tern c.20
Cattle Egret 1	Sandwich Tern c.60
Western Reef Heron 10	Common Tern 100+
Little Egret 1	White-cheeked Tern 10
Great White Egret 1	Collared Dove 5
Grey Heron 5	Palm Dove 15
Spoonbill 1	Rose-ringed Parakeet 2
Teal 2	Pallid Swift 5
Black-winged Stilt 10	White-collared Kingfisher 10+
Kentish Plover c.20	Common Kingfisher 3
Lesser Sand Plover 10	Little Green Bee-eater 3
Greater Sand Plover 5+	Indian Roller 2
Grey Plover 1	Crested Lark 5
Dunlin 5	Red-rumped Swallow 1
Bar-tailed Godwit 2	Bluethroat 2
Whimbrel 5	Desert Wheatear 1
Curlew 3	Graceful Warbler 2
Redshank c.20	Clamorous Reed Warbler 3
Greenshank c.10	Syke's Warbler 5
Wood Sandpiper 5	Chiffchaff 3
Common Sandpiper c.20	Purple Sunbird 2
Great Black-headed Gull 10	House Crow c.20
Black-headed Gull c.200	Common Mynah c.10
Slender-billed Gull c.20	House Sparrow c.20
Sooty Gull c.80	

East Coast (Khor Kalba – Dibba) (G2 + G5-G8). Feb 24th Afternoon

The following is a summary of the best sightings made along the East Coast driving from Khor Kalba to Dibba. The observations from Khor Kalba are not included. Lunch tips KFC or Pizza Hut in Fujairah city (in the main street).

Persian Shearwater c.150	Off Fujairah City
Lesser Kestrel 1	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba
Sooty Gull 250+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Great Black-headed Gull 30	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Black-headed Gull 1500+	Most north of Fujairah oil refinery
Slender-billed Gull 200+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Baltic Gull (fuscus) 1 (probably)	Fujairah oil refinery
Caspian Gull c.200	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Swift Tern 1	Near Dhadnah
Lesser Crested Tern c.20	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Sandwich Tern c.100	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Common Tern 500+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
White-cheeked Tern 70+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Pallid Swift c.500	Island off Rul Dhadnah
Red-rumped Swallow 6	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba
House Martin 5	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba
Isabelline Shrike 8	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba

Al Wathba Camel Racetrack, Abu Dhabi (B7). Feb 25th 0700 – 1130

A shorter morning visit. A bit rainy and no intense birding. Bring plenty of water and your own lunch when visiting Al Wathba. There are no decent places for a hot meal closer than Abu Dhabi or along E11 towards Dubai.

Black Kite 1	Richard's Pipit 2
Marsh Harrier 3-4	Tawny Pipit 15
Pallid Harrier 2	Meadow Pipit 1
Lesser Kestrel 1	Water Pipit 20
Grey Francolin c.15	Yellow Wagtail 1
Pacific Golden Plover 38	White Wagtail 10
Red-wattled Lapwing 1	Bluethroat 2
Ruff c.100	Isabelline Wheatear 2
Curlew 6	Desert Wheatear 10
Caspian Gull c.10	Graceful Warbler 5
Feral Dove 100+	Ménétries' Warbler 5
Palm Dove c.60	Desert Warbler 7
Collared Dove c.50	Purple Sunbird 2
Hoopoe 1	Isabelline Shrike 5
Bimaculated Lark 35	Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris) 1
Short-toed Lark c.20	Starling 17
Lesser Short-toed Lark 5	Common Mynah 2
Crested Lark 100+	House Sparrow c.50
Skylark 20	Indian Silverbill 15
Hoopoe Lark 1	Corn Bunting 10
Swallow 1	

Ghantoot (A9). Feb 25th 1300-1500

No sightings of Grey Hypocolius the last months, but we had to look for it anyway. Park next to the Hotel (see map 3 in the *Shell Guide*). Walk around in the plantation or check from the top of the hill overlooking the area. We were also permitted to enter the Polo Club area by a kind (but a bit uncertain) gatekeeper. Observations are from both the plantation and the Polo Club. The Black Tern is a mega with less than 10 observations in UAE. It was seen very well sitting and in flight for several minutes.

