

A birding trip to Oman

16-29 November 2012

Trip report written by: Petter Olsson



Ruddy-breasted Crake, Wadi Derbat 20121123, Photo: Peter Olsson

Participants

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General Information

Car rental

We rented a manual 4WD Toyota Landcruiser from Hertz via Mr Jet. We paid 1100 Euros for 14 days including damage waiver. The car worked fine all the time and we had no troubles at all during the trip.

Flight and money

We used Turkish Airways and paid 370 Euro for a return ticket Copenhagen-Muscat-Copenhagen. Regarding money it is advisable to bring preferably at least 20 OR/person to pay for the VISA if you are staying longer than ten days. For those staying shorter than ten days, the VISA cost only 5 OR/person. I brought USD, which also worked fine. Paying with credit card is also possible, but they added an extra 50 % on the VISA-price, which felt a little bit too much. At the arriving hall there is a couple of ATM: s to withdraw money from, both VISA and Mastercard worked fine. ATM: s is also found in most of the larger cities.

Telephone

We all bought SIM-cards from the phone-company Nawras. For those we paid 2 Rials each, which we could use for calls/sms/surf. To purchase such a SIM-card you have to go to one of the Nawras-stores and show your passport. Adding money is easily done by buying refill-cards. A recommendation is to bring a smartphone since it worked quite fine to surf at many places. It is fairly expensive to surf unless you charge the SIM-card with a month of surf including 500 MB, then it is only 3 OR. Just ask for it when buying your SIM-card.

Accommodation

Camping every night except the last, which we spent in Muscat. Camping places were as follow: Barr al Hikman-Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah-Ayn Hamran-Wadi Derbat-Ras Janjari-Wadi Derbat-Wadi Rabkut-Muntasar-Sayq plateau-Liwa-Ras al Khabbah. It is advisable to use a tent which can be set up without sealing it to the ground by sticks, this since the ground can either be very hard or very soft.

Contact

If you have any questions or comments about this report, please send me an E-mail to this address:

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Figure 1: The blue line in the map shows the track of the 5500 km covered during the trip.

Itinerary

16/11

As Seeb-Al Ansab Lagoons-Al Qurm Natural Park-Drive to Barr Al Hikman

17/11

Barr al Hikman, including Shannah, Hijj and Filim.

18/11

Barr al Hikman-Ad Duqm-Khawr Dhurf-Khawr Ghawi-Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah

19/11

Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah-Ash Schuwaymiyyah-Jinaw-Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah-Drive to Ayn Hamran

20/11

Ayn Hamran-Khawr Taqah-Khawr Rhawri-Tawi Atayr-Wadi Derbat

21/11

Wadi Derbat-Khawr Taqah-East Khawr-Raysut Waste Disposal Site-Al Mughsayl-Ras Janjari

22/11

Ras Janjari-Ras Mirbat-Khawr Taqah-Wadi Hanna-Ayn Hamran-Sahnawt Farm-Wadi Derbat

23/11

Wadi Derbat-Khawr Taqah-Ayn Hamran-West Khawr-Crown Plaza-Drive to Wadi Rabkut

24/11

Wadi Rabkut-Al Najda-Qatbit-Muntasar

25/11

Muntasar-Qatbit-Al Ghaftayn Hotel-Drive North to Sayq-plateau

26/11

Sayq-area including Wadi Bani Habib-Al Ansab Lagoons-Drive to Liwa

27/11

Liwa-Shinas-Khatmat Milahah-Shinas-Sun Farms-Drive to Ras al Khabbah

28/11

Ras al Khabbah-Khawr al Milh-Muscat

29/11

Al Qurm-Qantab-Al Qurm-Flight back to Copenhagen

Daily log

16/11

We arrived at As Seeb around 03:00 in the morning. Within an hour we had picked out our rental car and left the airport. We went directly to Al Ansab Lagoons where we arrived about an hour before dawn. The whole area is now fenced and banned for visitors unless you have a permit. However it was still possible to view the best pond, at least for waders from outside the fence. A Pectoral Sandpiper and two White-tailed Plovers were the most interesting observations. Next stop was Al Qurm Natural Park where we had a short stop at the beachside of the park. A few Masked Boobies passed by as well as some Bridled Terns, otherwise nothing special. After this we went to buy some food before we drove south towards Barr al Hikman. A short stop along the way at a date plantation at Muhktu gave the first Plain Leaf Warbler of the trip as well as an Eastern Orphean Warbler. This date plantation probably held a lot more good stuff and is well worth a stop when passing by. The rest of the drive south didn't give any special birds except from a couple of Egyptian Vultures. We had dinner in Hijj before we went to the coast to meet up with some Dutch friends who were there on a field expedition. During the night we did some bird-catching, a hundred birds or so were caught, mainly Sand Plovers, Dunlins, Curlew Sandpipers and Little Stints. Also some Sanderlings and Broad-billed Sandpipers.

17/11

Went out on the mudflats in the morning during the low tide and had a look on the massive amount of waders feeding there. Most interesting were 204 Great Knots and over 500 Crab Plovers, all within a distance of one kilometer. Hundreds of Broad-billed Sandpiper and several Terek Sandpipers are other nice birds around. After a while we decided to take the car and have a look in the mangroves just south of Shannah which produced an Amur Falcon and a Striated Heron. A stop in the harbor in Shannah led to a major loss, one of the two whiskey bottles brought for the trip decided to fall out on the paved parking lot, ending up in nothing but a wet spot and many pieces of glass. Some Swift Terns and Lesser Crested Terns was a vague comfort for the loss. After this we went to Hijj and had a look at the ponds around the Water Treatment Plant which held some ducks and waders including a Red-necked Phalarope and some Black-winged Stilt. Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters were sitting on the wires in the village. After this we felt like having a shower, so we drove the 25 kilometers to Filim, where there is a public shower which can be used. The area held some Common Snipes and the only European Starling of the trip. After the shower we returned to the Dutch field camp for another night of ringing. The catch was better than the night before, with two Crab Plovers being the best birds.

18/11

A walk along the small patch of vegetation next to the shore at the camp gave a Menetrie's Warbler, some Asian Desert Warblers and a Song Thrush. We then left Barr al Hikman early in the morning taking the coast road south towards Salalah. By coincidence we passed a wadi next to the road somewhere between Hijj and Ad Duqm just when the Sandgrouses came there to drink. Between 10:00-10:30 we saw 5 Spotted, 40 Crowned and 60 Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouses drinking the fairly salty water. The scattered palm trees also gave at least 3 Plain Leaf Warbler, fairly far south for this species I assume. The first South Arabian Wheatear of the trip was seen a few kilometers further along the road. About 20 km north before Ad Duqm the second Amur Falcon of the trip was discovered on some power wires. In the afternoon we had a stop at Khawr Dhurf where 15 Crowned

Sandgrouses were seen. There were also some waders and ducks around as well as a Spoonbill, but nothing odd. The last hour before dusk was spent at Khawr Ghawi, where 3 Crab Plovers and a Pacific Golden Plover were seen. There were a lot of terns and gulls around the mouth of the Khawr. However most of the waders were further in into the Khawr, and the sun set before we were able to reach them. Instead we drove south to Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah where we went to the small Palm-plantation at the "end" of the road. From here we had one Hume's Owl calling from 20:30 and then regularly throughout the night.

19/11

The morning hours were spent in Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah where we had a Wryneck, some Red-breasted Flycatchers, the firsts Shining Sunbirds of the trip as well as the only Striolated Buntings of the trip. Sand Partridges and Arabian Partridges were calling around us, some Short-toed Eagles were patrolling the cliffs and a Menetrie's Warbler was found singing next to the road. The midday hours were spent along the coastline between Ash Schuwaymiyyah and Jinaw. There were quite good movements of Jounin's Petrels (36), Masked Boobies (150) and also at least 15 Persian Shearwaters. At Jinaw there were thousands of Socotra Cormorants around, quite many in the water but also a lot of them roosting on the sides of the cliffs. In the late afternoon we drove back into Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah and the Hanging Garden to wait for the Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse which comes there to drink. The Sandgrouses were all seen between 18:10 and 18:25, when it was all dark outside. The birds went came to drink in the small patches of water above the stairs where there are some sun screens. A Hume's Owl was also heard calling from the cliffs in the opposite side of the Wadi. The rest of the evening was spent driving to Ayn Hamran where we were welcomed by several calling Arabian Scops Owl as well as some calling wolves.

20/11

The first two hours of light was spent scanning the bushes for different passerines giving good observations of species like Black-crowned Tchagra, Arabian Warblers and a couple of Bruce's Green Pigeons flying by. From about 07:30 the first eagles showed up above the mountains, which made me focus on finding the Verraux's Eagle that are seen there every now and then. The first hours gave some Bonelli's, Short-toed, Eastern Imperials, Steppe and a Booted Eagle. Some unidentified Swifts also passed by above the cliffs. Finally around 10:30 I found an adult Verraux's Eagle coming in from the left, actively flying east over the cliffs, just to disappear a minute after it showed up. About 11.00 we left Ayn Hamran and went to Khawr Taqah. The place looked rather boring with quite few birds seen, the first Indian Pond Heron of the trip was seen, as well as a passing Masked Booby out over the sea. A walk along the concrete walls of the ponds didn't give much to begin with, but in the northern end of the easternmost pond I suddenly flushed an adult Yellow Bittern just below me. The bird flew about 20-30 meters and went down in a small reed patch, never to be found again. The next stop was Khawr Rhawri which held a Pheasant-tailed Jacana, a Ferruginous Duck and the first Black-crowned Night-heron of the trip. After this we drove over the dry savannah-like grassy plains towards Tawi Atayr. A short stop including a walk a couple of hundred meters away from the road gave us a nice observation of a Singing Bush-lark. Other birds seen there was a Lappet-faced Vulture, a couple of Eastern Imperial Eagles, a Rough-legged Buzzard and the only Steppe Buzzard of the trip. At the sinkhole in Tawi Atayr there were about 50 Yemen Serins hanging around. Other birds in the area included a South Arabian Wheatear, Eastern Imperial, Steppe, Bonelli's and Short-toed Eagles. The last hour of light was spent at Wadi Derbat where about 150 Abdim's Stork came in to roost in

the fig trees. A couple of Bonelli's Eagles were around and about 20 Bruce's Green Pigeons were seen feeding in the fig trees. The night was spent in the Wadi with many displaying Arabian Scops Owls and also two Barn Owls.

21/11

About an hour before dawn an Arabian Spotted Eagle Owl called a few times from the mountain sides, but soon went silent again. The Barn Owls were also calling regularly during the night without being spotted. The morning hours were spent in Wadi Derbat where the flock of Abdim's Storks were seen, as well as two Hobbys hawking for insects over the stream. Some Spotted Eagles also patrolled the slopes of the Wadi. A walk along the small stream gave a Pin-tail Snipe, a couple of Bluethroats and a Black-crowned Night-heron. Some Eastern Olivaceous Warblers were seen in the trees next to the stream. Right before we exited the Wadi Derbat Road on the way to the main road a Long-billed Pipit was discovered walking around on the ground in the bushy area. Since we were passing by Khawr Taqah, we gave it a new try, this time it paid off quite well with a friendly Small Pratincole, a Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Black Kite and a couple of Montague's Harriers. Next stop was East Khawr which didn't give much but a flock of 80 Pacific Golden Plovers. Along the drive to Raysut we discovered two Crested Honey Buzzards soaring over a date plantation opposite to the Al Hilal Sports Club close to West Khawr. A stop at the waste dump in Raysut gave about 500 Steppe Eagles, 100 White Storks, 2 Spotted Eagles and 3 Eastern Imperial Eagles. The last hours of light was spent at Al Mughsayl which held at least 19 Brown Boobies, 40 Bridled Terns and the only 2 White-cheeked Terns of the trip. The night was spent driving a very rough road to Ras Janjari, which wasn't the place marked as Ras Janjari in the guide book, but marked so on the map we used.

