

TURKEY - a report from a birdwatching trip to Central and Eastern Turkey, 12 -25 May 2005

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12-25 May 2005, Jan Eske Schmidt, Claus Brostrom Nielsen and Klaus Malling Olsen undertook an extensive birdwatching tour to Central and Eastern Turkey - an essential birding destination for WP and ID aficionados.

General information.

As many reports are available on the Internet dealing with logistics a.s.o. we restrict this report to include essential information solely on birding, especially referring to the often used - and still very useful - booklets by David Gosney (1992) - essential reading to anyone visiting Turkey, but surely need some updates.

The booklets are normally referred to as **the Gem**, which we also frequently will do here.

ID literature used were mainly:

- Mullarney, Svensson, Grant and Zetterström (1999): The Collins Guide to Bird Identification. Beautifully illustrated, accurate and a pleasure to use. Essential.

- Beaman & Madge (edited and updated by Klaus Malling Olsen (1998): Handbook to Bird Identification, the Danish fully updated version, including further internet updates on www.netfugl.dk (handbook updates) added further information, especially regarding subspecies.

Logistics

We will not go in details, as most reports contains full informations. Also, we include no maps. Site directions are mainly from Gosney ("the Gem"). The best road map to Eastern Turkey is Grosse Landerkarte 1:800.000: Türkei, RV Reise- and Verkehrsverlag.

We booked flight tickets through Kipling Travels, Denmark, using Turkish Airlines. Copenhagen-Istanbul-Adana at a return fare for app. 3300 Danish Kroner. By moving direct to Adana we saved very long drives from Antalya to our goals, although we missed Akseki (apart from White-backed Woodpecker all "important" Mediterranean species can be observed closer to Adana). We hired a 4 door Fiat through Avis, delivered at Adana Airport and left there with no

problems (the regular car wash service provided at Turkish service stations surely helped us here...).

Turkey has a very good and modern road system, but the distance Batman - Birecik along A90 provided something of a nightmare - an upspeeded, hectic version of Indian main roads! Fortunately, the road has now been somewhat improved, especially the formerly notorious dangerous distance between Birecik and Gaziantep. A total of 4600 km. were driven.

Petrol was rather expensive, but other prizes were moderate. We stayed in small hotels, normally in three-bed rooms with private facilities, prized between 30 and 60 Turkish Lira including B&B.

Food and cleanness.

Despite hearing monstrous stories about stomach diseases, we never had any problems, despite eating all that the delightful Turkish cuisine could offer! We ate mainly at road-stops, frequently used by drivers and local people - very good value for money, and satisfying vegetarians and carnivores alike! The quality of the food was exceptionally. so we never ate at McDonald's, which recently had created problems to visitors (maybe after use of German meat?).

Extensive travel experience had proven, that most stomach problems can be avoided by washing hands at every given occasion. Shaking hands with locals are a pleasant way of making a positive contact, but the chance of catching diseases is not to be ignored - bring cleaning tissues (as the smelly ones offered by Turkish Airlines). Also, use bottled water, never canned water.

Climate

May is a perfect month for visiting Middle East. During most of the tour we had ideal weather for birding: +20-25 degrees and sunny with some scattered clouds especially in the afternoons. At Demirkazik (2800 m.) it was cold, and we used our Scandinavian winter equipment in the morning.

Even in Birecik - in summer noted for its very hot climate - temperatures were delightful, never exceeding +30 degrees,

In the Far East - noticeable near Ishak Pasa and Ararat - we experienced heavy thunderstorms, making birding impossible. This area is notorious for its heavy, sudden rainfalls.

All in all, Mid to late May is the ultimate time for visiting Turkey for the "target" species. As a bonus, migration is still on its way, and the mountain specialities still low down enough to be found without too much effort.

People

Expect a very friendly and curious attitude from all locals! "Kopenhag" is well known to most Turks, as many Turks have relatives in Denmark. In most places we were offered gifts (such as vegetables and fruits), and even if you do not speak Turkish, a

few gestures and a smile brings you long! At police and military checkpoints (frequent in the east) we never experienced anything but politeness, despite recent struggles between military and PKK.

I can only support Göran Pettersson's words (in the Swedish magazine Roadrunner) in, that the largest problems is not catching a disease, but to fall in love with a country so full of impressive landscape, friendly people and exciting birds as Turkey. And with so much new to discover!

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ITINERARY, including DIARY on daily activities and localities).

12 May. Departure Copenhagen-Istanbul on TK 1781, and on Istanbul-Adana on TK 478 . Quick, unproblematic transfer at the effective Atatürk International Airport, Istanbul, arrival 20:50 at Adana. Slight problem in getting the car, as we had to pass customers once more following arrival from abroad. But quick drive to Adana, where we almost by chance found accomodation at Sedef Hotel, rather close to the airport. Slightly more expensive than on the countryside, but with effective service (but somewhat downworn rooms).

13 May. Departure 07:10 and direct to Göksu Delta, visiting Akgöl Gölü 09:40-12:00. The target species were all found (but European specialities were somewhat ignored). A good new observation tower on the south side of the lagoon gave good but distant observations of Spoonbill, herons, (Grey-headed) Purple Swamphen, Marbled Teals and a small group of Red-winged Pratincoles. Telescope is essential here. The scrubs were filled with migrants such as shrikes (including a few Maskeds) and warblers. Black Francolin proved harder, but was finally and luckily, observed wandering freely close to the holiday village, mentioned in The Gen. But we never heard the characteristic "telegraph-song" - probably caused by our arrival late in the morning.

