

Birding Israel

March 2006

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Southern Israel, March 22nd - 29th 2006

Front cover

Sinai Rosefinch, *Pericrocotus albifrons*, Mt Shlomo, Eilat 23.3.

This is an graphically updated version of a report previously presented.

Participants

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Highlights

Among the rare local birds we had good views of Syrian Serin, Nubian Nightjar, Sinai Rosefinch, Sand Partridge, Crowned and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Macqueen's Bustard and Dead Sea Sparrow. We had two days with massive raptor movements in the Eilat mountains including many eagles. Vagrants and scarce migrants were Brown Booby, Lesser Flamingo, Sociable Lapwing, Long-tailed Jaeger, Oriental Skylark and Cyprus Warbler.

General information

Eilat at the northern shore of the Aqaba Gulf, is a world-famous place for birdwatching and need no further presentation. For three of us this was our first visit while Stefan had been here two times before. A lot of new buildings and new fields are constantly under construction around Eilat. This means that the hot-spots for birders changes. Our target was to see the southern Israel specialities as well as seeing migrating birds. We planned two day trips to Nizzana in the Negev desert, and to the Dead Sea, respectively. Otherwise we spend most of the time around Eilat, and north along the Arava valley to Lotan.

Literature

- * Collins Bird Guide, L Svensson, K Mullarney *et al.* (1999)
- * Birds of Europe, L Jonsson (1992)
- * Birds of the Middle-East, RF Porter, S Christensen, P Schiermacker-Hansen (1996)
- * Finding Birds in Israel, D Gosney (1996), a bit of out-of-date and doesn't cover all the sites
- * A Guide to the Birding Hot-spots of Southern Israel, H Shirihai, JP Smith *et al.* (2000)

Itinerary

- 22.3 Arrival Ovda afternoon. Bus to Eilat.
- 23.3 North Beach, KM20, Yotvata, KM19
- 24.3 North Beach, Mt Yoash, KM23, North Beach
- 25.3 Nizzana, Ben Gurion's grave, Ein Avdat, Kibbutz Lotan, Yotvata
- 26.3 North Beach, KM19, KM20, Samar, Yotvata sewage pool, Kibbutz Lotan
- 27.3 Shizzafon, En Hakikar, Metsukei Deragot, Ne'ot Hakikar
- 28.3 North Beach, Mt Yoash, KM19, KM37, Yotvata
- 29.3 North Beach, KM20, Ofira Park, mid-day transport to Ovda. Flight to Sweden.

Map of Southern Israel



Some of our main destinations pointed out.

Daily log

March 22nd

Arrived at Ovda Airport in the afternoon. Saw some **Arabian Babblers** and **Rock Martins** outside the airport main entrance. Bus transfer to Hotel Pierre in Eilat.

March 23rd

Took a cab from Hotel Pierre, in the local part of Eilat (where we stayed throughout the week) to the North Beach, where we ticked off the newly discovered **Brown Booby** which turned out to be stationary throughout the week, we also had three flocks of migrating **Glossy Ibises**, an **Arctic Skua** and the first **Striated Heron**. Birded from 07.00 to 08.10 and then took a cab back to the Shalom Center where we rented our car at Sixt. Went directly to KM20 for a successful twitch for the **Lesser Flamingo**. Other good birds were an **Alpine Swift**, a migrating **Egyptian Vulture** and two **Gull-billed Terns**. Later on we went further north to Yotvata to search for Arabian Warbler west of the road before Yotvata, and then around the South Circular Field. Two nice males **Namaqua Dove**, three **Sardinian Warblers**, and at the fields six **Bimaculated Larks** and a nice male eastern **Stonechat**. In the evening we went to the KM19 sewage pool and were almost giving up hope when suddenly in almost complete darkness a female **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** landed before our feet, it was soon joined by other birds, and finally we counted at least 14 birds. The pool itself had a **Yellow Wagtail (ssp. lutea)** and a fly-by 3y-male **Pallid Harrier**.