22/11

The morning was spent at Ras Janjari where we had about 80 Persian Shearwaters, 8 Jounin's Petrels, 70 Masked Boobies and 150 Bridled Terns. Otherwise nothing special was seen in the area. On the way back to the main road we found a single Cream-colored Courser at a fairly close range. Next place to visit was Ras Mirbat which gave a couple of Striated Herons and an unidentified larger Shearwater far out at sea in bad light condition together with at least 20 Persian Shearwaters and 4 Jounin's Petrels. A stop at Khawr Taqah only generated the previously seen Jacana. Next stop was a brief stop at Wadi Hanna, which didn't give much but a couple of Arabian Warbler and some quite loud men at the concrete pond. However we met another Swedish birdwatcher which tipped us off that there was a large flock of Sociable Plovers at Sahnawt farm. Thus we went there and soon found a flock of 40 birds on a newly ploughed field. Around were also 5 Namaqua Doves, a European Nightjar and plenty of Yellow Wagtails of different subspecies. An evening stop at Ayn Hamran gave a Lappet-faced Vulture and two Eastern Orpheeian Warblers. A drive around the bushes at the stony plains east of the road between Ayn Hamran and the main road gave some Eurasian Stone-curlews, a Cream-colored Courser and some Black-crowned Sparrow-larks. The night was spent in Wadi Derbat where the Barn Owls and the Arabian Scops Owls were calling regularly throughout the night. However no sound from the Spotted Eagle Owl heard from the same place last morning.

23/11

The morning was spent at Wadi Derbat where the usual 155 Abdim's Storks were around. A walk further into the valley from the parking ground gave a Black Stork, and some 50 Bruce's Green Pigeons were also seen. The Pintail Snipe from the other day was also still around together with at least 11 Common Snipes. Some Wood Warblers, a few Bluethroats, an Eastern Orpheeian Warbler and

an Eastern Olivaceous Warbler were also seen. However the major bird of the trip was found by my father in the vegetation at the shore opposite to the parking ground. The bird, a **Ruddy-breasted Crane** was obviously the first record for the Middle East. Another nice bird found shortly after was a Semi-collared Flycatcher just a couple of hundred meters away from the Crane.

After Wadi Derbat we went for a short stop at Khawr Taqah where the usual Jacana was still around, but otherwise nothing special. A walk around the small bushy patches on the plains below Ayn Hamran gave 55 Eurasian Stone Curlews, some Arabian Partridges and Arabian Warblers. The last hour of light was spent at West Khawr where 2 Red-knobbed Coots were around as well as an Intermediate Egret, a Little Bittern, a ferruginous Duck and some Black-headed and Scaly-breasted Munias. Before we took off for the drive north we had a stop at Crown Plaza Hotel where we soon found 2 Spotted Thick-knees hanging around the golf course in the Hotel area. During the night we drove to Wadi Rabkut where we spent the night.

24/11

The morning hours were spent at Wadi Rabkut where the best birds were two Lappet-face Vultures, some Sandgrouses of three species, Crowned, Spotted and Chestnut-bellied and the third Amur Falcon of the trip. A bit further north we had a stop at the farming project called Al Najda, but were not let in at the moment since the main boss were coming the same day. However the area is most likely well worth a visit if you pass by. For example hundreds of Sandgrouses were seen flying around at distance within the area. There were also some Black-crowned Sparrow-larks around as well as Hoopoe Larks. Next stop on the trip was Qatbit where a few new species like Hypocolius, Hume's Warbler and Nile Valley Sunbird were added to the trip list. The last hour of light was spent at Muntasar where we missed out on a Golden Eagle by less than an hour. A few hours search for Egyptian Nightjar only generated a single European before we had some hours sleep in our tents.

25/11

Birded around Muntasar until 10:30 which didn't give much. A Common Quail was an odd observation whilst Song Thrush and European Roller were more expected. The only Sandgrouses that came in to drink were 53 Spotted which was a little less than expected. A Long-legged Buzzard was also around as was a Siberian Stonechat. An hour's birding at mid day at Qatbit gave the same flock of Hypocolius as yesterday, but otherwise nothing special seen. However we were tipped off by Krister Mild that there were a pair of Dunn's Lark a few kilometers away, so we went there and soon found them hanging around giving good opportunities to take some photos. A drive along the vegetation resulted in two Bar-tailed Larks, some Black-crowned Sparrow-larks, Hoopoe Larks and 7 Greater Short-toed Larks. A last stop for birding was made at Al Ghaftayn Hotel where we had the only Sand Martin and Spotted Flycatcher of the trip. A Rose-colored Starling, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Common Redstart were other scarce birds seen. The rest of the night was spent driving north to the Sayq-plateau.

26/11

The night and morning was spent in the Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir. Here we found two Blue Rock Thrushes, 4 Arabian Babblers, 4 Plain Leaf Warblers, 4 Hume's Wheatears, 6 Red-tailed Wheatears and an Eastern Orphean Warbler. A visit to Wadi Bani Habib gave a Song Thrush, a Rose-colored Starling, a Wood Pigeon, two Sparrowhawks and at least 10 Plain Leaf Warblers. A stop at point P in the Sayq-plateau map in the birdwatching guide to Oman gave two charming Scrub

Warblers. Before dusk a short stop was made at Al Ansab Lagoons where the Pectoral Sandpiper was still around as well as the two White-tailed Plovers. A new additive to the trip list was a Black-necked Grebe. The evening was spent driving north to Liwa where we tented on the beach.

27/11

At dawn the Collared Kingfisher was calling once, but didn't show itself even though we spent a couple of hours at the place. However at least three Syke's Warbler were seen together with lots of Western Clamorous Warblers and a couple of Striated herons. Next place was Shinas where we also tried to find the Kingfisher without any luck. The place didn't give much at all to be honest so we drove north to Khatmat Milahah where we easily found a male Variable Wheatear as well as some Arabian Babblers and a Sparrowhawk. Another short stop at Shinas was made on the way south with no luck on the Kingfisher, however a well needed swim in the ocean was nice. The last hours of daylight was spent at Sun Farms where the best birds were 9 Oriental Skylarks, 1 Rufous Turtle-dove, 7 Sociable Plovers, 3 Cream-colored Courser, 5 White-tailed Plovers, 20 Namaqua Doves and at least 30 Richard's Pipits. The night was then spent driving south to Ras al Khabbah.

28/11

The first two and a half hours of light were spent scanning the ocean for seabirds. This didn't pay off as well as we hoped for even though it was blowing 10 m/s from the SW. 48 Great Black-headed Gulls and an Arctic Skua was the most interesting observations. A Masked Booby and 2 Persian Shearwaters were the only real seabirds seen during the morning. A stop at the Water Treatment Plant in Al Khabbah gave 40 Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouses, some Black-crowned Sparrow-larks and 7 Greater Short-toed Larks. A stop at Khawr al Milh on the way back to Muscat gave 49 Egyptian Vultures and 3 Black-necked Grebes. Otherwise the birding was hard due to quite windy conditions so we drove back to Muscat where we went to our accommodation for the night at a private house close to Al Qurm.

29/11

Heavy rain during the morning let us have some extra sleep for the first time during the trip. After the rain ended we took a short trip to the rear entrance of Al Qurm Natural Park. This used to be a good place with a nice pond for waterfowl, but this had change since last time I was there, now they were building a sewage system in the area and the pond was more or less entirely gone. However I remember that there used to be a nice pond inside the fence behind the small restaurant along the back road. The fence was easily climbed, but you better be careful due to very sharp fence poles. But this was the place for birding in Al Qurm nowadays. A Jack Snipe, a Pin-tail Snipe, 4 Common Snipes and a Siberian Stonechat were some nice birds seen in the morning. The day was spent at a beach in Qantab, thus hardly any birding being done. However a single Hume's Wheatear was seen. In the afternoon a last visit to Al Qurm gave 10 Red-vented Bulbuls, a Striated heron, 10 Common Waxbills and some unidentified Weavers. After picking our stuff together we drove to the airport and returned the car at 23:00 and waited for our flight back to Copenhagen.

Site Comments

Al Ansab Lagoons

Previously a place easy to access, now it is entirely within fence with no trespassing signs. As I understand it is possible to enter the area by receiving a permit ahead of your visit. However we went there on our own and still were able to have a good look over the best pond. It is not easy to find the place, but a good suggestion is to go to Ghala industrial area and follow the yellow sludge trucks until you see the lagoons on your left side. We parked next to a football field where there also was possible to pass below the fence in an empty concrete ditch. However I guess this is not recommended even though I found it unlikely that someone will bother you.

Al Ghaftayn Hotel

This small Hotel Garden in the middle of the desert is well worth a stop if you pass at daytime. Most of the birds were in the trees and bushes behind the hotel. Especially the small fenced pond behind the hotel on the other side of the wall could hold some nice birds.

Al Mughsayl

This is the place for Brown Booby in Oman. Terns and Gulls were also around in large numbers as well as some Socotra Cormorants. However the Khawr wasn't worth spending too much time at. Sure it is worth a short stop, but hardly during the morning hours. I heard from other birdwatchers that there were some small pools further into the Wadi which we unfortunately didn't check where both Baillon's and Little Crake were seen during our stay in Oman. We skipped the Wadi completely due to lack of time.

Al Qurm

A short stop at the two bridges on the beach side of the park could give some nice birds roosting at the sand bars and the mangroves. It is also worth scanning the ocean for passing seabirds. However the best place in the park is by far the small pond close to the rear entrance described in the guidebook. I would recommend parking the car around following coordinates: 23° 37.014'N, 58°28.547'E. Then just climb the low fence and walk along the reed edge to the west where you will find a small shallow pond which holds plenty of waders, herons, ducks etc. A visit at dawn and at dusk will probably give you observations of different Weavers, Waxbills and other escapees. This is also a good spot for Red-vented and White-cheeked Bulbul.



Figure 2: Al Qurm Natural Park entered from the rear entrance. The former pool has decreased a lot in size due to construction work. The pond described in the text above is placed behind the large buildings shown in the picture.

Ayn Hamran

This is probably one of the easiest as well as most accessible places to see Verraux's Eagle in Oman. For us it took 4 hours before we saw an adult bird passing by over the cliffs. Other birds most easily found in this area were Arabian Warbler, Blackstart, Arabian Partridge and Black-crowned Tchagra. We were a little bit too late for species like Dideric Cuckoo, Forbes-Watsons Swift and Grey-headed Kingfisher which all are found here at least until end of October. We met a couple of Spanish birders which had seen Golden-winged Grosbeak the same week as we were there, so they are around. A dead Spotted Eagle Owl at the small pond was a sad observation, but some other birders had a bird calling the night before we arrived.