Eventually we had difficulties in finding the direction to the eastern part of the Delta in the Gen (which here seems somewhat outdated and undetailed regarding roads), so wader concentrations were never found - just a number of hunting raptors, including 4-5 Short-toed Eagles (migrants?) and a rather odd-looking Peregrine.

In the afternoon we headed northward and made short stops in spruce forests looking for Krüpers Nuthatch without success. We reached Ali Safaks pension in Cucurbak in time for dinner, and was briefed for tomorrow's program. We have prebooked here at home, but was surprised, that two Safak pensions exists. We eventually experienced, that his two brothers, which are birdwatchers, leads a similar pension on the opposite site of the road, which may be a better choice if you go for other than Snowcocks. Both sites are to be regarded as overprized.

14 May. A very early start at 04:30 saw us in a uncomfortable platform on the back of the tractor driving from 1500 m. up to 2600 m. in mist and cold. The drive took 1.5 hour, but it must be possible to walk the entire way up to the mountain along the tractor track, which starts behind the mountaineers hostel and ends at a cup-shaped valley, named Cimbar Bogazi (?). Here we - now in perfect cloudless conditions - trekked up to a small hill, overlooking **Demirkazik**. Caspian Snowcocks were immediately heard, and just after a minute a beautiful Wallcreeper flew over for landing on the steep slopes. What a beginning! The Snowcocks proved hard work, and just glimpses were seen - but what a sound in the magnificent mountain landscape! As the cloud starts to appear we tried with luck for another target species, Radde's Accentor, hardly skulking in dwarf vegetation in wet meadows just below the peak. Both forms of Black Redstarts were present, groups of Alpine Choughs performed their acrobatic flight, but Alpine Accentor was sadly missed.

It was soon start for the descend into the magnificent deep gorge - cliffs raised vertically for hundreds of meters, but the passage was just 10 meter broad, looking like a scenery from "Lord of the Rings". Birds were few, and the detour soon start to be very strenuous with most steep detours and passage of what might be named a miniature "Hillary Step" (Everest afficionados knows what I mean). For passages, this was mountaineering rather than trekking with hardly any visible tracks. Warnings in other reports about the up-tour via this gorge are highly relevant! You should be absolutely fit, have trekking experience and wear the best of mountain footwear, as parts of the trek are on rocks and might get very slippery.

Birds were few, restricted to singing Wrens, a beautiful Red-fronted Serin and some Red-billed Choughs (the yellow-billed cousin abundant on the top). Lower down and at the entrance of the gorge a stream attracted more passerines and a pair of Rock Nuthatches was observed at nest in the vicinity of vertical climbers!

The afternoon saw us in the fir forest near **Aladag** - another Snowcock site (described under **Kalki Dag** in the gem, and especially by Kristensen (1999)). Birds were scarce, but a mighty Lammergeier enlivered - but not enough for another strenuous try for Snowcocks. A single bird was heard. Few other birds were seen with Rock Buntings as an exception. More birds were observed near the nomad camps with the first sights of the strange *penicillata* Shore Lark as a curious highlight.

But for 100 Euros for guiding alone in the morning we felt somewhat ribbed, despite the most impressive of environments. 25 Euros for accommodation and food is what you expect to pay here. However, the mountaineer's hostel is not a good alternative, as birders are frequently treated badly and ribbed up here as well.

15 May. At 5:00 we started the long drive eastwards, making a five hour break at **Sultan Marshes**. The marshy area was largely ignored, as we want to concentrate on species confirmed to salt steppes: Asian Short-toed Lark *aharoni* was easy and together with Isabelline Wheatear character birds. Hours were spend studying the larks, but also a fruitless search for Greater Sand Plover, which have been seen by many at "Gosney 8" - we only saw Kentish Plovers here. However, waterbirds such as Whiskered Terns offered good photo opportunities.

The rest of the day was spend on the road, driving Kayseri - Sivas - Becirkas, where Hotel Berlin offered accomonation for 30 Lira. Total driving about 650 km.

16 May. Started driving following breakfast (bread and olives) shortly after 07:00. Another long drive awaited, as we wanted to reach the famous village of Sivri Kaya in time for afternoon birding. It was impossible to resist a good numbers of raptors at Baskarshmag, with a Pallid Harrier soaring with Golden Eagle, Steppe and Long-legged Buzzard and the amount of very photogene Long-leggeds perched on telegraph wires.

The small village of **Gelinkaya**, with their willow scrubs down to a small mountain stream is probably Turkey's best site for Mountain Chiffchaff. We observed easily this species here. Also, we made a short visit to the forest of Maden Koprubari, where Saker Falcon and Levant Sparrowhawk recently have been observed, but saw nothing of special interest. Unusualy ill-smelling eggs made the place notorious memorable for the worst meal we receiced in Turkey!

We were aware that **Ovitdagi Gecedi** pass (2800 m) still could be snow-filled, meaning a long detour to reach Sivri Kaya, but the road was fine, allthogh all houses still was snow-covered up to the roofs! The road-sides attraced many passerines, such as groups of White-winged Snowfinchs, Water Pipits (of the form *coutelli*) and our only Alpine Accentor for the trip. The snow covered landscape with hardly any rocks visible among the snow was spectacular, reminding of Himalaya peaks - the only sign of spring approaching was a small group of migrating Honey Buzzards.