March 24th

North Beach between 05.50 and 07.30 gave a brilliant adult **Long-tailed Jaeger** and no less than 4 **Arctic Skuas**. Three 2y **Great Black-headed Gulls**, one summer plumaged and one

winter-plumaged **Whiskered Terns** came in from the Red Sea, together with a **Long-legged Buzzard**. Four **Greater Sandplovers** stood on buoys next to the fishing-cages. We quickly left the beach and headed toward the Eilat Mountains since the soft eastern breeze seemed to get the raptors on the move. In three and a half hours we counted among thousands of **Steppe Buzzards** and **Black Kites**: **Greater Spotted Eagle** 1, **Lesser Spotted Eagle** 1, **Steppe Eagle** 5, **Long-legged Buzzard** 1, **Pallid Harrier** 1 ad male, **Black Stork** 5. Three female-type **Sinai Rosefinches** were at the high mountain raptor watch point along with the first **White-crowned Black Wheatear** for the trip. A **Temminck's Horned Lark** flew by. After the mountains we went to the cemetery where we saw two different males **Rüppell's Warblers**, an **Eastern Orphean Warbler** and a **Namaqua Dove**. Among the dates close to the southern fields we had our first **Indian Silverbills** and a few migrants. At KM23 (see below) we had a good fall of migrants including a late male **Cyprus Warbler**, a **Nightingale**, and a **Sardinian Warbler**. We continued east to the Doum Palms where we soon found a **Scrub Warbler**. During the evening we were once again at the North Beach where a couple of hundred ducks came in from sea together with five **Caspian Terns** and thirty **White-eyed Gulls**.

March 25th

Started at 04.10 (which was about an hour too late!) and arrived Nizzana at 07.00 (It's wiser to start from Eilat at 03.00 to be able to arrive at sunrise at 06.00). Along the way we had a male **Blue Rock Thrush** at Mitzpe Ramon, **Little Owl** and **Lesser Kestrel** at Ashalim. At Nizzana we started south of the airfield west of the road scanning the desert and soon found two different **MacQueen's Bustards**. Also **Cream-coloured Coursers** and a single **Bar-tailed Desert Lark**. Since it was Sabbath there was no military activity going on, which might be a good thing to consider. At the 4b sewage pools (see Shiri Hai 2000) we had seven **Black-bellied** and three **Spotted Sandgrouse** between 08.00 and 09.25 (see below) also at this site **Yellow Wagtail (ssp. lutea)**, two **Southern Grey Shrike (ssp. aucheri)** a male **Bluethroat (ssp. cyanecula)**. On the way from Nizzana at some large field west of Ashalim we had at least 50 **Spotted Sandgrouse** and a **Lesser Short-toed Lark**. At lunchtime we reached Ben Gurion's grave south of Sede Boker. Here we had a **Syrian Serin** together with a flock of 30 **Cretzschmar's** and **Ortolan Buntings**. At Ein Avdat we didn't connect with the supposedly breeding pair of Bonelli's Eagle but indeed saw two **Griffon Vultures**, an **Alpine Swift**, three **Mourning Wheatears** and two **Desert Larks**. After a short break at Mizpe Ramon we arrived at Kibbutz Lotan at late afternoon where there was no sight of the Sociable Plover or the Cinereous Bunting previously reported from here. A beautiful male **Yellow Wagtail (form superciliaris)** though. We got some info about some Oriental Skylarks at Yotvata and immediately went to the South Circular Field where we spent rest of the evening. At the field it took a while before we found a sole **Oriental Skylark** amongst the hundreds of **Greater Short-toed Larks**. Also a **Barbary Falcon**, and a male **Eastern Stonechat**.