Barr al Hikman

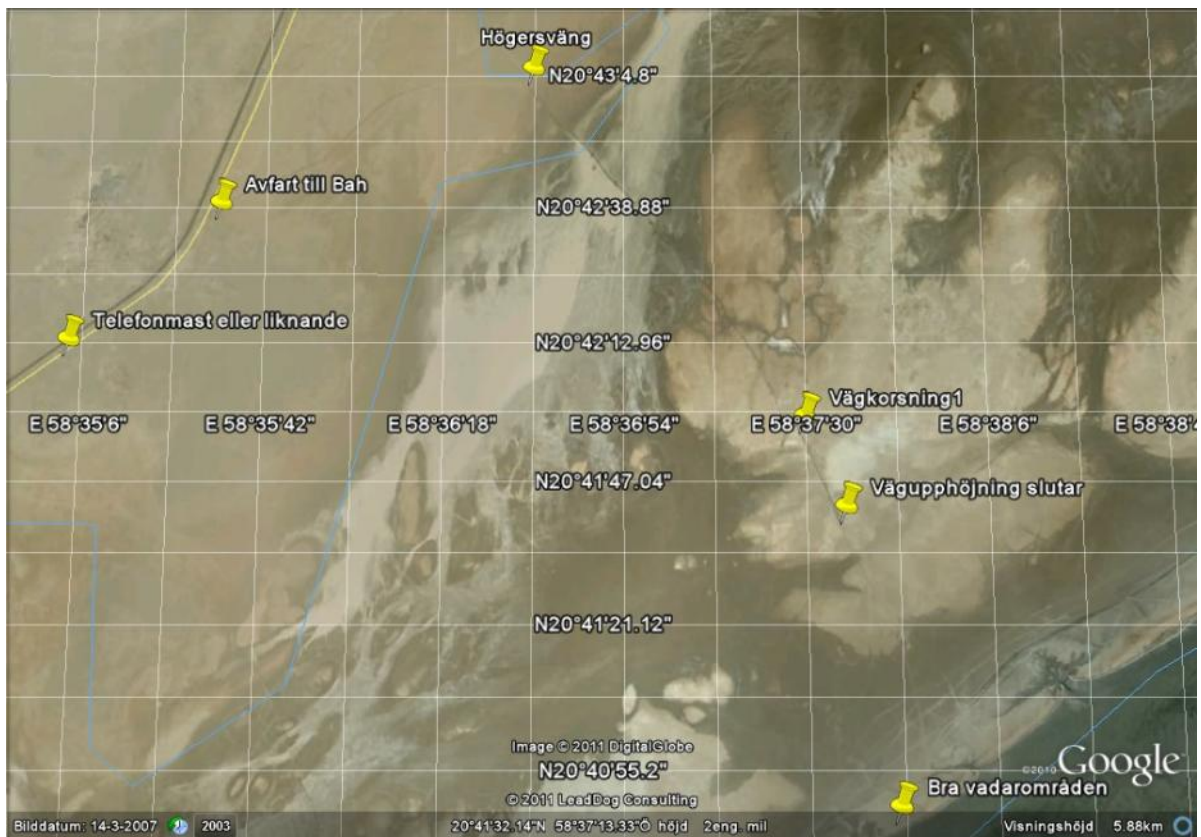


Figure 3: This picture shows how to find the areas with the largest densities of waders in the Barr al Hikman area. Translation of the Swedish words in the map are as follows: Telefonmast=Phone mast, Avfart=Exit, Högersväng=Right turn, Vägkorsning=Road junction, vägupphöjning slutar=end of elevated road, Bra vadarområde=Good area for waders.

Figure 3 shows how to reach some of the best areas for Waders in Barr al Hikman. The exit leading out on the sebkha is easily missed unless you have been there before or if you use coordinates. The phone mast marked on the map as “telefonmast” is easily seen in daylight, there are no other buildings in the area. In the picture the road can be seen as a dark line. Use Google Earth to zoom in further. Parts of this road is elevated and in that area it is not recommended to leave the road as it is very easy to get stuck for hours or days here no matter what kind of car you have. However there is one point where it is ok to leave the elevated part, the point marked as “vägkorsning” in the figure above. Here you can take off to the left which may be needed during spring tides. At periods with lower high tides it is possible to continue on the elevated road until it ends and then use the tracks

available to reach the shoreline. Both the next 10 kilometer to the south as well as the area north to the mangrove patch are probably one of the places in the world where you find the highest densities of waders. The small patch of low vegetation along the shoreline holds species like Asian Desert Warbler and Menetrie's Warbler during the winter. At migration time almost anything can show up here. Crab Plovers should be present with a couple of thousand individuals in this area. Great Knot is also fairly common but maybe a bit more difficult to find as they gather at places with a lot of green algae. But a couple of hundred birds should be around in this area.

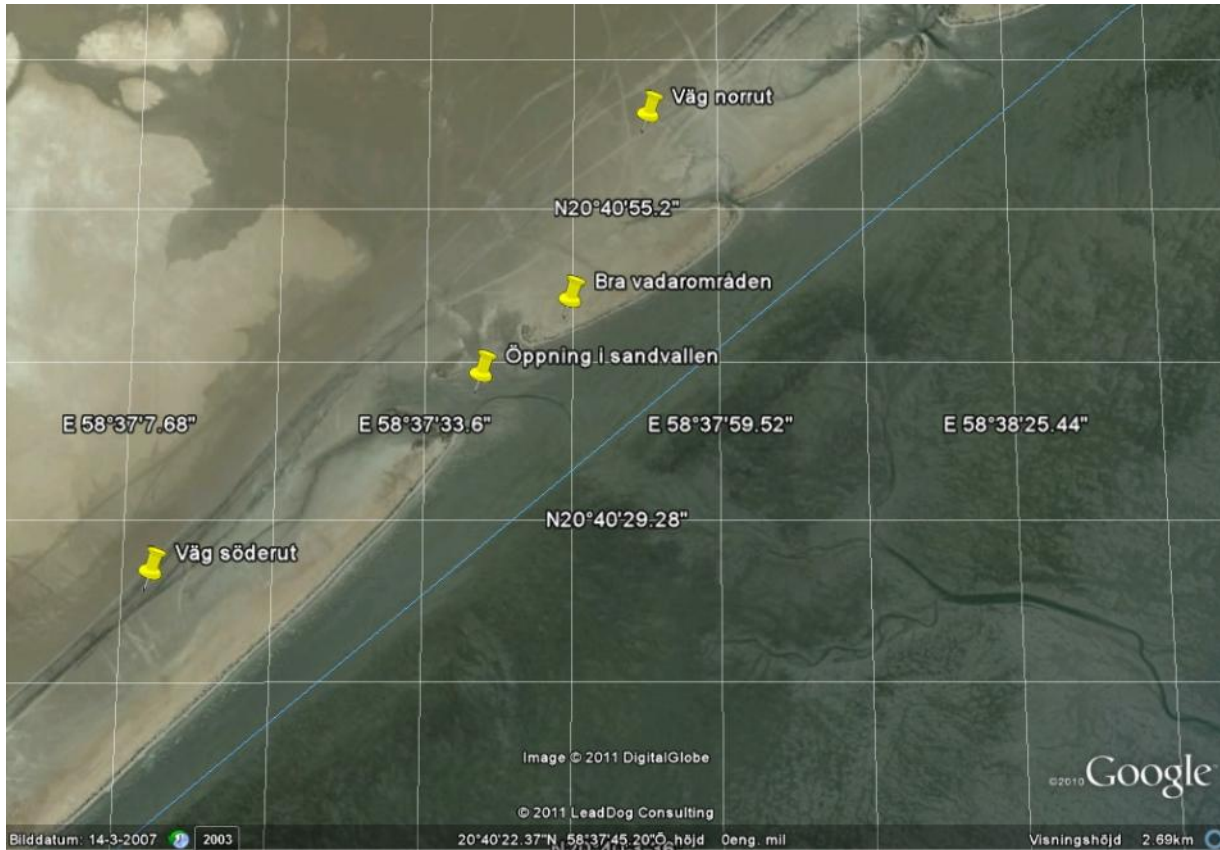


Figure 4: The spot marked "Bra vadarområden" zoomed in. Väg norrut=Road to the north, Öppning i sandvallen=Break in the sand dunes, Väg söderut=Road to the south.

Figure 4 is a zoomed version of the point marked good area for waders in Figure 3. The roads that lead north and south can be driven when the high tides are fairly low. Periods with high peaks during high tide may make these roads impossible to use. However there are a number of roads to choose from, which all are going in the same direction as the marked road. This means that different roads are used depending on how wet the roads are. Places where there are breaks in the sand dunes often works as roosting places during high tides for many of the waders, especially the larger species as many of the smaller birds go inland at high tide.

Figure 5 shows the area between the point marked as a good place for waders and the mangrove area in the north. This whole area is one of the best places to find good numbers of Great Knots. These are often present in the flocks of Bar-tailed Godwits during high tides, but during low tide they are not usually together.

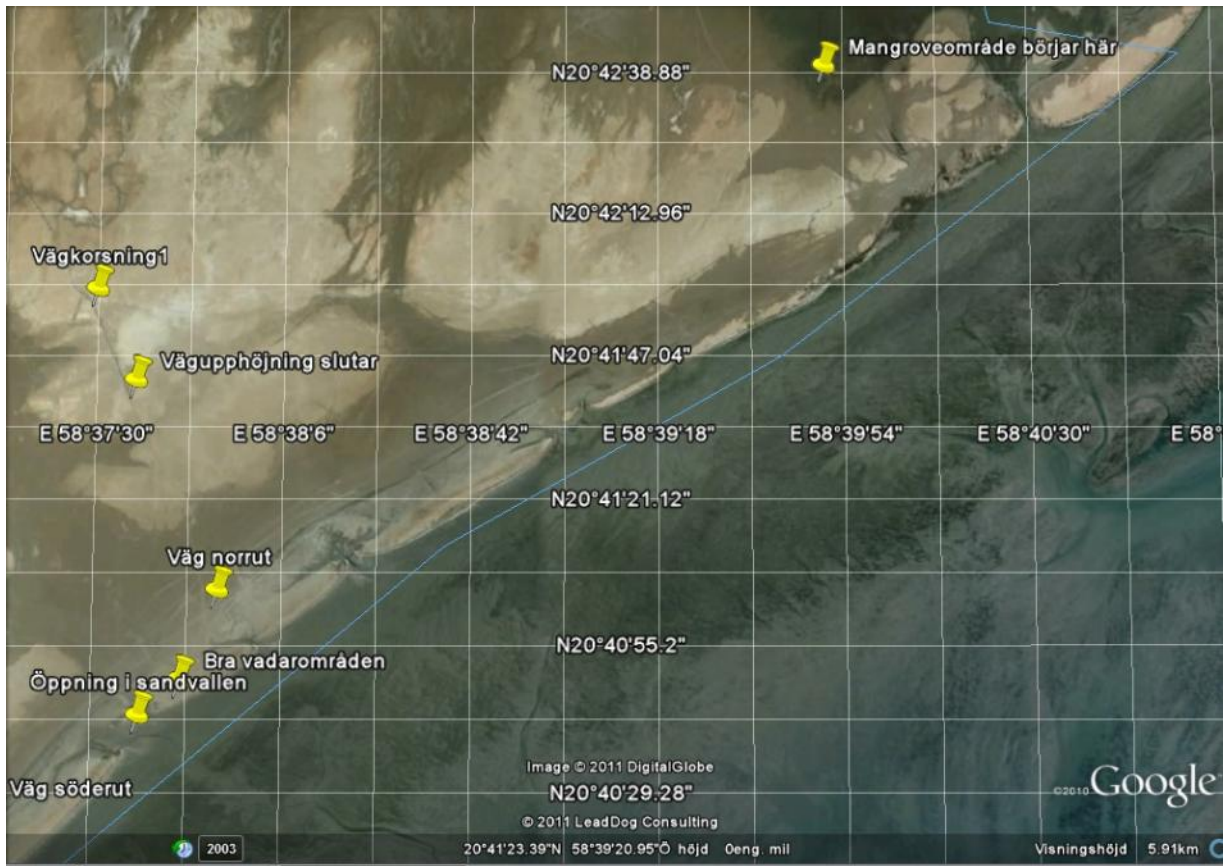


Figure 5: The area north of the "Good area for waders". Mangroveområde börjar här=Mangrove patch starts here.