At 15:00 we reached the picturesque village **Sivri Kaya** - the home of the enigmatic Caucasian Black Grouse. A bird which normally will take as much struggles as the Snowcock, but alas: after a few singing Green Warblers have been found in the riverine forests - things went out very well. Claus was eager in trekking into alien territory, Jan and Klaus tried more in comfort to scan the steep mountain sides with their patches of dwarf rhododendron for the exclusive chick. Soon a black spot was discovered, and as the black spot flew up - displaying white underwings - the case was clear! During the next hour 7 birds were seen, several males performing their unique "rubberball" display before the females present. Clearly the bird are active the last hours before sunset

(and in the morning), and are easy in May before retreating to a much higher altitude in summer.

The nearby **Izıkdere** offers good accomodation in the hotel Genesisiz, where we were accompnied by a German group from "Dr. Kock"s bird tours, which has added both the Snowcocks and Radde´s Accentor in the area (and therefore felt no need to go to Demirkazik).

17 May. The fir forest at Hotel Genesisiz immediately offered opportunities to show Green Warbler to "the Cocks", which still have to add it to their list. This became more of an experimental day following yesterdays luck with the Grouse, so we quickly drove to the Black Sea coast - mainly for gull watching. Good flocks of Yellow-legged Gulls was seen in local garbage dumps, accompnied by fewer, all immature Caspians, and careful scrutinizing revealed unexpected additions to our list such as Shag, Black-throated Diver and Heuglin´s Gull. At **Rize** a group of Honey Buzzards was seen in the distance, so we decided to give a try at Hopa - a Black Sea city near Georgia, where we supposed most of the raptor migration to pass in the light easterlies. The right decision: During two intense hours we counted 3800 Honey Buzzards with a good mixture of other migrants: 1 Black Stork, 12 Lesser Spotted Eagles, 1 imm. Steppe Eagle, 2 Short-toed Eagles, 255 sec cal. year Steppe Buzzard, 25 Black Kites, 13 Levant Sparrow Hawks, a 2 cal. Pallid Harrier, 2 Kestrels and scattered groups of European Bee-eaters. The migration here was as east to observe as at Eilat or Burgas and must be fabolous in March-April! All was observed from the eastern outskirts of the town with ease, albeit to some excitement for the locals.

In autumn 1976 over 300.000 raptors, mainly buzzards were observed in the nearby valleys of Borcksa, so this area have a enormous potential for raptor watching, and is easily reached, e.g. via local flights from Istanbul to Trabzon.

Another long driving day followed - at first rather eventless (but adding another Green Warbler) as well as meal at picturescue, but ugly Artvin (placed on steep hills reminding of Gangtok in Sikkim). Later we reached the plains and lakes of **Ardadan** housing many raptors, flocks of White-winged Black Terns and shorebirds and several exorbitant males of Citrine Wagtails - a time consulpting Crane on nest and a nice sight of an immature Imperial Eagle completed our too short visit here (THIS area should be looked out for in the future!), before we decided to visit Cildir and Aktas Lakes near the Georgian Border. We were warned about police activities here, and did not succeed in obtaining a permit to reach lake **Aklas** (distant Dalmatian and White Pelicans was observed in telescope in the shelter of a small mountain, but another target bird, Velvet Scoter (of which we were curious to observe posible differences from North European populations) remained at a distance not enabling to see essential details).

Armenian Gulls were unexpected abundant, and the large numbers of adults indicates that a considerable breeding population is found here.

In this remote area, the landscape was rough: green field and deep lakes lacking vegetation leaving an impression of being in the Arctic - and hours passed before we even saw another car. The whole area between Ardahan and Georgia clearly needs more attention - there must be a lot to discover here!

Lately we reached Kars - a rustic (karsk) place with a taste of Russia "in the middle of nowhere" to our surprise to find ourself having dinner in a european style pizzeria.

18 May Departure at 05:00 with some bisquits on the way. Lush green landscape with a mixture of small wetlands (with loads of White-winged Black Terns and a small colony of Montagu's Harrier) mixed with more harsh stony ground - the home for loads of Bimaculated Larks. By chance, we visited a gravel pitch near **Halikista** - the home of several Finch's Wheatears, and about the only one we ever found during the trip.

In the distance, mighty Mount Ararat raised over green swamps, creating a unique Oriental landscape of unsurpassed beauty, and equalling the sight of Kilimanjaro and Mount Fuji - other rather isolated volcanic mountains. A breathless sight for a mointan addict! The imposant palace **Ishik Pasha** created a unique taste of 1001 nights adventure, built in sandstone in semi-desert surroudings. The green, cliff-filled slopes here are the home of the notorious difficult Mongolian Trumpeter Finch as well as Grey-necked Bunting. Many miss these species by visiting the palace itself, but a better idea is checking the parking area some hundred meters further beyond the palace and carefully and patiencly await the presence of the elusive species at the slopes immediately north of the parking range about 1 km. SE of the palace. Very quickly a suspected bunting was heard and seen - Ortolan Bunting, which proved rather common in the lower part of the valley near small streams (but surprising scarcely mentioned in trip reports!). Not a single Grey-necked was found despite hours of walking the slopes well known for the species, but a nice male Mongolian Trumpeter Finch showed well for Klaus and Jan before disappearing never to be seen again!