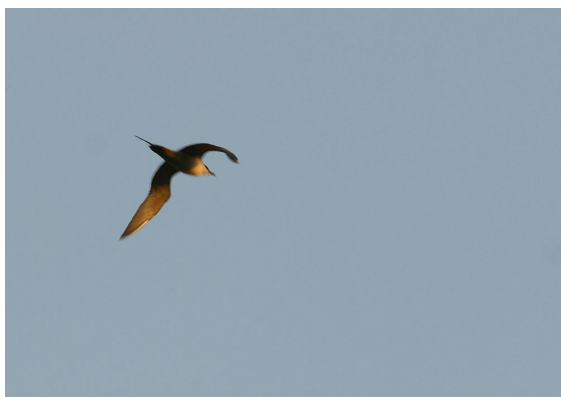
March 26th

At North Beach during the morning we had a ghost-like male **Pallid Harrier** in from the sea. Also two **Red-necked Phalaropes**, and our first **Western Reef-Heron**. No larger raptor movements were observed at the mountains (north-western winds) but indeed a female **Hooded Wheatear** and a single **Sinai Rosefinch**. After the mountains he headed for an incredibly productive pond at KM19 where we had a male **Baillon's Crane**, one male and two female-types **Little Crane**, five different **Citrine Wagtails**, two **Bimaculated Larks** and at least 15 **Desert Finches**. Migrating north were 40 **White Storks**, a light-morph **Booted Eagle**, a **Lesser Kestrel**, and a **Short-toed Eagle**. At KM20 the **Lesser Flamingo** was still present, and also a **Whiskered Tern**, a **Red-necked Phalarope** and a female **Greater Sandplover**. We continued north along road 90 and at Samar we searched the extensive date plantations in search of a Semi-collared Flycatcher. We didn't find the flycatcher but two **Stone-curlews**, a **Song Thrush**, a **Turtle Dove**, and three **Indian Silverbills**. At Yotvata sewage pool we had a male **Little Crane** and a female **Eastern Orphean Warbler**. The rest of the afternoon and the evening we spent at Kibbutz Lotan and were well rewarded with ridiculously close views of the long-staying **Sociable Plover**. Also two males **Rüppell's Warblers**, a female **Sardinian Warbler**, and in the

organic gardens a male **Namaqua Dove**.

March 27th

Today we had decided to go north to the Dead Sea. We started however with a sewage pool north of Shizzafon where we got magnificent views of eight **Crowned Sandgrouse** and around 80 **Spotted Sandgrouse**. When waiting for the Sandgrouse we had a female **Hen Harrier** flying north, two **Black Storks**, 9 **Trumpeter Finches** and amazingly no less than 44(!) **Syrian Serins** in one flock heading north. Drove further north and at En Hakikar (before the turn-off to Ne'ot Hakikar) we searched fruitlessly for Arabian Warbler, but we did see six **Eastern Orphean Warblers**, three **Scrub Warblers**, four **Desert Larks** and two **Trumpeter Finches**. At midday we reached the Dead Sea and directly drove up to Metsukei Deragot where we found a nest of **Bonelli's Eagle** in the impressive canyon. A male **Hooded Wheatear**, a lot of **Fan-tailed Ravens** and five **Griffon Vultures**. After the mandatory swim in the Dead Sea we could go south again, hundreds of **Pallid Swifts** and a **Common Raven** along the way. At 17.30 we met our guide Yoav who showed us the fish ponds at Ne'ot Hakikar which proved excellent with a **White-throated Kingfisher**, **Clamorous Reed Warbler**, **Savi's Warbler**, **Cetti's Warbler** and two males **Little Crake**, as well as **Dead Sea Sparrow**. As the light became dimmer we headed for the nightjar site. After an hours search we could localize at least three individuals of the extremely local **Nubian Nightjar**-population. After thanking Yoav (who is working on a project considering the nightjars, and is one of few with full access to the area, and also probably knows most about of this little jewel) we drove back to Eilat.



Long-tailed Jaeger, Migrating North Beach 24.3



Sociable Lapwing, Kibbutz Lotan 26.3



Sand Partridge, Eilat Mountains 28.3



Nubian Nightjar, Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.