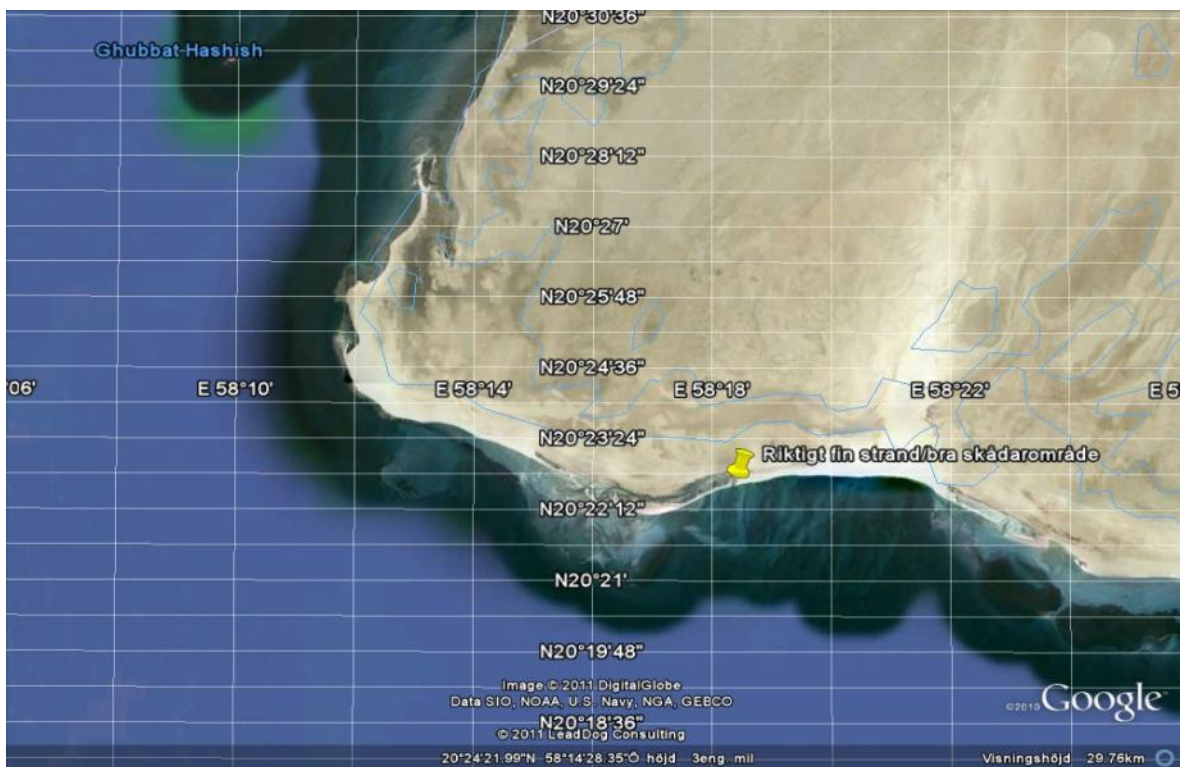


Figure 6: The south coast of Barr al Hikman. This is a nice place with a really nice beach. Some salt water lagoons always holds good number of waders and the surrounding vegetation is good for migrants and some wintering passerines.

Figure 7 shows the Filim area including Mahawat. Mahawat is either reached by getting a fisherman to take you out during high tide or you can walk there during low tides. However the walk is very muddy and time consuming and don't give you a very long time on the island. I have only been to the island twice, but only had one observation of the White-eyes. The road to Filim is paved and in very good condition. If you are in need of a shower there is a public shower at the desalination plant next to the mangroves which I have used several times. There are also almost always some interesting birds around this place due to the access to fresh water.

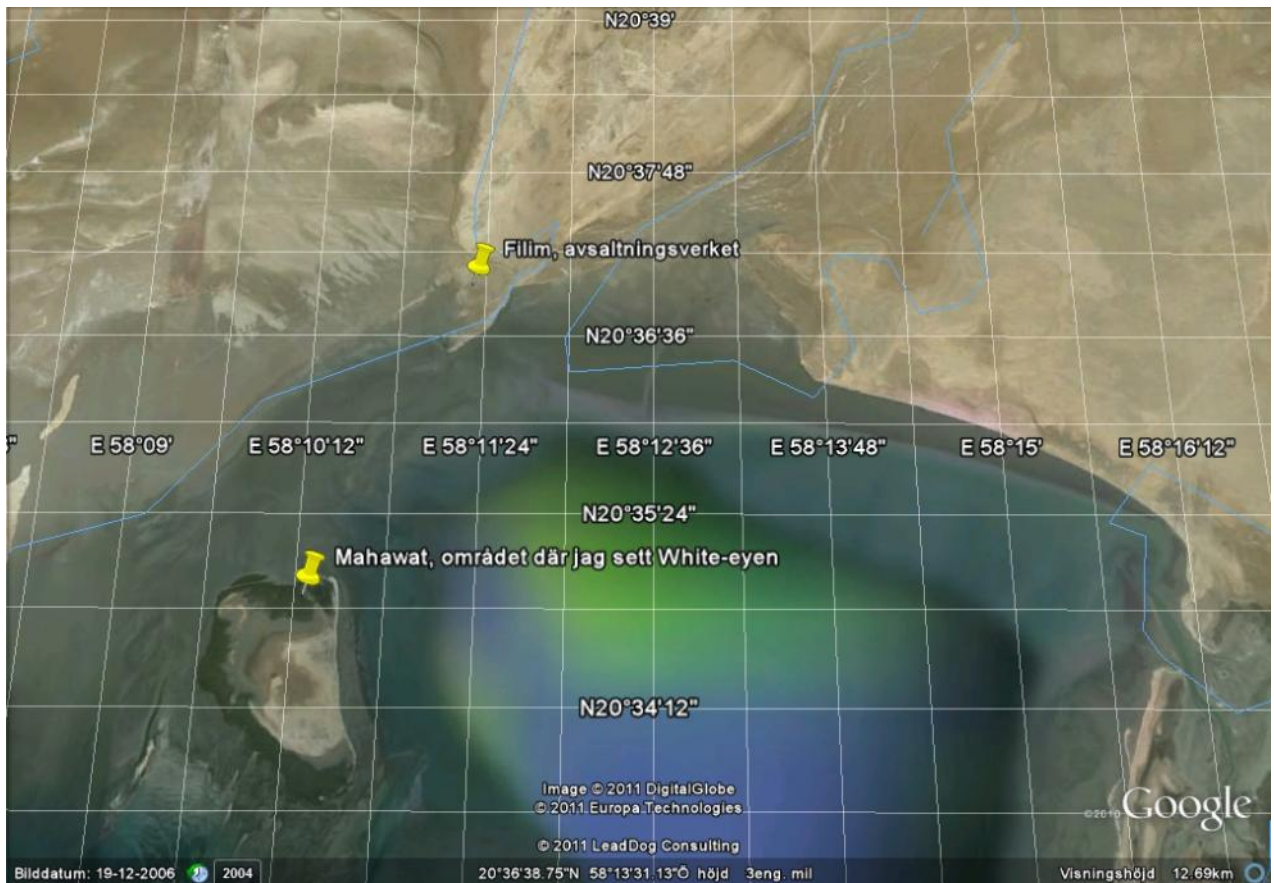


Figure 7: Filim and the island Mahawat where Oriental White-eye can be found in the mangroves. The mudflats between Mahawat and Filim is usually good for Great Knots.

If you are interested in gulls, there is a place called Al Najdah where the fishermen come in to pick out the fish from their nets. This place is situated at following coordinates: 20° 50.789'N, 58° 44.401'E. During the winter months there are 30-50000 large white-headed gulls around. A couple of thousand Swift Terns are also around as well as Sooty Gulls and in smaller numbers also Great Black-headed Gulls.

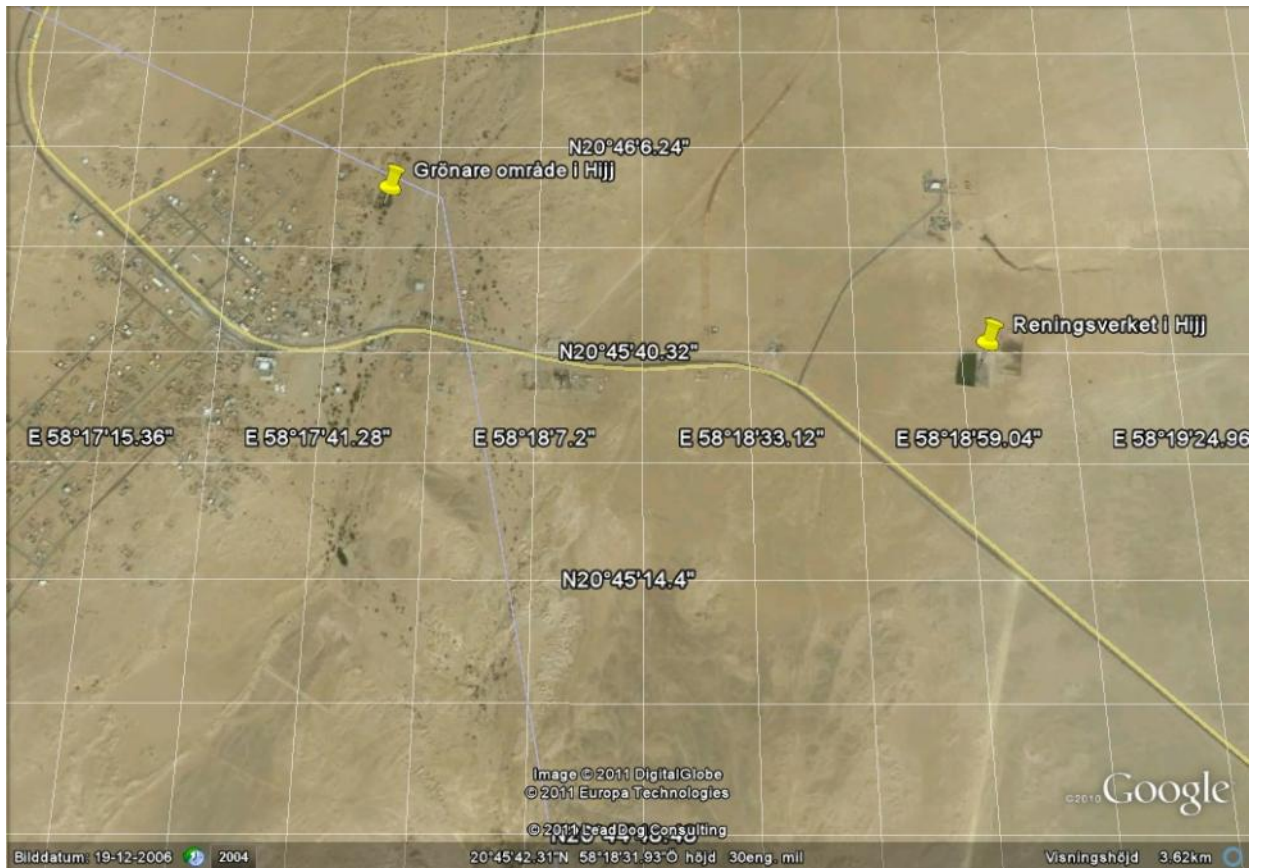


Figure 8: Two spots in Hijj worth checking when passing through. The left marker is an irrigated garden which attracts migrating birds. The right marker shows some sewage ponds that usually holds some ducks and waders. Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouses may come to drink here.