Following hours of searching we decided alternatives - the dark lava fields between **Dogubeyacik** and **Serpmetas**, which formerly have housed the Mongolian (as well as the still sadly missed Crimsom-winged Finch). This area, very close to the Iranian border, have formerly been fruitfull, but according to the political instable situation we were not allowed entrance to the lava fields at Serpmetas, and only allowed a very short visit to the Curdian village **Caldiran** (where severel Crimson-winged Finches were seen accompagnied by a local gun-man!). The day ended with the most spectacular thunder-and hailstorms over mount Ararat, leaving the

small mud-build villages (each with a parabol antenna) as a swamp and created a scenary equal to a dramatic instruction of Wagner's Götterdämmerung!

We spend the night in Dogubeyacik.

19 May. Intensive observation at **Ishik Pasa** 05:15-10:25 added at least some distant singing Grey-necked Buntings (eventually identified by much better observations in Van Hills). All were singing very high up on the cliffy, hardly herb-grown slopes - a habitat totally different from the Ortolan Buntings. (although the hearing of the song was somewhat disturbed by a half-long prayer echoing against the steep mounting - a soundscape well worth a Pink Floyd record!). Again. Mongolian Trumpeter Finch proved at most time consulping species, and no luck today!

Now we almost thought we had too much rain: Very heavy rain accompnied us on the road to Van, som we decided to skip Bendimari Marshes, which otherwise looked promising. However, we almost dried quicker than the sun start to shine, so we decided to try **Van Hills** (very well described in the Gen) for Grey-necked Bunting. Immedially after the quarry described, a green slope (opposite a small parking lot) leads in between two flat, stony hills - the home for several Grey-necked Buntings, which here showed up superb!

We were tipped by a small wetland immediately south of **Erzek Lake**, whih should be good for ducks, Paddyfield and Moustached Warbler. But only Sedge Warbler here. However, our target bird was Caspian Stonechat, which should be found following a small track leading SW immediately west of the wetland. We succeeded well and had a collaborable pair near nest, enabling digiscoping and documenting all features of the extremely exorbitant male and the plumagewise very interesting female!

Later we made a short try at the eastern road along Erzek Lake, but with little succes apart from the best Little Owl *lilith* of the tour and some distant shorebirds. The western side of the lake is is argumentably better for waterbirds - but Black-necked Grebe and Flamingoes had not the highest of priority on this trip.

The salty Van Lake are for parts rather free for birds (apart from herds of Armenian Gulls), but there are exceptions, such as **South Van Marshes** in the outskirts of Van town. We tried Gosney site 1 in the evening with success and was quickly able to locate several Paddyfield Warblers - like a small Reed Warbler with the face of a Sedge! It is a good locality for water birds, albeit somewhat disturbed, and we were able to track Ruddy Shelduck with dabblings, 4 White-headed Ducks and groups of White-winged Terns. Few Slender-billed Gulls added our list, but we still have to wait for Citrine Wagtail. A nearby orchard housed several vagrants. We spend the night at hotel Bayrak for 30 Lira after almost being ribbled for 120 Lira by a unfriendly hotel nearby. And hotels are not that easy to find in Van.

20 May. A very productive morning in **South Van Marshes**, now at "Gosney 2" in perfect light. Several waders had arrived, and a flock of 56 Red-necked Phalaropes, fine summer-plumaged Ferruginous Sandpipers and hundreds of Little Stints were present. Prize birds were 5 very attractive males of Lesser Kestrel (breeding at Van Castle), a good population of Citrine Wagtails and small groups of Paddyfield Warblers.

Driving along Van Lake offers few birds, but locally Armenian Gulls were abundant, and small numbers of Black-necked Grebes were seen. We left Van at around 09:00. Taking a long drive westwards, we passed several military controls, but less time consulting than expected. The day went rather eventless, apart from a very nice male Levant Sparrowhawk in green forests near Baykan, and an unexpected singing Pale Rock Sparrow - one of the only of the trip.

Driving westwards it became hot, and the very heavy traffic at A90 between Batman (!) and Birezik tested the nerves of drivers to a strong degree. Much heavy traffic, outburned trucks and very impatient driving by fast prestige cars making the most uncontrolled overtakes was like driving India on speed! Luckily we reached Birezik around 20:00, quickly checking in at the obligatorical Motel Mirkelam - a highway's countership to London Heathrow with its heavy traffic between Iran and Southern Turkey. We tried the famous owl cafe in the evening - it is situated in the second row of cafe's, and there is no longer a Pepsi sign (as noted by Gosney) but a Coca Cola sign. Nevertheless, the large park and the old blue fountain cannot really be missed. This can be the owls, but the first Scop's Owl for the tour made some compensation for things to follow.

21 May. Birezik must be regarded as one of the most obligatoric of all WP birding localities with its well of specialities. Birezik itself is a rather uncharming road-stop, but with the old castle spectacularly placed down to the Euphrat-river. The former Bald Ibis colony is now kept in captivity, but are seen free flying between the "Ibis Centre" and the feeding fields south of the bridge, and a few pairs breeds in the "Ibis Wadi". Birding starts early here, and about 05:00 we found ourselves watching 18 Ibises, the Pygmy Cormorant missed at Sultan Marshes and a small group of Little Swifts, which breeds on the cliffs ca 1 km. south of the highway bridge on the eastern shore of River Euphrat.