March 28th

Started as usual at the North Beach where 1 3y and 1 2y **Great Black-headed Gulls** were roosting. A few migrating ducks, some terns, two **Lesser Kestrel** and an unidentified female Harrier came in from sea. Today raptor migration proved excellent, we stood over-whelmed at

the Low Mountains from 08.15 to 11.30 and had **Steppe Eagle** 52, **Lesser Spotted Eagle** 6, three unidentified eagles, **Booted Eagle** 3 light morph and 1 dark morph, **Short-toed Eagle** 3, a female **Pallid Harrier**, **Osprey** 5, **Egyptian Vulture** 3, **Long-legged Buzzard** 4, **Black Stork** 24, **White Stork** 50, **Alpine Swift** 8, among outstanding numbers of **Steppe Buzzards**. In Wadi Shlomo at the Camel Ranch we found a female **Subalpine Warbler**. At KM19 we had our first long-expected **Bee-eaters**, many of the birds from the 26th, and an out-of-place **Golden Plover**, and three **Black-crowned Night-Herons**. Further north at KM37 we had a 2y-male **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush**. A final attempt for Arabian Warbler at Yotvata didn't give the sought-after warbler but indeed one male and one female **Rüppell's Warbler**, two **Spectacled Warblers** and at the circular fields all four species of harrier within 15 minutes, five **Marsh Harriers**, a female **Hen Harrier**, a 2y-male **Montagu's Harrier** and an adult male **Pallid Harrier**! During the afternoon heavy clouds actually gave a few raindrops.

March 29th

The last day of our trip was spent around Eilat. At North Beach very quiet migration and also few migrants in the southern date plantations. At KM20 we found two **Collared Pratincoles**. And more than 200 **Slender-billed Gulls**. After returning the car at 09.30 we spent the last two hours in Ofira Park. A beautiful male **Collared Flycatcher** was the last trip-tick that was added to our list. When waiting for our transport to the airport we noted good raptor migration just above the hotel grounds and soon we found a **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, this was a nice ending to the trip, and a final proof of what a tremendous birding place Eilat is.



Lesser Flamingo at KM20, 23.3.

A few site comments

KM19 dirt pool

At KM19, between the salt ponds at KM20 and the sewage pool at KM19, close to the Jordanian border there was a small pond behind some large cow shelters. This pond, that tragically was

about to be filled with dirt, still held quite a few wetland species such as Little Crane, Baillon's Crane and Citrine Wagtail.

KM23

When going north from Eilat on road 90, just before KM23, there is a sign that says Doum Palms to the right. Just after this turn-off there is a small patch of forest on your right-hand side (east of the road). This small patch was very easy and not particularly time-consuming to search through. On three attempts our best bird was a splendid male Cyprus Warbler.

Nizzana

The place to see the Sandgrouse come to drink is the north-western corner of the sewage pool 4b in Shirihai. We did not try pool 4c. Best is to stand at some distance, to not frighten the birds. We had 7 Black-bellied and 3 Spotted Sandgrouse here. But we only arrived at 08.00 and left at 09.25. Maybe an earlier visit would have been more productive. We met three British birders who even had Crowned Sandgrouse in two flocks here. But they'd been at the spot at 07.30. We've not included any further information or maps of Mount Victoria (or Nagabwet area) since that wouldn't provide much useful information since all/most birding is done roadside and with a guide. However some GPS coordinates are listed.



Syrian Serin, Ben Gurion's grave, Sede Boker 25.3 *Hooded Wheatear, female, Mt Yoash, Eilat 26.3*

List of birds: Israel, March 22nd - 29th 2006

Following IOC World Bird List 3.3 (Jan 2013) (www.worldbirdnames.org). In total: 195 species (5 species on the IUCN Red List). Subspecies notations are foremost literature-based.