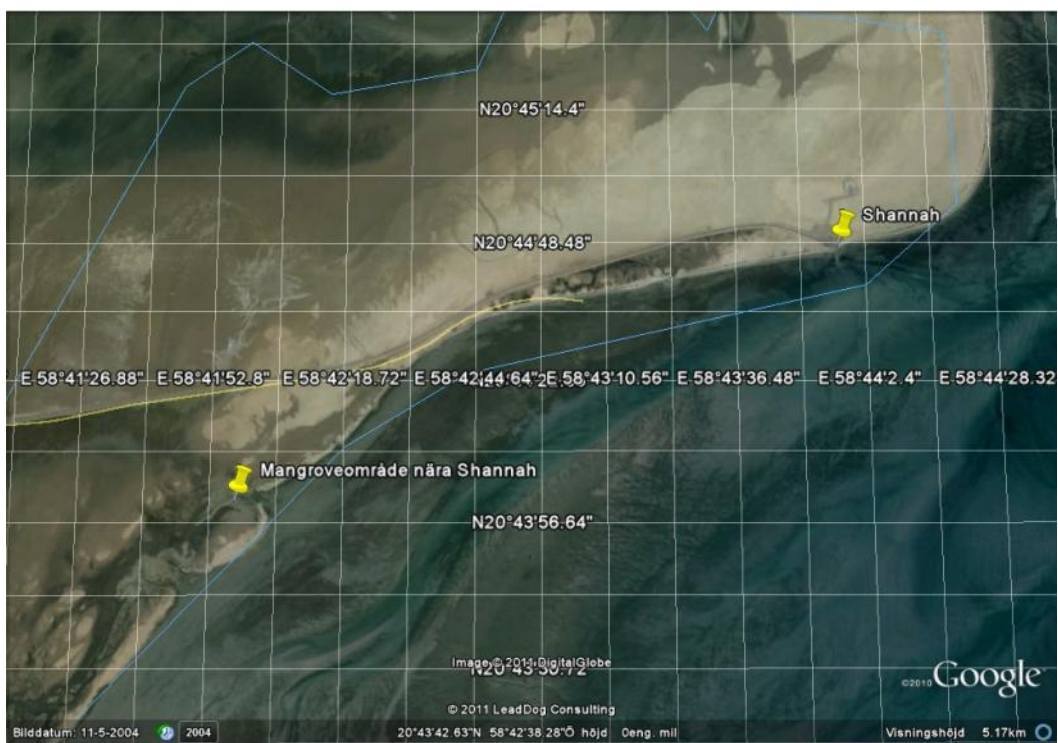


Figure 9: The left marker shows the mangrove area south of Shannah. During our trip we found an Amur Falcon here. This is also the place where Lesser Moorhen have been caught.

Crown Plaza Hotel

This is probably one of the easiest places to find Spotted Thick-knee at. We went there around 22.30 and had two birds hanging around the small golf course inside the hotel area. A good suggestion could be to combine this bird by having a beer at the hotel bar. Another Swedish birder told us that there was a Grey-headed Kingfisher hanging around the pool area in the mornings, but we didn't make any try for this bird. But I guess it could be around throughout the winter.

East Khawr

Another spot that I didn't really find very interesting. I guess there are nice birds showing up here every now and then but the most interesting we saw was a flock of 80 Pacific Golden Plovers. Sure it is worth giving it a few minutes when passing by, but I wouldn't waste a morning here.

Jinaw

This is probably one of the best places in Oman to see large numbers of Socotra Cormorants. We were there in the afternoon and saw probably at least 10 000 birds. There were also good numbers of Masked Boobies, Jounin's Petrels and Persian Shearwater in the area between Ash Schuwaymiyyah and Jinaw.

Khatmat Milahah

This is the place for Variable Wheatear, which we also found quite easily. However the bird is really tricky to separate from Hume's Wheatear, which however should be around at more rocky areas whilst the Variable Wheatear tends to sit low in bushes and trees in the plains. A few Plain Leaf Warblers and Asian Desert Warblers were also seen as well as Arabian Babblers and Red-tailed Wheatears.

Khawr al Milh

We made a short visit and the only interesting birds seen were 49 Egyptian Vultures and a few Black-necked Grebe. Perhaps the windy conditions made the birds go away. But in my opinion the Qurayyat area is not a place I would spend too much time birding at when birding Oman.

Khawr Dhurf

This is a Khawr which is worth a stop if passing by if you are driving the coast road south to Salalah. We didn't see anything special except some Crowned Sandgrouses and a Turkestan Shrike. Some Spoonbills, Herons, Ducks and Terns are around but not in any impressive numbers.

Khawr Ghawi

This place is worth giving some more time with large numbers of roosting Gulls and Terns around the mouth. We arrived a little bit late in the afternoon giving us just an hour of daylight which wasn't enough to go further into the Khawr. Fairly good numbers of Flamingos and waders were seen at distance with a few Crab Plovers being possible to ID. To be able to do this area properly you either need a 4WD and good skills to drive in sand or be willing to walk 10-15 km. Some parts of the area can also be reached by a 2WD on dirt tracks.

Khawr Rhawri

We approached this place from the west which was a good option since we got a good overview from a cliff before we went down to the Water level and did some birding. A Pheasant-tailed Jacana and a Ferruginous Duck was however the only interesting birds around when we were there. But this place is worth a check if you are passing by the area.

Khawr Taqah

The area doesn't look very interesting since all the ponds are surrounded by concrete walls and dense reed. But we had some really nice birds at the short visits we paid the place. A Yellow Bittern was flushed in the Northeastern pond where also the Pheasant-tailed Jacana spent most of its time. A Small Pratincole was found sitting on the concrete next to the NW pond at one of our visits. Other nice birds around were Booted Eagle, Montague's Harrier and Black Kite. Since the place is very easy to access it is definitely worth having a look there every time you pass by. In the night many Black-crowned Night-herons were seen in the area.

Liwa

In the Birdwatching guide to Oman the Collared Kingfisher is said to be abundant, or in this case supposed to be seen at every visit. I wouldn't say this is the case anymore even though we heard it calling once right at dawn close to the area where there are a lot of dead branches at the edge of the mangrove patch. A Syke's Warbler also came out openly jumping around among the dead branches. Striated Heron, Western Clamorous Warbler and Common Kingfisher are other birds you can expect to see here.

Muntasar

There are a few places where water is present which should be checked at the place. The most obvious is the open water at the eastern end of the oasis. This is the place where the Sandgrouses come to drink from about 09:00. There is also a concrete pond in the Northeastern part which is hidden behind some palm-trees and the reed. During our visit we didn't see anything special. The only Nightjar we found was a single European and not any of the searched for Egyptian, which is seen regularly at the place during previous winters. We also missed out on the Golden Eagle which was seen about 30 minutes before we arrived. Otherwise the numbers of birds around were few with a Common Quail being the most odd. I guess that the Sandgrouses that used to come there in hundreds now has split up and found new places to drink at due to the growing number of farming projects in the area.

Qatbit

This place hardly needs any description since it is well described in the guidebook. Hypocolius, Nile Valley Sunbird and Hume's Warbler were the best bird during our visit. However a more unknown place is probably the sandy plain shown in the picture below about five kilometers NW of Qatbit along the dirt track. The coordinates for this place are: 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E. This place was very good for larks and Dunn's, Bar-tailed, Hoopoe, Black Crowned Sparrow and Greater Short-toed Lark were all found. We also made a brief stop at the Qatbit Oasis which didn't give much.



Ras al Khabbah

This is a good vantage point for seawatching since you are standing on a high cliff at a point. However going there at the end of November was obviously more or less a waste of time. Hardly any seabirds were seen and the only savior was a good migration of Great Black-headed Gulls which were seen at close range.

Ras Janjari

The place we went to is not the place called Ras Janjari in the guidebook, but rather the one marked on maps. In Google earth the place we visited is the point east of Qanqari Bay at the coordinates: 17° 0.047'N, 55° 1.187'E. The place is not bad for sea birds. But I guess the point marked as Ras Janjari in the guidebook is better. Also it is not recommended to go to this place since the road is very rough and thus time-consuming.

Ras Mirbat

We only visited this place at daytime when the light conditions were very poor. Still there were fairly good numbers of seabirds. If you only have access to a 2WD this is probably the best place around Salalah for seabirds. Striated Herons were around at the point as well as in the harbor. We tried to get a fisherman to bring us out to the birds, but all of them were occupied by lobster fishing at the moment.

Raysut Waste Dump

This place is probably the worst place you may visit during your trip to Oman. However the large number of Steppe Eagles may make it worth the visit. There is obviously a place nearby where the Eagles come down to drink which should be a lot nicer to pay a visit. Unfortunately I do not know where.

Sahnawt Farm

The farm is fenced and off limit to visitors. However large parts of the farm can be scanned just by driving around looking through the many openings in the fence. There is for example no problem at all to enter the farming area through the broken fence at the western end of the farm. We didn't spend much time at the place, but a flock of 40 Sociable Plovers were nice.

Sayq Plateau

This place requires a 4WD since you are not allowed to drive the steep road up the hill with a 2WD. The Sayq-plateau is a good place for species like Plain Leaf Warbler, Lappet-faced Vulture, Red-tailed Wheatear, Hume's Wheatear, Wood Pigeon and Blue Rock Thrush. Another species that is found here is Scrub Warbler which we found close to the point P in the guidebook. Wadi Bani Habib with its small gardens is a very nice place to visit even though we didn't find anything interesting at our visit.

Shinas

This is supposed to be another good spot for Collared Kingfisher and Syke's Warbler of which we saw none. However we were there at midday, which of course makes it more difficult. It is a quite nice place and it is hard to tell which place to choose for the morning hours of Liwa and Shinas to get the best result.