We spend almost 4 hours in the "**Ibis Wadi**". Menetries Warbler was immediately found and was abundant, together with the ever present, but always charming Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. but to see the larger and greyer Upcher's Warbler we had to climb the wadi and see the species in scrub on the top overlooking the wadi. Chukars were present, but we had our problems with the target species See See Partridge, of which we finally found four. A

single Pale Rock Sparrow was noted as well before running into our old travel companions, the legendary Rask brothers by chance.....

A easier option for See See Partridge was the small wadi at Isik Restaurant less than 1 km. north of the Ibis Valley - we easily had good view of two birds here, as well as White-spectacled Bulbul.

More productive was the plantation described in The Gem 3-5 km. north of the bridge, on the east side of the river. Yellow-throated Sparrow was quickly recorded, preferring pylons, Dead Sea Sparrow was found nesting and small groups of Desert Finches flew over.

A newly discovered area are the fishing ponds and marshes a few km. to the south of the bridge over Euphrat. The ponds are *the* place to look for Pied Kingfisher, which was easily found, and the reed beds were filled with Pygmy Cormorants, migrating White-winged Terns, few Squacco and Little Herons and several Ferruginous Ducks. The insect-like song of Graceful Warbler intermixed with the explosive of Cetti's and the "rap" of Great Reed Warbler.

It can be incredibly hot in Birezik. but May is still relatively bearable. The gravel pits - formerly breeding sites for Green Bee-eater - just north of Motel Mirkelam, may have a new potential for the species, for European Bee-eater were plentiful, but completely overshadowed by thousands of Sand Martins breeding here. Two Cattle Egrets made our only observations for the trip, and a third Pied Kingfisher was seen, but the soundscape was more impressive with the strange mechanical song from Graceful Warbler and the telegraphic from Black Francolin.

We met at 15:00 with the Rask brothers for the "usual" owl show at the famous cafe. The owner immediately showed Long-eared Owl - adult and young, but we were for the harder stuff. As usual: after some searching in shadowing trees everyone gives up and offers the owner (a relative to his murdered brother?) a fee for showing the Bruce's Scops Owl, he first claimed not to have seen for months. A minute after, and a nice adult poaches freely in the sun just above the main cafe - attracted by an endless stream of gratulating turks watching the probably not too infrequent sighting in telescopes - a real show! In moment, the owl's movements have a vague similarity of the moribund pope Johannes Paul II. An Eastern Bonelli's Warbler was a surprising addition to the birdlist.

A day at Birezik needs a celebrating, which does not appear by itself - so we arranged a joint meeting at the best available restaurant just north of Motel Mirkelam with Turkish specialities such as fresh Euphrat Fish, kebabs, Efes, delicious salads and an offer to test sheep's brain.....

22 May. 2 hours drive to quite another avifauna in the agricultural landscape near **Gaziantep**. The landscape here is

dominated by shallow valleys and rugged hills. In the valley bottoms there are lush vegetation with orchards, small patches of dense deciduous forest and scrubs, whereas higher up the landscape becomes more open, with stony, herb-grown plateaus with numerous small thorny bushes and flowers - highest up the landscape becomes harsh with restricted vegetation consisting mainly of herbs on stony ground. Short bushy vegetation exists up to the steeper cliffs, dominating the horizon.

The valleys here are a birder's heaven and the main spots for "Turkish delights". Relatively few areas are visited, mainly due to lack of time, but two areas have paid attention. The **Isikli** village - mentioned in "the Gem" - is worthwhile a visit, but it seemed better to visit a slightly different area than mentioned in "the Gem". Instead of parking in the middle of the village, drive further east for about 5-800 m. to the entrance of a broad valley, from where a barely visible track leads along orchards to the more open area, used by shepherds for grazing of sheep. This was our well producing choice. Already after few minutes a beautiful male Red-tailed Wheatear showed itself, and soon the surrounding were filled with new birds - clearly a bunting's heaven with Crested Larks and Black-headed Buntings all over, and several White-throated Robins gave good view. All morning was spent in this area.

We were warned by shepherd's dogs here, but it seems that we ourselves creates more scarcity to a poor 9 year old shepherd boy, staring at us for minutes before finally accepting positive gestures and being portrayed by our digital camera! Guess his story to his natives in the evening must have had strong reminiscence of "rural people's" encounters of third degree - he looked at us, and must have regarded us as being aliens quickly flying away in a white "ufo" with the speed of the sound (mainly tractors and horse-wagons are used in this rural areas).

A more frequently visited area is the similar, but larger **Durnalik** - not at least as the population of target species indeed are larger. It is an area frequently visited by trekkers from the surrounding villages. Using The Gem is possible to get a overview over this very attractive area, which offers opportunities for long walks (bring along a good load of water - it can be hot in the middle of the day). Some kilometer's trek make it possible to reach the "moonscape" - an area of black cliffs renowned for Pale Rock Sparrow, which was absent this year. The always active Claus was however lucky in finding a female Red-tailed Wheatear here, and all were surprised by the good opportunities to study a healthy population of Cinereous Bunting, Upcher's Warbler, both Rock Nuthatches and Sombre Tit to mention a few. The walk takes some hours, but is made easy by a good system of small tracks. Reaching the "moonscape" in the future will be much easier, as a new gravel road is almost constructed, but could theoretically cause some disturbance to the area.