- 1. Chukar** *Alectoris chukar sinaica*
5+1 Nizzana 25.3.
- 2. Sand Partridge** *Ammoperdix heyi heyi*
Seen on 5 days.
- 3. Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix coturnix*
Seen on 5 days. At least 25 at Yotvata South Circular Field 23.3.
- 4. Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*
1 KM20 23, 26 & 29.3.
- 5. Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*
5 migrating North Beach 24.3, 2 KM20 29.3.

6. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
7. **Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*
8. **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*
9. **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*
10. **Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca crecca*
11. **Common Pochard** *Aythya farina*
4 females KM19 23.3.
12. **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
1 Yotvaya sewage pool 23.3, 1 Nizzana pool 4b 25.3.
13. **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus ruber*
A couple of hundreds at KM20.
14. **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus minor*
One adult bird at KM20 throughout the week.
15. **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*
5 Eilat mountains 24.3, 2 N of Shizzafon 27.3, 24 Eilat mountains 28.3, 1 Yotvata 28.3.
16. **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*
e.g. 200 Ashalim 25.3, 40 KM19 26.3, 50 Eilat mountains 28.3, 40 Yotvata 28.3.
17. **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*
50 migrating North Beach 23.3, 1 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.
18. **Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*
4 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3, 3 KM19 28.3.
19. **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*
Max 5 North Beach.
20. **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*
21. **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
Seen in highest numbers at Yotvata South Circular Field and Ne'ot Hakikar
22. **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*
23. **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*
8 Yotvata sewage pool 23.3.
24. **Great Egret** *Egretta alba*
North Beach.
25. **Little Egret** *Ergetta garzetta*
26. **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis*
1 North Beach 26.3.

- 27. Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster*
1 subad North Beach throughout the week.
- 28. Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*
- 29. Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
1 KM37 24.3, 5 Eilat mountains 28.3.
- 30. Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*
- 31. Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*
1 ad KM20 23.3, 3 Eilat mountains 24.3, 1 ad Ein Avdat 25.3, 3 Eilat mountains 28.3.
- 32. Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus*
2 Ein Avdat 25.3, 5 Metsukei Deragot 27.3.
- 33. Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*
1 Ein Avdat 25.3, 1 KM19 26.3, 1 Metsukei Deragot 27.3, 3 Eilat mountains 28.3, 1 KM19 28.3, 1 Eilat city 29.3.
- 34. Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*
- 35. Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*
1 female N Shizzafon 27.3, 1 female Yotvata 28.3.
- 36. Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* **NT**
1 3y-male KM19 23.3, 1 ad male Eilat mountains 24.3, 1 ad male North Beach 26.3, 1 younger female Montagu's/Pallid Harrier North Beach 28.3, 1 ad female Eilat mountains 28.3, 1 ad male Yotvata 28.3.
- 37. Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*
1 2y-male Yotvata 28.3.
- 38. Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*
1 KM20 23.3, 6 Eilat mountains 28.3, 1 KM23 28.3.
- 39. Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*
- 40. Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*
1 North Beach 24.3, 1 Eilat mountains 24.3, 1 Mizpe Ramon 25.3, 4 Eilat mountains 28.3, 1 Yotvata 28.3.
- 41. Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina*
1 Eilat mountains 24.3, 6 Eilat mountains 28.3.
- 42. Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* **VU**
1 Eilat mountains 24.3.
- 43. Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*
5 Eilat mountains 24.3, 52 Eilat mountains 28.3.
- 44. Bonelli's Eagle** *Aquila fasciata*
1 ad on its nest at Metsukei Deragot 27.3.
- 45. Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*

1 dark morph(dm) Yotvata 23.3, 1 light morph (lm) KM19 26.3, 3 lm + 1 dm Eilat mountains 28.3

46. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

3 Ashalim 25.3, 10 KM19 26.3, 2 North Beach 28.3, 2 Eilat mountains 28.3, 1 Yotvata 28.3.

47. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

48. Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

1 North Beach 24.3, 1 Shizzafon 25.3, 1 Yotvata 25 & 28.3, 1 KM19 26 & 28.3.

49. Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii*

2 Nizzana 25.3.

50. Little Crane *Porzana parva*

1 male + 2 females KM19 26 & 28.3, 1 male Yotvata 26.3, 1 male Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.