Little Grebe 5	Hoopoe 1
Egyptian Goose 2	Crested Lark c.20
Teal 2	Richard's Pipit 4
Pochard c.20	White Wagtail 1
Ferruginous Duck 1	White-cheeked Bulbul c.30
Grey Francolin 5	Red-vented Bulbul c.15
Moorhen 3	Stonechat 1
Coot 1	Isabelline Wheatear 1
Pacific Golden Plover 10	Desert Wheatear 6
Red-wattled Lapwing 5	Graceful Warbler 2
Black-headed Gull 2	Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 4
Black Tern 1 winter	Chiffchaff 3
Feral Dove c.100	Purple Sunbird 5
Collared Dove 15	Isabelline Shrike 1
Palm Dove 15	Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri) 2
Rose-ringed Parakeet 2	Common Mynah 5
Little Green Bee-eater 2	House Sparrow 10

Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 25th 1730 – 1830

To the discussion on hybrid Red-knobbed Coots that has been going on; which characters are seen that indicates hybrids? The extremely reduced red knobs are typical of young and non-breeding individuals. The black feathering in front of the face (behind the bill) seems perfect for Red-knobbed Coot. More interesting (?); one of the Purple Gallinules was grey-headed and the other blue-headed! Are they different subspecies?

Little Grebe 100+	Moorhen 50+
Black-necked Grebe 66	Purple Gallinule 2
Cattle Egret 10	Red-knobbed Coot 1
Little Egret 5+	Coot 100+
Grey Heron 2	Black-winged Stilt 5
Glossy Ibis 3	Ringed Plover 1
Teal 20+	Red-wattled Lapwing 3
Mallard 30+	White-tailed Plover 1
Pintail 2	Marsh Sandpiper 1
Shoveler 15	Wood Sandpiper 5
Pochard c.30	Redshank 5+
Marsh Harrier 1	Temminck's Stint 10

Feral Dove 10+
Collared Dove 5
Palm Dove 5
Pallid Swift 1
Crested Lark 5
Sand Martin c.40

Swallow c.15
House Martin 1
White-cheeked Bulbul 2
Reed Warbler (fuscus) 2
Striped Weaver 5

Umm al Qawain Breakwater (C3). Feb 26th 0700 – 0900

A good site for gulls and terns, and a good combination to birding at Khor al Beidah. Birding is best in the morning due to the sunlight.

Great Black-headed Gull 14
Black-headed Gull 1000+
Slender-billed Gull c.150
Caspian Gull c.25
Gull-billed Tern 10

Caspian Tern 2
Swift Tern 3
Lesser Crested Tern 10+
Sandwich Tern 200+
Common Tern c.10

Al Jazeerah Khor, Ras al Khaimah (D1). Feb 26th 1000 – 1100

A nice place that can host egrets, waders, terns and gulls. Check the trees for passerines. The area is now halfway filled with sand as they are doing construction work on a large scale in the area. The total numbers of species seen here is not mentioned.

Pacific Golden Plover 5
Saunders' Little Tern 17
Gull-billed Tern 10

Flamingo 15
Also few waders and egrets ++

Hamraniyah fields, Ras al Khaimah (D2). Feb 26th 1300 – 1730

The agricultural area of Hamraniyah is extensive with a labyrinth of tracks and fields. Lots of birds, and the water supplies seemed good this year. Khatt Lake nearby which was dried out last February was now filled with water (but few birds).

Pallid Harrier 1
Greater Spotted Eagle 1
Bonelli's Eagle 1
Sparrowhawk 1
Grey Francolin 5+
Quail 2
Red-wattled Lapwing 10
Collared Dove 50+
Palm Dove 70+
Rose-ringed Parakeet 10
Pallid Swift 10
Little Green Bee-eater 150+
Indian Roller 40+

Hoopoe 5
Crested Lark 20
Red-rumped Swallow 2
White-cheeked Bulbul 20
Black Redstart 5
Isabelline Wheatear 1
Desert Wheatear 1
Eastern Pied Wheatear 1
Graceful Warbler 10
Ménétries' Warbler 1
Eastern Orphean Warbler 1-2
Desert Lesser Whitethroat 3
Chiffchaff 5

Arabian Babbler 17
Purple Sunbird 15
Isabelline Shrike 2
Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri) 13
House Crow 15

Brown-necked Raven 1
Starling 15
Common Mynah c.30
Bank Mynah c.40
House Sparrow 50+

Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 27th 0700 – 1200

Much time devoted to the Oriental (Small) Skylarks...