Isikli and **Durnalik** are worth several days, but - as we did ourselves - almost anyone ignores the presence of so many similar looking spots nearby. The area must be full of undiscovered bird spots and have a high potential.

From about 16:00 we found ourself on the road again, ending up at Silifte where a rather noisy hotel Arisan (prized 30 Lira for a triple room) was used at base for a night, when half of the town celebrated the Turkish soccer championship won by Istanbul-based Fenerbache!

23 May. With some extra days aviable we decided to give a try for some species, which at the start of the tour had lower priority: the south Mediterranean species (booking a Lesbos charter flights is indeed easier than planning a trip covering most parts of the remote Eastern Turkey in search of mouth-watering local specialities).

The area just north of **Silifke** is "truly Mediterranean" - shallow hills with small orchards, gardens anf fir forest with smell from herbs and flight from colourful butterflies. From Silifke, the landscape soon raises several hundreds meters, giving place to this attractive habitat. The area have frequently been used as alternative to the well-visited Akseki near Antalya, and proved to have much the same to offer.

Just 10 km. north of Silifte, the village of **Demircili** was tested first. The "upper" cemetary, immediately north of the village, is a reliable site for Olive-tree Warbler, which immediately was found singing from the enormous olive-tree at the cemetary. This tree eventually produced even Eastern Orphean Warbler and Masked Shrike. Another target-species - Krüper's Nuthatch took some work, but finally a family group was spotted in the fir forest 2 km. north of Demircili. Rüppell's Warbler was easy with several singing in the macchia bordering the road. A local landowner invited us on freshly milked milk and showed the hippie-looking KMO his proud secret - the "herb garden". The short road between **Demircili** and **Imamli** was very productive, and after few morning hours we were ready for another try at Göksu Delta - this time with better luck on the middle part of the delta (Gosney site 12-13). Just turn south at Yildirika Latkik Kalpati and follow the channels. No sign of White-breasted Kingfisher however, but a scatter of wetland birds with some nice views of Marsh Harriers (most photographic here), Marbled Teal and Ferruginous Duck.

Experiments not always work. We planned to do seawatching at the promising looking Aphroditias, but the very long and winding road ended in a closed "reserve", probably for the obscurer part of the Turkish upperclass, No seabirds here! And no chance for a Mediterranean swim, nethier in- or outside.

Night was spend in a dubious apartment hotel for 30 Lira in the middle of a futuristic Russian nightmare along the very heavily used main road.

24 May. In the morning we found ourself in a prison - closed in at 6 a clock at our resort! A telephone call to the owner released us, but we are inreluctant in recommanding Court Apart Motel.....

We still missed one main target bird: White-breasted Kingfisher. In the forest named "Tarsus Delta west" we did several hour's seach before succeeding along a well grown canal. Rufous Bush Robins were most plentiful here along with a good selection of Mediterranean songbirds.

After some struggles we managed to find **Tuzlu Golu**, with its mass of Kentish Plovers and the only flock of Flamingoes of the tour. Some distant shorebirds proved all to be common species, but the site is famous for their rarities, with recent observations of White-tailed, Caspian and Greater Sand Plover. Gosney also have information about **Tuzla Creek** - a fine semi-grown site for waterbirds such as herons and a potential "evening hot-spot" for rails. However, the detour to Adana was up and we preferred a few hours rest at the Sefek Hotel before the journey home.

25 May. Rose at 03:00 and drove to Adana airport for catching the local flight to Istanbul - a Airbus 310 arriving directly from Kabul. Three hours of waiting in Ataturk Airport, Istanbul, relieved loads of private planes from all over Europe - it was time for the Champion's League final cup in Istanbul that evening. 12:45, following three hours on a Turkish Airlines Boeing 737 we were on Danish ground again. A truly oriental adventure had finally come to an end.

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systematic list, with special reference to "target species", their identification and habitats

(note, that not every observation of common observed birds are mentioned - and that the "running order" mainly follows Mullarney et al. (1999) - the most frequently used field guide to the area)

1. **Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

17.5 1 adult in summer plumage migrating W at Derepazari, Black Sea.
Winters scarcely in Black Sea region - a late observation of the species.

2. **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

13.5 1 Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 17.5 5 Cildir Gölü..

3. **Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

17.5 2 ad. in waterhole near Ardahan.

4. Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

18.5 9 at waterhole near Kars was the largest observation. Scattered observations Lake Van, and 2 Akgöl, Göksu Delta on 13.5.

5. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scattered observations in most suitable habitats such as small lakes and ponds. Most were 10 in waterpools near Ardahan and Kars 17-18.5.

6. Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

17.5 1 Aktas Gölü, together with White Pelicans. According to Tucker & Heath (1994), the decreasing breeding population of the species in Turkey is 100-150 pairs, mainly in the west (Lake Manyas), although a small isolated breeding population are found at Aktas and Cirdir near the border to Georgia. The species is sometimes seen near Nigde, Central Anatolia as well.