51. Baillon's Crane *Porzana pusilla*

1 male KM19 26 & 28.3.

52. Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

53. Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

54. Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

2 KM19 23.3, 2 Samar 26.3.

55. Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

2 North Beach 23.3, 5 North Beach 28.3.

56. Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

57. Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*

58. Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* **CE**

1 Kibbutz Lotan 26.3.

59. Eurasian Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

1 KM19 28.3.

60. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

61. Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

62. Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

63. Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

North Beach: 1 23.3, 4 24.3, 1 26.3, 1 28.3, 2 29.3. 1 KM20 26.3, 2 KM20 29.3.

64. Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

65. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* **NT**

2 KM20 23.3, 1 KM20 29.3.

66. Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

1 Nizzana 25.3, 1 KM20 26.3.

- 67. Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
- 68. Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
- 69. Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
- 70. Green Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
- 71. Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
- 72. Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
- 73. Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
1 North Beach 23.3.
- 74. Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
- 75. Dunlin** *Calidria alpina*
1 North Beach 23.3, 6 KM20 26.3, 1 KM20 29.3.
- 76. Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*
- 77. Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*
2 migrating North Beach 26.3, 1 KM20 26.3.
- 78. Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor*
3 Nizzana 25.3.
- 79. Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*
2 KM20 29.3.
- 80. White-eyed Gull** *Larus leucopthalmus*
max 30 North Beach 24.3.
- 81. Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*
North Beach: 3 2y 24.3, 1 2y 26.3, 1 3y + 1 2y 28.3, 2 2y 29.3.
- 82. Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*
- 83. Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*
max 200 KM20 29.3.
- 84. Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus fuscus*
A few ssp. *graellsii/intermedius* as well. No certain sp./ssp. *heuglini/cachinnans/barabensis*. Max 20 large white-headed gulls at North Beach.
- 85. Armenian Gull** *Larus armenicus*
A few identified at North Beach.
- 86. Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*
2 KM20 23.3, 1 North Beach 28.3.
- 87. Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*
North Beach: 5 24.3, 1 26.3, 5 28.3.

88. Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

North Beach: 2 23.3, 2 24.3, 2 28.3, 1 29.3.

89. Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

North Beach: 4 26.3, 9 28.3, 10 29.3.

90. Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

2 North Beach 24.3, 1 ad KM19 & KM20 26.3.

91. Arctic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

1 North Beach 23.3, 4 North Beach 24.3.

92. Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*

1 ad North Beach 24.3.

93. Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*

The place to see this species come to drink is no longer the pumping station but in fact the sewage pool at KM19. The pool itself is fenced off, but there is a hole in fence at both the north-western and north-eastern corner. The northern part of the north-eastern pool is where the Sandgrouse drink. To see them, arrive well before 18.00 and sit quietly waiting at the western bank of the pool. We had at least 14 birds coming to drink just before it got pitch-dark at 18.15-18.25. The birds seem to be quite easily disturbed.

94. Crowned Sandgrouse *Pterocles coronatus*

Besides Nizzana, Shizzafon could also be productive for this species. We were told about a pool just north of Shizzafon which proved to be good for Crowned on our only visit. A couple of kilometres north of Shizzafon (north of the road 40 – road 12 intersection) there is a rather large military complex on your left-hand side (west of the road), just opposite of the complex there is a small fence a couple of hundred meters from the road on your right-hand side (east of the road). This fence surrounds a small sewage pool. We had 8 Crowned Sandgrouse drinking here between 07.55 to 08.15.

95. Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*

3 Nizzana 25.3, 50 Ashalim 25.3, 80 N Shizzafon 27.3.

96. Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

7 Nizzana 25.3.

97. Rock Dove *Columba livia***98. Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto***99. European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

1 Samar 26.3, 1 Yotvata 26.3.

100. Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis***101. Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*

2 males Yotvata 23.3, 1 Eilat cemetery 24.3, 1 male Kibbutz Lotan 26.3.

102. Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Singles seen in Eilat city and southern date plantations.

103. Little Owl *Athene noctua*

1 Ashalim 25.3.

104. Nubian Nightjar *Caprimulgus nubicus* **Restricted range**
3 seen + 1 heard Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.

105. Common Swift *Apus apus*

106. Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*
Singles seen in Eilat. Hundreds in the Dead Sea region.

107. Alpine Swift *Apus melba*
1 KM20 23.3, 1 Ein Avdat 25.3, 8 Eilat mountains 28.3.

108. White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*
1 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.

109. Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
1 North Beach 23.3.

110. Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
North Beach daily.

111. Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis cyanophrys*
Seen on five days.

112. European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*
30 KM19 28.3, 30 KM20 29.3.

113. Hoopoe *Upopa epops*
Singles daily.

114. Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
Singles daily.

115. Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis aucheri*
3 at Nizzana-Ashalim 25.3.

116. Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*
Seen daily.

117. Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*
Seen daily.

118. House Crow *Corvus splendens*

119. Hooded Crow *Corvus corone cornix*
Only around Nizzana-Ashalim

120. Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*

121. Common Raven *Corvus corax*
1 Mt Sodom, Dead Sea 27.3.

122. Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*
Many around the Dead Sea, 20 Metsukei Deragot 27.3.

- 123. Great Tit** *Parus major*
1 Ben Gurion's grave 25.3.
- 124. Bar-tailed Desert Lark** *Ammomanes cinctura*
2 Nizzana 25.3.
- 125. Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti*
2 Ein Avdat 25.3, 4 En Hakikar 27.3, 1 Metsukei Deragot 27.3.
- 126. Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata*
6 Yotvata South Circular Field 23.3, 2 KM 19 26.3 & 1 28.3.
- 127. Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*
Very common. Hundreds at Yotvata South Circular Field and KM19.
- 128. Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens*
1 Ashalim 25.3.
- 129. Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*
- 130. Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*
1 Yotvata South Circular Field 25.3.
- 131. Temminck's Lark** *Eremophila bilopha*
1 in flight Mt Shlomo 24.3.
- 132. White-spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*
- 133. Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*
- 134. Rock Martin** *Hirundo fuligula*
- 135. Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
- 136. Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*
Seen daily after 25.3.
- 137. Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*
- 138. Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*
1 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.
- 139. Streaked Scrub Warbler** *Scotocerca inquieta*
1 Doum Palms 24.3, 3 En Hakikar 27.3.
- 140. Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus orientalis*
Seen almost daily.
- 141. Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*
1 pale individual of probable eastern origin Ofira Park 29.3.
- 142. Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
- 143. Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

- 144. Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*
4 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.
- 145. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Iduna pallida*
- 146. Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*
1 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.
- 147. Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis*
- 148. Arabian Babbler** *Turdoides squamiceps*
Seen at Ovda Airport, Yotvata and Ne'ot Hakikar.
- 149. Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*
- 150. Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*
- 151. Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia crassirostris*
1 Eilat cemetery 24.3, 1 Yotvata 26.3, 6 En Hakikar 27.3, 1 Yotvata 28.3.
- 152. Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*
- 153. Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata*
2 Yotvata 28.3.
- 154. Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans albistriata*
1 female Wadi Shlomo (The Camel Ranch) 28.3.
- 155. Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala*
1 male + 1 female Yotvata 23.3, 1 male KM23 24.3, 1 female Kibbutz Lotan 26.3.
- 156. Cyprus Warbler** *Sylvia melanothorax*
1 male KM23 24.3.
- 157. Rüppell's Warbler** *Sylvia ruppeli*
2 males Eilat cemetery 24 & 26.3, 1 female KM23 26.3, 2 males Kibbutz Lotan 26.3, 1 male + 1 female Yotvata 28.3.
- 158. Tristram's Starling** *Onychognathus tristramii*
- 159. Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula*
Ben Guiron's grave
- 160. Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*
1 Samar 26.3.
- 161. Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*
1 KM23 24.3, 3 Samar 26.3, 1 South Date Plantations 28.3.
- 162. Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*
Singles daily. ssp. *cyaneacula* 1 male Nizzana 4b-pool 25.3, 1 male Switzerland Park 29.3.
- 163. Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Singles daily. Quite a few ssp. *samamiscus*.