Sun Farms

To enter this place just drive up to the gate and fill in your contact information in the book you will be handed by the guard. I have been there at three occasions having no problem to enter at either of them. It is said that they are closing down the farm but there is still good activity with a lot of cattle. However the former fields where they used to grow vegetables have been abandoned. However there are still some circular fields where grass is grown which is good for Larks, Pipits and Sociable Plovers. The best fields are those newly cut which when we were there were those at 24° 17.810'N, 56° 44.540'E. Those with higher grass are not so interesting, and also not recommended to walk around in. At our visit we had a flock of 9 Oriental Skylarks and at least 30 Richard's Pipits, all seen at the irrigated grassy fields with low grass. Another part of the area not to be missed is the sewage ponds at 24° 18.895'N, 56° 45.038'E where plenty of waders always are around. This used to be a good place for Masked Wagtail, which we didn't see during our trip. Grey Francolins, White-tailed Lapwing and Glossy Ibises are other birds hanging around the ponds. However the whole area is well worth driving around in search of different birds. At least one pair of Lilith Owls is supposed to be present in the area even though we missed out on that species.

Tawi Atayr

This is the place where you go for Yemen Serin which was very easily found at the sinkhole. A pair of Bonelli's Eagles also hangs around in the sinkhole. There are plenty of birds around but we didn't see anything unexpected. The grassy plains on the way to Tawi Atayr if coming from Wadi Derbat are good for Raptors, Wheatears and Singing Bush-lark. However we only found one Bush-lark, but there were most likely more of them, but they may be hard to find as they are hiding quite well. Steppe Buzzard, Long-legged Buzzard and Lappet-faced Vulture were seen in this area as well.

Wadi along the main road between Muhut and Ad Duqm

A short stop between 10:00-11:00 in the Wadi next to the road at the coordinates 20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E gave three species of Sandgrouses, Chestnut-bellied, Crowned and a few Spotted. There were also 3 Plain Leaf Warblers around. So if you pass by on the way south from Barr al Hikman it is worth taking at least a short walk around the palm-trees and the reed patches. The water in the Wadi seemed to have rather high salt content, but still the Sandgrouses used it for drinking.

Wadi Ash Schuwaymiyyah

This Wadi is well worth a visit if you are taking the coast road down to Salalah. Soon it is also possible to drive the whole way to Salalah along the coast, which is hard at the moment even if we were told it was possible with a 4WD. The most interesting birds seen or heard in the Wadi are Hume's Owl and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse. We heard one owl at the date plantation at the "end" of the road and another one from the cliffs on the opposite side of the Hanging Gardens. The Sandgrouses comes to drink after dusk at the small ponds on the cliff reached by walking up the stairs to the sunscreens. When we were there the Sandgrouses arrived at 18:10 and the last observation was at 18:25. You will first find them calling before you see them. They seem to come out of nowhere just when you think it is getting to dark. Other birds present in the Wadi are Striolated Bunting, Sand Partridge and Arabian Partridge. There are also recent observations of Verraux's Eagle from the hanging gardens, but we failed to see any. The Wadi is also probably one of the best places for South Arabian Wheatear which was fairly common here.

Wadi Derbat

I would say this is one of the best birding spots in Oman. This is the place to start with when birding in southern Oman. You will easily track down Bruce's Green Pigeon, African Paradise Flycatcher, Blackstart, Abyssinian White-eye, Black-crowned Tchagra. Further into the Wadi where the stream goes over to small patches of water in between stones is a good place for South Arabian Wheatear. Greater Spotted Eagle, Eastern Imperial Eagle and Bonelli's Eagle are easily seen. During our visits there were at least 155 Abdim's Storks around which were easily seen. A single Black Stork was hanging around further in the Wadi. The whole stream is well worth walking around since anything can show up. This was for example the place where we found the Ruddy-breasted Crake which had its territory at following coordinates: 17° 6.317'N, 54° 27.218'E which is opposite to the parking place at the end of the paved road. There is also a trail continuing over the small hill leading deeper into the Wadi. There are some really nice areas around here to which shouldn't be forgotten. The area with low bushes close to the turnoff is probably a good place for Long-billed Pipit as we found one there from the car.



Figure 10: Part of the stream in the Wadi a bit upstream from the parking ground. There are some nice pools around here which should be covered when birding in Wadi Derbat.

Wadi Hanna

This is said to be the best place for Golden-winged Grosbeak. Unfortunately we just paid a brief visit at mid day which didn't give anything but loud Omani kids. This place is easily accessed with a 2WD since the road now is paved.

Wadi Rabkut

This place was a quite nice area which is supposed to be good for Maqueen's Bustard which we failed to find. However this Wadi is long and hard to go through. The most interesting birds we saw were an Amur Falcon and two Lappet-faced Vultures. This is also a good place for African Collared Dove which shouldn't be forgotten to look for. I probably heard one, but didn't think of the species until later same day when I was reminded of the fact that there have been previous observations in this area. A 4WD is preferred but a 2WD will work fairly good as well.

West Khawr

This place is definitely worth a short visit. The main target here is the Red-knobbed Coot which has been around for a couple of years now. Other species seen were Ferruginous Duck, Intermediate Egret, Little Bittern, Black-headed and Scaly-breasted Munia.

Species seen

Little Grebe

30+ Al Ansab Lagoons, 1 Wadi Derbat, 2 Khawr Al Mughsayl.

Black-necked Grebe

1 Al Ansab Lagoons 26/11, 3 Khawr al Milh 28/11.

Jounin's Petrel

36 Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 8 Ras Janjari 22/11, 4 Ras Mirbat 22/11.

Persian Shearwater

14 Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 5 Al Mughsayl 21/11, >80 Ras Janjari 22/11, >20 Ras Mirbat 22/11, 2 Ras al Khabbah 28/11.

Masked Booby

2 Al Qurm Beach (Muscat) 16/11, 150 Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 1 Khawr Taqah Beach 20/11, >70 Ras Janjari 22/11, 1 Ras al Khabbah 28/11.

Brown Booby

19 Al Mughsayl 21/11. Most of the birds were sitting on small plastic containers in the sea.

Great Cormorant

30 Al Ansab Lagoons, Barr al Hikman, 3 Khawr Rhawri.

Socotra Cormorant

1 Ash Shuwaymiyyah, > 10 000 where the high cliffs start at Jinaw 19/11.

Little Bittern

1 juvenile bird flushed at West Khawr 23/11.

Yellow Bittern

1 adult flushed in the northern part of the NW pond at Khawr Taqah while walking on the pavement next to the pond 20/11. The bird went down in a small reed patch and disappeared.

Black-crowned Night-heron

1 Khawr Rhawri, 2 Wadi Derbat, 20 Khawr Taqah.

Striated Heron

1 Mangroves in Shannah (BaH), 1 Ras Mirbat 22/11, 1 Mirbat Harbor 22/11, 2 Liwa 27/11, 1 Al Qurm (Muscat) 29/11.

Squacco Heron

3 East Khawr 21/11, 1 West Khawr 23/11, 1 Sun Farms 27/11. Also several Squacco/Indian Pond Herons seen that were left unidentified, mainly in the Khawrs in the Salalah area.

Indian Pond Heron

2 Khawr Taqah 20/11, 1 Khawr Rhawri 20/11, 3 East Khawr 21/11, 1 Liwa 27/11.



Cattle Egret

2 West Khawr 23/11, >40 Sun Farms 27/11.

Western Reef Heron

Most common Heron in Oman: Barr al Hikman, Al Ansab Lagoons, Khawr Dhurf, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Little Egret

Small numbers seen at: Al Ansab Lagoons, Wadi Derbat, Al Qurm, Khawr Dhurf etc.

Intermediate Egret

1 West Khawr.

Great White Egret

Small numbers seen at: Barr al Hikman, Al Ansab Lagoons, Khawr Dhurf, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Grey Heron

Small numbers seen at: Barr al Hikman, Wadi Derbat, Al Qurm, Khawr Dhurf etc.

Purple Heron

1 Al Qurm, 2 Khawr Taqah, 2 Wadi Derbat, 2 West Khawr.

Black Stork

1 Wadi Derbat 23/11. A younger bird was seen in a pool in the stream about 1 km upstream from the parking place at the end of the paved road.

White Stork

>100 Raysut Waste Disposal Site.

Abdim's Stork

>155 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11. The birds came in to roost/drink every now and then during the day.



Eurasian Spoonbill

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 30 Khawr Ghawi 18/11, 2 Khawr Dhurf 18/11.

Glossy Ibis

41 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 1 Khawr Taqah 21/11, 1 Khawr Al Mughsayl 21/11, 8 Khawr Taqah 23/11, 15 Sun Farms 27/11, 10 Al Qurm (Muscat) 29/11.

Greater Flamingo

Barr al Hikman, Al Ansab Lagoons, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Wigeon

Hijj (Water treatment plant), Khawr Dhurf, West Khawr etc.

Teal

Al Ansab Lagoons, Hijj (Water treatment plant), West Khawr, Muntasar etc.

Mallard

3 Al Qurm 29/11, 1 Shinas 27/11.

Northern Pintail

Al Ansab Lagoons, Hijj (Water treatment plant), West Khawr, Sun Farms etc.

Garganey

Al Ansab Lagoons, Hijj (Water treatment plant), Khawr Taqah etc.

Shoveler

Al Ansab Lagoons, Hijj (Water treatment plant), Ash Shuwamiyyah etc.

Ferruginous Duck

1 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 1 Khawr Rhawri 20/11, 1 West Khawr 23/11.

Tufted Duck

2 West Khawr 23/11, 2 Al Ansab Lagoons 26/11.

Crested Honey Buzzard

2 Date palm plantation close to Al Hilal Sports Club in Salalah 21/11.



Black Kite (Yellow-billed)

1 Khawr Taqah 21/11.

Egyptian Vulture

2 Izki 16/11, 49 Khawr al Milh (Qurayyat).

Lappet-faced Vulture

1 flew over the road at the grasslands near Tawi Atayr (20° 06.781'N, 54° 28.870'E) 20/11, 1 Ayn Hamran 22/11, 2 Wadi Rabkut 24/11.

Short-toed Eagle

1 along the road about 3 km S of the Wadi at (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11, 2 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyya 19/11, 5 Ayn Hamran 20-23/11, 6 Tawi Atayr, 1 Sun Farms 27/11, 2 Wadi derbat 23/11.

Marsh Harrier

Barr al Hikman, Khawr Taqah, Sun Farms etc.

Pallid Harrier

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 1 Al Najda 24/11, 3 Sun Farms 27/11.

Montague's Harrier

2 Khawr Taqah 21/11.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk

1 Wadi (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11, 1 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, 2 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 2 Wadi Bani Habib 26/11, 1 Khatmat Milahah 27/11.

Common Buzzard

1 along the road at grasslands near Tawi Atayr (20° 06.781'N, 54° 28.870'E) 20/11.

Long-legged Buzzard

1 Grasslands near Tawi Atayr 20/11 (20° 06.781'N, 54° 28.870'E), 1 Muntasar 25/11.

Greater Spotted Eagle

5 Wadi Derbat 21/11, 2 Raysut Waste Disposal Site 21/11, 10 Wadi Derbat 23/11, 1 Sun Farms 27/11, 1 Khawr Taqah 23/11.

Steppe Eagle

6 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 4 Khawr Rawri 20/11, 12 Tawi Atayr 20/11, 500 Raysut Waste Disposal Site 21/11, 6 Wadi Rabkut 24/11, 1 Al Qurm 29/11. Also several single birds along the road during the trip.