7. White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotatus*

17.5 10 Aktas Gölü. 250-400 pairs bred in Turkey, (Tucker & Heath 1994), somewhat mirroring the distribution of Dalmatian Pelican, but with several colonies in Central Anatolia.

8. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

17.5 about 10 along Black Sea coastline between Derebapazi and Rize.

9. Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*

17.5 1 small harbour between Rize and Arhavi, Black Sea Coast. A small population exists along the NE Black Sea Coast of Turkey, but the species is more frequently observed by visiting birders in the Mediterranean area. The Turkish breeding population is just few hundreds pairs.

10. Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*

21.5 >80 Birezik, mainly in Euphrat 2-3 km. south of the town, resting in reed beds. App. 1500 pairs bred mid 1990 in Turkey, but with an increase and probably spread, at least to the now suitable habitats at Birezik; the Western lakes and Sultan Marshes are otherwise the traditional areas to look for the species.

11. Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minimus*

21.5 2 reed beds 2-3 km. south of Birezik, at Euphrat River, and one seen from the restaurant in the evening at Euphrat - 24.5 3 ad. Tuzla Creek.

As usual, this little skulker creates rather hard work - but the sign of a slowly-flying Coot with large pale patches "like izing on mazarina cakes!" should reveal u number!

12. Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

15.5 1 2 cal. Year bird Sultan Marshes.

13. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis ibis*

21.5 2 adult in breeding plumage gravel pits north of Birezik, along Euphrat was the sole observation. The species is surprising local in Turkey, with small populations in Sultan Marshes and in the river deltas of the SE Mediterranean. The newly discovered wetlands near Birezik seems to offer at

good substitute for certain wetland species, which otherwise will be easier at Sultan Marshes (e.g. Pygmy Cormorant).

14. **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

Seems to be the more widespread of the white herons, although never numerous. Small gatherings seen e.g. at Akgöl, Birezik and Tuzla Creek, never exceeding 5-6 apart from 10 Sultan Marshes 15.5.

15. **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce in wetlands, with 20 Akgöl, Göksu Delta, 10 Sultan Marshes 15.5., 15 24.5 Göksu Delta and 24.5 7 Tuzla/Tuzla Creek being the highest count.

16. **Great White Egret** *Egretta alba*

14.5 4 Akgöl, Göksu Delta and 15.5 4 Sultan Marshes.

17. **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

Scattered observations in suitable habitats.

18. **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

Commoner than Grey Heron, with frequent observations in extensive wetlands, especially with large reed beds. 9 at Akgöl, Göksu Delta on 14.5 was the largest count.

The general "anorectic" shape of the species and the general darkness was most striking at distance - especially the spike-like bill, the extremely slender body and deep "throat patch", which somewhat reminded us of the gular parts of Marabou Stork in flight were eye-catching. The spread toes, often cited as a good character, were observed on a couple of occasions (but usually after the legs have proven to be yellow) - it was however rarely a main suspicion character.

19. **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

Rather common in agricultural landscape, with nests noted locally in small colonies, most at Göksu Delta: 15 on 15.5 and 20 on 24.5, on pylons between Nigde and Sultan Marshes, and on almost any pylon between Batman and Diyarbakir 21.5. Breeds scattered throughout the country and seen with nests several sites, often in loose colonies.

A flock of 32 migrated north at Birezik on 22.5.

20. **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

17.5 1 2 cal year migrating Hopa together with raptors.

21. **Bald Ibis** *Geronicus eremita*

The small population, which is kept in half-captivity in Birezik is easily observed. App. 80 birds exists. We saw e.g. 18 on the cliffs 1 km. south of Birezik bridge on the east side of Euphrat, 17 (including nest with young) in the "Ibis Wadi" and 33 feeding in a plantation some km south of Birezik. Tickable or not? At least an interesting experience!

22. **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*

13.5 12 Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 15.5 8 Sultan Marshes - 19.5 1 Erzek Gölü.

23. **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

13.5 8 Akgöl, Göksu Delta was the sole observation of this beautiful species..

24. **Great Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*

24.5 78 Tuzla Gölü.

12-18.000 pairs breeds in Turkey, which holds 6 of 10 of the most important WP European breeding areas for the species (Tucker & Heath 1994). The population seen at Tuzla seemed to hold mainly immatures. The species breeds in locally very dense colonies in saline habitats.

25. **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

19.6 6 South Van Marshes, site 1 in the Gem.

26. **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

Scattered observations of small groups in suitable habitats: lakes and river edges, often in mountain areas.. No count exceeds 10, but the species was seen in most wetlands areas; a pair with 5 nestlings observed South Van Gölü 19.5, at "Gem 1".

4.000-8.000 pairs bred Turkey (Tucker & Heath 1994), making the country by far the most important breeding site in the region. However, a strong decrease has taken place in especially Central Anatolia caused by habitat destruction such as overgrazing, increasing salt extraction and upstream irrigation systems (probably the most important factor). The species seems freely hunted.

27. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Observed in small numbers throughout, most 18.5 10 Kars.

28. **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

18.5 4 males and 4 females waterhole near Kars. - 19.5 3 Erzek Gölü.

29. **Common Teal** *Anas crecca*

17.5 2 (pair) Ardahan.

30. **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

17.5 4 (2 pairs) Ardahan - 18.5 2 (pair) waterhole at Kars. - 21.5 2 males + 1 female Birezik at Euftrat.