Cattle Egret 10
Glossy Ibis 3
Grey Francolin 5
Red-wattled Lapwing 2
White-tailed Plover 3
Sociable Plover 2
Common Snipe 2
Jack Snipe 1
Collared Dove c.20
Palm Dove c.30
Hoopoe 2
Black-crowned Finch Lark 1
Crested Lark c.20
Oriental (Small) Skylark 2
Skylark c.10
Swallow 2
Richard's Pipit 2

Tawny Pipit 2
Red-throated Pipit 30+
Water pipit 20+
Buff-bellied Pipit 1
Yellow Wagtail 50+
Citrine Wagtail 3
White Wagtail c.30
White-cheeked Bulbul 5
Isabelline Wheatear 1
Graceful Warbler 5
Purple Sunbird 3
Starling 5+
Common Mynah c.10
Indian Silverbill 10
House Sparrow 100+
Striped Weaver 2+

Safa Park, Dubai (A5). Feb 27th 1230 – 1400

Park of the escapes birds...and some good ones too. A popular picnic area. Open from 8 o'clock. Entry fee 5 Dhr pr person. Hot meal possible at the Malik cafeteria inside the park.

Great Cormorant 2
Night Heron 6
Western Reef heron 1
Great White Egret 1
Grey Heron 1
Mallard 50+
Shikra 1 (nesting?)
Grey Francolin 2
Red-wattled Lapwing 3
Common Sandpiper 5
Black-headed Gull 300+
Slender-billed Gull <5
Caspian Gull <5
Caspian Tern 1
Collared Dove 15

Palm Dove 15
Rose-ringed Parakeet 5
Alexandrine Parakeet 3
Indian Roller 5
Hoopoe 8
White Wagtail 2
Grey Wagtail 1
White-cheeked Bulbul 50+
Red-vented Bulbul 15+
Black Redstart 2-3
Song Thrush 4
Graceful Warbler 10
Chiffchaff 1
Purple Sunbird 5
Isabelline Shrike 1

House Crow 5
Common Mynah 10+

Indian Silverbill 5
House Sparrow 20+

Ghantoot (A9). Feb 27th Afternoon.

After a disappointing stop at Jebel Ali Golf Resort we decided to use what was left of daylight on our last birding day at Ghantoot. Maybe the wish for *Hypocolius* led the way? A check at the Al Jazirah Resort (Golden Tulip Hotel) seemed dull until UAE's second ever Dusky Thrush suddenly appeared in front of us. What a delight...

Pallid Harrier 1
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse 6
Collared Dove 10
Palm Dove 20
Little Green Bee-eater 2
Pale Crag Martin 2
Red-vented Bulbul c.10
White-cheeked Bulbul c.15
Blue Rock Thrush 1

Song Thrush 1
Dusky Thrush 1
Graceful Warbler 5+
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 1+
Purple Sunbird 2
Isabelline Shrike 1
Southern Grey Shrike (*aucheri*) 2
Common Mynah 5+
House Sparrow c.10

Species list

The species list covers all species recorded on our trip. Species in *italics* are escapes. For some other species the status is a bit more unclear (e.g. Shikra). We have also given the different Stonechats, Grey Shrikes (*aucheri* and *pallidirostris*) and Lesser Whitethroats (*curruca* and *minula*) species account even though this is not completely correct (depending on which systematics you follow).

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Little Grebe | 24. Pintail | 46. Black-winged Stilt |
| 2. Black-necked Grebe | 25. Shoveler | 47. Avocet |
| 3. Persian Shearwater | 26. Pochard | 48. Crab Plover |
| 4. Great Cormorant | 27. Ferruginous Duck | 49. Stone Curlew |
| 5. Socotra Cormorant | 28. Black Kite | 50. Little Ringed Plover |
| 6. Night Heron | 29. Marsh Harrier | 51. Ringed Plover |
| 7. Little Green Heron | 30. Pallid Harrier | 52. Kentish Plover |
| 8. Indian Pond Heron | 31. Greater Spotted Eagle | 53. Lesser Sand Plover |
| 9. Cattle Egret | 32. Bonelli's Eagle | 54. Greater Sand Plover |
| 10. Western Reef Heron | 33. Shikra | 55. Pacific Golden Plover |
| 11. Little Egret | 34. Osprey | 56. Grey Plover |
| 12. Great White Egret | 35. Sparrowhawk | 57. Red-wattled Lapwing |
| 13. Grey Heron | 36. Lesser Kestrel | 58. Sociable Plover |
| 14. <i>Yellow-billed Stork</i> | 37. Kestrel | 59. White-tailed Plover |
| 15. Glossy Ibis | 38. Grey Francolin | 60. Great Knot |
| 16. <i>Sacred Ibis</i> | 39. Quail | 61. Sanderling |
| 17. Spoonbill | 40. White-breasted Waterhen | 62. Little Stint |
| 18. Flamingo | 41. Moorhen | 63. Temminck's Stint |
| 19. <i>Black Swan</i> | 42. Purple Gallinule | 64. Curlew Sandpiper |
| 20. Egyptian Goose | 43. Red-knobbed Coot | 65. Dunlin |
| 21. Wigeon | 44. Coot | 66. Ruff |
| 22. Teal | 45. Oystercatcher | 67. Jack Snipe |
| 23. Mallard | | 68. Common Snipe |