Eastern Imperial Eagle

2 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 3 Grasslands near Tawi Atayr (20° 06.781'N, 54° 28.870'E) 20/11, 1 Tawi Atayr 20/11, 1 Wadi Derbat, 3 Raysut Waste Disposal Site, 1 Sahnawt Farm 22/11.

Bonelli's Eagle

2 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 4 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 2 Tawi Atayr 20/11, 3 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 1 Sun Farms.

Verreaux's Eagle

1 adult flew by over the cliffs at Ayn Hamran around 10:30 the 20/11.

Booted Eagle

1 pale morph Ayn Hamran 20/11, 1 dark morph Khawr Taqah 20/11, 1 pale morph Khawr Taqah 22/11.

Osprey

Several seen at Barr al Hikman and along the coast road close to Ad Duqm.

Common Kestrel

Single birds seen at several places like Hijj, Wadi Derbat, Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah, Ayn Hamran etc.

Amur Falcon

1 adult female at the mangrove patch south of Shannah (BaH), 1 juv on power lines next to the road about 20 km N of Ad Duqm, 1 juv Wadi Rabkut 24/11.



Eurasian Hobby

3 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Peregrine Falcon

1 Ayn Hamran 20/11.

Arabian Partridge

15 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 12 Ayn Hamran 20-23/11, 8 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Sand Partridge

3 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 6 Wadi Rabkut 24/11.

Grey Francolin

5 Al Ansab Lagoons, 40 sun Farms 27/11, 20 NW of Al Khabbah at 22° 18.248'N 59° 46.988'E.

Common Quail

1 Muntasar 25/11.

Common Moorhen

>100 West Khawr. Otherwise seen in small numbers in most of the wetlands visited.

Common Coot

1 Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 4 West Khawr 23/11. Also seen at Khawr Taqah 20/11 and Al Ansab Lagoons 26/11.

Red-knobbed Coot

2 West Khawr 23/11.

Ruddy-breasted Crake

1 Wadi Derbat. The bird was seen walking at the shoreline at the coordinates 17° 6.317'N, 54°27.218'E. This site is on the opposite side of the stream more or less at the parking place at the end of the paved road. The bird was most easily seen by waiting for it to come out of a small tuft of grass where it used to hide. Sometimes it also walked around in the water lilies a few meters away. The record of this species was the first for the Middle East and the bird was found by Peter Olsson.



Pheasant-tailed Jacana

1 Khawr Rhawri 20/11, 1 Khawr Taqah 20-23/11.



Eurasian Oystercatcher

Common at Barr al Hikman and Khawr Ghawi. Single birds seen in coastal habitats at several places.

Black-winged Stilt

>100 Sun Farms. Otherwise seen in small numbers in most of the Khawrs in the south.

Crab Plover

>500 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 3 Khawr Ghawi.

Eurasian Stone-Curlew

55 at dry stream beds with bushes on the stony plain along the road to Ayn Hamran. The birds are hiding quite well but are fairly easy to find from the car at 17° 4.420'N, 54° 16.858'E. There are several small dry streambeds with bushes in the area which is likely to hold more birds.

Spotted Thick-knee

2 Crown Plaza Hotel in Salalah. The birds were seen and heard at the small golf course in the hotel area at 22:30 the 23/11.

Cream-colored Courser

1 at the beginning of the rough dirt track to Ras Janjari (17° 5.079'N, 54°56.982'E), 1 at the stony/sandy plains east of the road to Ayn Hamran (17° 3.676'N, 54° 17.070'E), 3 Sun Farms 27/11.

Small Pratincole

1 Khawr Taqah 21/11. The bird was seen sitting on the eastern side on the pavement next to the NW pond at 10:30.



Ringed Plover

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Kentish Plover

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Lesser Sand Plover

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Greater Sand Plover

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Pacific Golden Plover

1 Khawr Ghawi 18/11, 1 Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 3 Khawr Rhawri 20/11, >80 East Khawr 21/11.

Grey Plover

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Red-wattled Plover

2 Al Ansab Lagoons, >100 Sun Farms (the ponds).

White-tailed Plover

2 Al Ansab Lagoons 16-27/11, 5 Sun Farms (the ponds).

Sociable Plover

40 Sahnawt Farm 22/11. The birds were seen in one flock at the SW-most field which was just ploughed. 7 Sun Farms on newly harvested grass fields at 24° 17.810'N, 56° 44.540'E.

Great Knot

204 Barr al Hikman 17/11 on the mudflats near following coordinates: 20° 40.898'N, 58° 39.170'E.

Sanderling

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Little Stint

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Temminck's Stint

2 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, 7 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 10 Sun Farms 27/11, 5 Al Qurm 29/11.

Curlew Sandpiper

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Dunlin

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Pectoral Sandpiper

1 Al Ansab Lagoons 16-27/11.

Broad-billed Sandpiper

>200 Barr al Hikman. Otherwise just some scattered observations at places with mudflats like Khawr Ghawi.

Ruff

40 Al Ansab Lagoons 16-26/11, 30 Sun Farms 27/11. Also seen in small numbers in the Khawrs in the south.

Jack Snipe

1 Al Qurm Park 29/11.

Common Snipe

5 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, 11 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 4 Khawr Al Mughsayl 21/11, 4 Sun Farms 29/11.

Pin-tailed Snipe

1 Feeding at the shores of the stream in Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 1 Al Qurm 29/11.



Black-tailed Godwit

2 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 1 Khawr Rhawri 20/11, 1 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 1 East Khawr 21/11.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Commonly seen at Barr al Hikman etc.

Whimbrel

Small numbers seen at Barr al Hikman, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Eurasian Curlew

Small numbers seen at Barr al Hikman, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Spotted Redshank

1 Filim (BaH) 17/11.

Common Redshank

Fairly common at Barr al Hikman, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Marsh Sandpiper

4 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 2 Barr al Hikman 18/11, 1 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Common Greenshank

Al Ansab Lagoons, Barr al Hikman, Wadi Derbat etc.

Wood Sandpiper

8 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 4 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 10 Sun Farms 27/11. Single birds also seen at several of the Khawrs in the south.

Green Sandpiper

1 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 1 Tawi Atayr 20/11, 4 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Terek Sandpiper

Fairly common at Barr al Hikman. Single birds in Al Mughsayl, Shinas, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Common Sandpiper

Small numbers seen in Filim, Shannah, Al Qurm, Wadi Derbat etc.

Ruddy Turnstone

Common Barr al Hikman.

Red-necked Phalarope

500 Al Qurm Beach (Muscat) 16/11, 1 Hijj 17/11, 1 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, >100 Ash Shuwaymiyyah, >250 Ras Janjari 22/11, >500 Ras al Khabbah 28/11.

Arctic Skua

1 immature bird flew south at Ras al Khabbah 28/11.

Sooty Gull

Barr al Hikman, Khawr Ghawi etc.

Black-headed Gull

3 West Khawr 23/11.

Slender-billed Gull

Commonly seen along the coast.

Great Black-headed Gull

48 migrating south at Ras al Khabbah 28/11.



Baltic Gull

A few seen at Khawr Ghawi.

Heuglin's Gull

Common along the coast.

Caspian Gull

Common along the coast.

Gull-billed Tern

>10 Barr al Hikman 17/11.

Caspian Tern

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 10 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, >50 Khawr Ghawi 18/11.

Swift Tern

Common along the coast.

Lesser Crested Tern

4 Shannah (BaH) 17/11, 3 Khawr Ghawi 18/11, a few single birds seen along the coast in the south.

Sandwich Tern

6 Shannah (BaH) 17/11, also seen in small numbers along the coast in the south.

Common Tern

7 Jinaw 19/11.

White-cheeked Tern

2 Came in to roost on the plastic containers out in the sea at late afternoon at Al Mughsayl 21/11.

Bridled Tern

6 Al Qurm Beach (Muscat) 16/11, 5 off shore at Khawr Rhawri 20/11, >40 Al Mughsayl, >150 Ras Janjari 22/11.

Saunder's Tern

4 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 1 Khawr Taqah 20/11. Many more Little/Saunder's Terns were seen along the coast during the trip, but very limited time spent identifying them.

Whiskered Tern

1 Filim 17/11, 1 Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 2 Khawr Rhawri 20/11, 1 Khawr Al Mughsayl, 10 East Khawr 21/11, 1 West Khawr 23/11, >40 Sun Farms 27/11.

White-winged Black Tern

1 East Khawr 21/11, 10 Sun Farms 27/11.

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse

>20 Hanging Gardens at Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah. The birds came to drink in the small pools on the small plateau at the hanging gardens. Walk up the stairs and sit down at the first sunscreen and wait for the birds at dusk. The birds came in to drink between 18:10-18:25. They were calling frequently in the darkness when they arrived.

Crowned Sandgrouse

40 Wadi 70 km N Ad Duqm (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11. Came to drink between 10:00-10:30, 15 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, 5 Wadi Rabkut 24/11.

Spotted Sandgrouse

5 Wadi 70 km N Ad Duqm (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11. Came to drink between 10:00-10:30, >150 Al Najda 24/11, 10 Wadi Rabkut 24/11, 53 Muntasar 25/11, came to drink between 09:10-09:30. >70 Sandy plain with low vegetation 5 km NNW Qatbit at 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse

2 Hijj 17/11, >60 in Wadi 70 km N Ad Duqm (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11. Came to drink between 10:00-10:30. 10 Wadi Rabkut 24/11. 40 Al Khabbah Water treatment plant 28/11 at 22°17.861'N, 59° 48.856'E.

Bruce's Green Pigeon

2 Ayn Hamran 20/11, >50 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Wood Pigeon

1 Wadi Bani Habib 26/11.

Rock Dove

15 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 5 Ayn Hamran 20/11.

Laughing Dove

Common throughout.

Namaqua Dove

5 Sahnawt Farm 21/11, 20 Sun Farms 27/11.

Collared Dove

Common throughout.

Rufous Turtle-dove

1 juv Sun Farms 27/11.



Ring-necked Parakeet

7 Khawr Taqah 21/11, 8 Sahnawt Farm 21/11, common in Muscat.

Barn Owl

2 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Arabian Spotted Eagle Owl

1 Heard calling about an hour before dawn at Wadi Derbat. Heard from following coordinates: 17°05.849'N, 54° 26.981'E.

Hume's Owl

1 At the cliffs close to the date plantation at the "end" of the road in Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 18/11. The bird was calling when we arrived at 20:30 and continued to do so irregularly throughout the night. Coordinates for the site is: 17°54.631'N, 55° 27.246'E. Another bird was heard calling from the cliffs on the opposite side of the Wadi from the Hanging Garden in Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah. This bird was calling a couple of times at 18:05 the 19/11 while we were waiting for the Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse to show up.

Arabian Scops-owl

7 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 15 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.



European Nightjahr

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 1 Sahnawt Farm 22/11, 2 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 1 Al Najda 24/11, 1 Muntasar 24/11.

Common Swift

1 West Khawr 23/11.

Pallid Swift

10 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11

Collared Kingfisher

1 Liwa 27/11. Only heard at dawn.

Common Kingfisher

3 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 5 Liwa 27/11, 4 Shinas 27/11, 1 Al Qurm 29/11.