- 164. Blackstart** *Cercomela melanura*
Seen every day.
- 165. Eastern Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus*
1 male Yotvata South Circular Field 23.3, 1 male Yotvata North Circular Field 25.3.
- 166. Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*
Seen daily.
- 167. Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*
- 168. Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca*
Seen daily.
- 169. Mourning Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugens*
3 males Ein Avdat 25.3.
- 170. Hooded Wheatear** *Oenanthe monacha*
1 female Mt Shlomo 26.3, 1 male Metsukei Deragot 27.3.
- 171. Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*
1 2y-male KM37 28.3.
- 172. Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*
1 male Mizpe Ramon 25.3.
- 173. Collared Flycatcher** *Muscicapa albicollis*
1 male Ofira Park 29.3.
- 174. Palestine Sunbird** *Nectarina osea*
Seen daily.
- 175. House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
- 176. Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*
- 177. Dead Sea Sparrow** *Passer moabiticus*
2 Ne'ot Hakikar 27.3.
- 178. Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica*
max 13 South date plantations. 3 Samar 26.3.
- 179. Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*
ssp. *beema* 1 male KM19 26 & 28.3
ssp. *lutea* 1 KM19 23.3, 1 Nizzana 4b-pool 25.3.
form 'superciliaris' 1 male Kibbutz Lotan 25.3.
many ssp. *flava*, *thunbergi* and *feldegg*
- 180. Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*
5 KM19 26.3, 7 KM19 28.3, both ssp. *citreola* and *werae*.
- 181. White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*
- 182. Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

Singles daily.

183. Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

184. Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

185. Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta coutelli*

186. Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

1 female Mitzpe Ramon 25.3.

187. Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus* VU Restricted range

1 2y Ben Gurion's grave 25.3, 44 flew by N of Shizzafon 27.3.

188. European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

189. Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

2 Sede Boker 25.3.

190. Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

2 Telalim 25.3.

191. Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

max 15 KM19 23, 26 & 28.3. 2 Ein Avdat 25.3.

192. Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*

9 N of Shizzafon 27.3, 2 En Hakikar 27.3.

193. Sinai Rosefinch *Carpodacus synoicus*

3 females Mt Shlomo 24.3, 1 female 26.3. To find them follow the turn-off right to the high mountain raptor watch point (described in Gosney) on Mt Shlomo (the plateau) just before the paved road comes to its highest point at Mt Yoash. On your left hand side after 100 m along the dirt track to the plateau there is a small wadi with one single tree. Around this tree is where we saw the rosefinches.

194. Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

195. Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*

Additional record shots



Western Yellow Wagtail (ssp. feldegg), KM20 23.3



Collared Flycatcher, Ofira Park 29.3.



Lesser Spotted Eagle and two "Steppe" Buzzards, Eilat 24.3.



The ghost, Pallid Harrier, Eilat 24.3.



Cretzschmar's Bunting, female, Ben Gurion's grave 25.3.



Woodchat Shrike, abberant possibly 2cy-individual, Ofira Park 29.3.

Additional birding shots



Eilat, high mountain raptor watch 24.3.



North Beach, morning migration 24.3.



Good movements of raptors, Eilat 24.3.



Negev Desert, close to Mitzpe Ramon 26.3.



*Yotvata, fruitless search for Arabian Warbler 24.3.
Photo: Stefan Ettestam*



*Good views of Syrian Serin at Ben Gurion's grave,
Sede Boker 25.3. Photo: Stefan Ettestam*