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 69. Black-tailed Godwit | 106. Desert Eagle Owl | 145. Black Redstart |
| 70. Bar-tailed Godwit | 107. Egyptian Nightjar | 146. Stonechat |
| 71. Whimbrel | 108. Syke's Nightjar | 147. Siberian Stonechat |
| 72. Curlew | 109. Common Swift | 148. Isabelline Wheatear |
| 73. Spotted Redshank | 110. Pallid Swift | 149. Pied Wheatear |
| 74. Redshank | 111. White-collared Kingfisher | 150. Desert Wheatear |
| 75. Marsh Sandpiper | 112. Common Kingfisher | 151. Red-tailed Wheatear |
| 76. Greenshank | 113. Little Green Bee-eater | 152. Eastern Pied Wheatear |
| 77. Green Sandpiper | 114. Indian Roller | 153. Hume's Wheatear |
| 78. Wood Sandpiper | 115. Hoopoe | 154. Blue Rock Thrush |
| 79. Terek Sandpiper | 116. Black-crowned Finch Lark | 155. Song Thrush |
| 80. Common Sandpiper | 117. Desert Lark | 156. Mistle Thrush |
| 81. Turnstone | 118. Hoopoe Lark | 157. Dusky Thrush |
| 82. Arctic Skua | 119. Bimaculated Lark | 158. Graceful Warbler |
| 83. Sooty Gull | 120. Short-toed Lark | 159. Scrub Warbler |
| 84. Great Black-headed Gull | 121. Lesser Short-toed Lark | 160. Reed Warbler |
| 85. Black-headed Gull | 122. Crested Lark | 161. Clamorous Reed Warbler |
| 86. Slender-billed Gull | 123. Oriental Skylark | 162. Syke's Warbler |
| 87. Lesser Black-backed Gull | 124. Skylark | 163. Ménétries' Warbler |
| - heuglini | 125. Sand Martin | 164. Desert Warbler |
| - fuscus | 126. Pale Crag Martin | 165. Eastern Orphean Warbler |
| 88. Caspian Gull | 127. Swallow | 166. Lesser Whitethroat |
| - cachinnans | 128. Red-rumped Swallow | 167. Desert Lesser Whitethroat |
| - barabensis | 129. House martin | 168. Plain Leaf Warbler |
| 89. Gull-billed Tern | 130. Richard's Pipit | 169. Chiffchaff |
| 90. Caspian Tern | 131. Tawny Pipit | 170. Arabian Babbler |
| 91. Crested (Swift) Tern | 132. Long-billed Pipit | 171. Purple Sunbird |
| 92. Lesser Crested Tern | 133. Meadow Pipit | 172. Isabelline Shrike |
| 93. Sandwich Tern | 134. Red-throated Pipit | 173. Steppe Grey Shrike |
| 94. Common Tern | 135. Water Pipit | 174. Southern Grey Shrike |
| 95. White-cheeked Tern | 136. Buff-bellied Pipit | 175. Woodchat Shrike |
| 96. Saunder's Little Tern | 137. Yellow Wagtail | 176. Masked Shrike |
| 97. Whiskered / White-winged Tern | - feldegg | 177. House Crow |
| 98. Black Tern | - beema | 178. Brown-necked Raven |
| 99. Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse | - thunbergi | 179. Starling |
| 100. Feral Dove | - lutea | 180. Pied Mynah |
| 101. Collared Dove | 138. Citrine wagtail | 181. Common Mynah |
| 102. Palm Dove | 139. Grey Wagtail | 182. Bank Mynah |
| 103. Rose-ringed Parakeet | 140. White Wagtail | 183. House Sparrow |
| 104. Alexandrine Parakeet | 141. White-cheeked Bulbul | 184. Indian Silverbill |
| 105. Striated (Bruce's) Scops Owl | 142. Yellow-vented Bulbul | 185. House Bunting |
| | 143. Red-vented Bulbul | 186. Corn Bunting |
| | 144. Bluethroat | 187. Striped Weaver |

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