Green Bee-eater

Single birds or pairs seen at Al Ansab Lagoons, Sun Farms, Al Qurm, Sahnawt Farm etc.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Small numbers seen at Barr al Hikman, Sahnawt Farm, Muntasar, Wadi Bani Habib etc.

European Roller

1 Muntasar 25/11, 1 Bushy area NW Al Khabbah at 22° 18.248'N, 59° 46.988'E.

Indian Roller

Single birds seen regularly along the roads in the from Hijj North to Khatmat Milahah.

Hoopoe

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 5 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Eurasian Wryneck

1 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11

Singing Bush-lark

1 Grasslands near Tawi Atayr at 20° 06.781'N, 54° 28.870'E.



Black-crowned Sparrow-lark

4 Plains below Ayn Hamran 22/11, 10 Al Najda 24/11, >10 Wadi Rabkut 24/11, 2 Muntasar 25/11, 8 Sandy plain with low vegetation 5 km NNW Qatbit 25/11 at 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E, 5 Al Khabbah Water treatment plant 28/11 at 22°17.861'N, 59° 48.856'E.

Desert Lark

>10 along the road between Muhut and Khawr Ghawi 18/11. >10 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 2 Plains below Ayn Hamran 23/11, 4 Wadi Rabkut 24/11, 8 Sayq-plateau 26/11. The pictures below show two different subspecies of Desert Lark. The bird to the left was seen in Wadi Rabkut and the other along the road north of Ad Duqm.



Dunn's Lark

2 Sandy plain with low vegetation 5 km NNW Qatbit 25/11 at 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E.



Bar-tailed Lark

2 Sandy plain with low vegetation 5 km NNW Qatbit 25/11 at 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E.

Hoopoe Lark

3 Along the road between Sinaw and Muhut 16/11, 3 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 7 Ad Duqm 18/11, 1 Al Najda 24/11, 4 Wadi Rabkut 24/11, 4 Sandy plain with low vegetation 5 km NNW Qatbit 25/11 at 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E.

Greater Short-toed Lark

7 Sandy plain with low vegetation 5 km NNW Qatbit 25/11 at 19° 12.624'N, 54° 29.032'E, 7 Al Khabbah Water treatment plant 28/11 at 22°17.861'N, 59° 48.856'E.

Crested Lark

Scattered observations throughout. Common at Ad Duqm, Al Khabbah, Sun Farms etc.

Oriental Skylark

9 Sun Farms 27/11 on newly harvested grass fields at 24° 17.810'N, 56° 44.540'E.

Eurasian Skylark

6 Sun Farms 27/11 on newly harvested grass fields at 24° 17.810'N, 56° 44.540'E.

Sand Martin

1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11.

Pale Rock Martin

Scattered observations throughout the country. Wadi Derbat, Muscat and Sayq are all safe locations for this specie.

Barn Swallow

5 Ad Duqm 18/11, 1 Muntasar 25/11, 1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11.

Richard's Pipit

>30 Sun Farms 27/11 on newly harvested grass fields at 24° 17.810'N, 56° 44.540'E.

Tawny Pipit

Scattered observations throughout. >50 Ad Duqm 18/11, >20 Barr al Hikman 17/11, >100 Sun Farms 27/11.

Long-billed Pipit

1 Wadi Derbat 21/11. Seen on the ground among bushes along the road a couple of hundred meters in from the turnoff.

Tree Pipit

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 1 Wadi 70 km N Ad Duqm (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11, 1 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 8 Grasslands near Tawi Atayr at 20° 06.781'N, 54° 28.870'E, >20 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Red-throated Pipit

1 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, 1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11.

Water Pipit

4 Muntasar 25/11, >30 Sun Farms 27/11.

Yellow Wagtail

1 Khawr Dhurf 18/11, >50 Sahnawt Farm, at least three subspecies: Feldegg, Beema and Thunbergi. 1 Wadi Derbat 23/11, >50 Sun Farms 27/11.

Grey Wagtail

1 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 10 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11

Citrine Wagtail

>30 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 1 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 6 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 2 Muntasar 25/11, >5 Sun Farms.

White Wagtail

3 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 6 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 1 Muntasar 25/11, 5 Sun Farms 27/11.

White-eared Bulbul

>40 Al Qurm (Muscat) 29/11. >10 Sayq-plateau 26/11.

Red-vented Bulbul

>10 Al Qurm (Muscat) 29/11.

White-spectacled Bulbul

Fairly common throughout.

Grey Hypocolius

3 Qatbit Motel Garden 25/11.



Bluethroat

1 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 4 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 2 Khawr Taqah 22/11, 5 Qatbit 24/11, 4 Muntasar 25/11, 2 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11, 1 Al Qurm 29/11.

Black Redstart (semirufus)

2 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 3 Qatbit Motel Garden 24/11, 1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11, >50 Sayq-plateau 26/11, 5 Khatmat Milahah 27/11.

Common Redstart

1 Khawr Ghawi 18/11, 1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11.

Blackstart

>10 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 3 tawi Atayr, >20 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11. Also some scattered observations in the south.

Siberian Stonechat (maura)

1 Muntasar 25/11, 1 Sun Farms 27/11, 1 Al Qurm 29/11.

Northern Wheatear

1 Khawr Ghawi 18/11, 2 Sun Farms 27/11.

Isabelline Wheatear

4 Khawr Ghawi 18/11, >20 Grass plains west of Tawi Atayr 20/11, 1 Ayn Hamran 23/11, 3 Sun Farms 27/11. Also some scattered observations along the roads throughout.

Desert Wheatear

Commonly seen throughout.

Red-tailed Wheatear

6 Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir (Sayq-plateau) 26/11, >10 Sayq-plateau 26/11, 1 Khatmat Milahah 27/11, 1 Sun Farms 27/11.

Eastern Pied Wheatear

1 Khatmat Milahah 27/11. In the area just north of the village described in the birdwatching guide.



South Arabian Wheatear

1 Along the road approximately 50 km N of Ad Duqm, 12 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 1 Jinaw 19/11, 2 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 2 Tawi Atayr 20/11, 2 Wadi Derbat 23/11

Hume's Wheatear

4 Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir (Sayq-plateau) 26/11, >12 Sayq-plateau 26/11, 1 South of Qurayyat 28/11, 1 Qantab 29/11.

Blue Rock Thrush

2 Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir (Sayq-plateau) 26/11.

Song Thrush

1 Barr al Hikman 17/11, 2 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 1 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 1 Muntasar 25/11, 1 Qatbit Motel Garden 25/11, 1 Wadi Bani Habib 26/11.

Graceful Prinia

Fairly common in areas with dense vegetation in the north. Some scattered observations in the south.

Scrub Warbler

2 at point P in the map over Sayq-plateau in the birdwatching guide 26/11.

Eurasian Reed Warbler

1 Khawr Taqah 20/11, 2 Muntasar 25/11, 4 Liwa 27/11.

Western Clamorous Warbler

Common in mangroves and reeds throughout. Shannah, Liwa Shinas, Khawr Taqah etc.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler

4 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Syke's Warbler

3 in the mangroves early morning in Liwa 27/11.



Menetrie's Warbler

2 Barr al Hikman, fairly easy to find in the small strain of vegetation along the shore. 1 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11.

Asian Desert Warbler

5 Barr al Hikman, fairly easy to find in the small strain of vegetation along the shore, 1 Al Najda 24/11, >5 Wadi Rabkut 24/11.

Arabian Warbler

12 Ayn Hamran 20-23/11, 2 Wadi Hannah 22/11.

Eastern Orphean Warbler

1 Date-plantation at Muhktu 16/11 at 22° 40.215'N, 57° 59.558'E, 2 Ayn Hamran 22/11, 2 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11, 1 Qatbit Motel Garden 24/11, 1 Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir (Sayq-plateau) 26/11.

Lesser Whitethroat

Fairly common throughout.

Hume's Warbler

2 Qatbit Motel Garden 24/11.

Plain Leaf Warbler

1 Date-plantation at Muhktu 16/11 at 22° 40.215'N, 57° 59.558'E, 3 Among palm-trees in a Wadi 70 km N Ad Duqm (20° 19.677'N, 57° 47.457'E) 18/11, >10 Wadi Bani Habib 26/11, 4 Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir (Sayq-plateau) 26/11, 2 Khatmat Milahah 27/11.



Chiffchaff

Commonly seen throughout the country.

Wood Warbler

3 Wadi Derbat 23/11.

Spotted Flycatcher

1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11.

Red-breasted Flycatcher

2 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 1 Wadi Derbat 23/11, 1 Qatbit Motel Garden 25/11, 1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11.

Semi-collared Flycatcher

1 Wadi Derbat 23/11. Seen in the trees between the stream/lake and the paved road.



African Paradise-flycatcher

6 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 1 Tawi Atayr, >50 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Arabian Babbler

4 Wadi right before the turnoff to Al Manakhir (Sayq-plateau) 26/11, 4 Khatmat Milahah 27/11.

Nile-valley Sunbird

1 Qatbit Motel Garden 24/11.

Purple Sunbird

Commonly seen in the north. Al Qurm, Sun Farms, Al Khabbah etc.

Shining Sunbird

4 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, >10 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 6 Tawi Atayr 20/11, >25 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Palestinian Sunbird

1 Tawi Atayr 20/11.

Abyssinian White-eye

>50 Ayn Hamran 20/11, >50 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Black-crowned Tchagra

4 Ayn Hamran 20/11, 2 Wadi Derbat 20-23/11.

Daurian Shrike

1 Al Ansab Lagoons 16/11, 1 Al Qurm 16/11, 3 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 1 Tawi Atayr 20/11, 2 Al Mughsayl 21/11, 1 Al Najda 24/11, 1 Qatbit Motel Garden 25/11, 2 Sun Farms 27/11, 2 Al Qurm 29/11.

Turkestan Shrike

1 Khawr Dhurf 18/11.

Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris)

1 Sun Farms 27/11, 1 Al Khabbah 28/11.

Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri)

Scattered observations throughout in arid drier areas.

House Crow

Common in the north.

Brown-necked Raven

Scattered observations throughout.

Fan-tailed Raven

Scattered observations in the south at for example Tawi Atayr and Ayn Hamran.

Tristram's Grackle

>50 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11, 10 Ayn Hamran 20/11, >50 Tawi Atayr 20/11.

European Starling

1 Filim 17/11.

Rose-colored Starling

1 Al Ghaftayn Hotel 25/11, 1 Wadi Bani Habib 26/11.

Common Myna

Very common in the north, less so in the south.

House Sparrow

Commonly seen throughout.

Rüppel's Weaver

Common in the south.

Indian Silverbill

Commonly seen in Al Qurm and Sun Farms.

African Silverbill

Common in the south.

Yemen Serin

>50 Tawi Atayr 20/11.

Striolated Bunting

2 Wadi Ash Shuwaymiyyah 19/11.

African Rock Bunting

Common in the south.

Scaly-breasted Munia

>30 West Khawr 23/11. Came in to roost in the reed at dusk.

Black-headed Munia

5 West Khawr 23/11. Came in to roost in the reed at dusk.

Common Waxbill

>10 Al Qurm 29/11. Most likely escaped birds.

Weaver Sp.

5 Al Qurm 29/11. Most likely escaped birds. Possibly Streaked Weaver.