31. **Marbled Teal** *Marmoretta angosturensis*

13.5 6 Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta - 23.5 2 Göksu Delta..

150-250 pairs breeds in Turkey, mainly in Göksu Delta (Tucker & Heath 1994).

32. **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*

16.5 4 males and 4 females Sultan Marshes.

33. **Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

Regular in wetlands, most 17.5 9 Ardahan - 19.5 30 Erzek Gölü and 25 South Van Marshes

34. **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Scattered observations, most 18.5 10 Kars.

35. **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya ferruginea*

21.5 3 males + 1 female 2-3 km. south of Birezik, at river Euftrat - 23.5 2 males and 2 females Göksu Delta..

As usual, the wing-bars are broad enough to create impression of almost white wings in flight - an impression strangely shared with Red-crested Pochard.

36. White-headed Duck *Oxyuca leucocephala*

19.5 4 males + 1 female South Van Marshes (Gem site 1) - 20.5 1 male South Van Marshes (Gem site 2).

150-250 pairs breeds in Turkey, in small, brachish wetlands with extensive redbeeds (Tucker & Heath 1994). Several wetlands around Ardahan looked most promising for the species, but without result. Another well-known sites are the shores of Lake Erzek, Bendimahi Marshes at Lake Van. Also, any extensive wetland in the far East should be searched; recently observed at a small, red-beed-surrounded lake - "small mast lake" along D070 35 km. from Kars towards Igdir. A hill with a high television mast indicated the site, which is between the road and the hill (Hendriks 2004)..

37. Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca fusca*

17.5 1 Aksas Gölü and 3 Cildur Gölü.

A small, isolated population exists in remore lakes in Turkey (even near Van). We were most curious in observing possible plumage differences between these isolated population and Weset European birds, as both the siberian form *stegnegeri* and the Neartctic form *deglandtii* at least regarding males differs clearly from each other (see e.g. Garner 199, Garner et al. 2004) and even at distance would be seperable. In moderate distance these Turkish delighetts looked with head-shape as in *fuscus*. .

38.. Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

14.5 1 adult Kalki Dag, Aladag Mountains - 18.5 1 adult Ishik Pasa.

Lammergeier has a stable population on 100-500 (800) pairs in Turkey, where found in high mountain areas throughout the country, above treeline and normally over 1000 m. of altitude (seemingly mist frequent at 1500-3000 m. (Gensbøl 1994,Forsman 1997).

39. Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

17.5 10 near carcass Ardahan.

100-1000 pairs breeds Turkey, which is one of the countries with a decrease of the population. A reliable site is the valley between Ispir and the pass south of Sivri Kaya (also a reliable site for Cinereous Vulture and Imperial Eagle), as described by Schwalbe on his report in the Danish web-site www.netfugl.dk

40. Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

13.5 1 3 cal. Year Göksu Delta. - 16.5 1 imm. Ardahan. - 18.5 1 ad. Igdir - 23.5 1 ad. Demircili.

A widespredds breeder with 1000-7000 breeding pairs in Turkey., probably more commen in the western part of the country.

41. Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

14.5 1 imm. Demirkazik. - 14.5 1 ad. Kalki Dag. - 16.5 1 imm. Baskarschmag. - 16.5 1 2 cal. Year near Gelinkaya. - 17.5 1 ad. Ishak Pasa - 17.5 2 ad. + 1 imm. Near the pass Tendürek Gecedt Bakum - 18.5 1 imm. Serpmetas - 19.5 1 ad. Ishak Pasa

Seems to be widespread in mountainious areas. Gensbøl (1994) gives a breeding population og 500-1500 pairs in Turkey.

42. Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

17.5 1 imm. Near Ardahan. Two very distant, displaying eagles could have belonged to this species as well. A small population on 10-150 pairs breeds in Turkey., mainly in central Anatolian highland. It is regularly reported from valleys between Ispir and the pass south of Sivri Kaya, where it probably breeds.

43. Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis orientalis*

17.5 1 imm.. migrating N Hopa with Honey Buzzards.

Apparently scarce so late in spring, but predictably very common during spring peak period of March-April;. We would not be surprised if daily totals of thousands might be recorded then! In Eilat, Israel spring numbers have exceeded 75.000 with no breeding population between here and Central Asia; however, the majority are suspected to pass east to Hopa; autumn counts at Borcksa gave 271 birds in 1976 - still a fair share!

44. Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

17.5 1 imm.. migrating Rize - 17.5 11 (of which 2 3 cal year and 3 2 cal year) migrating Hopa. - 17.5 1 imm. Ardahan.

A good collection of a species with a very scattered breeding population in Turkey (probably not exceeding 100 pairs). Migration truly continues into May, and one can only be curious about the migration earlier in spring at Hopa, although the main breeding range for the species lies much to the West of Turkey. A large passage must pass Gulf of Iskenderun near Adana (the Belen Pass) both autumn and spring, based on the massive migration present at Bosphorus and northern Israel/Palestina, where days over 15.000 regularly registered..

Concerning ID: all were typical, rather small-winged and compact birds with the typical upperparts, but for 2 cal years now bleached compared to the cleaner and warmer impression of fresh autumn juveniles, and with greater coverts bar reduced by wear.

Underparts appears in most cases rather uniform with a faint paler coverts than flight feathers - a normal field impression of the species. The double-patch at the wing-bend (created by pale bases to primaries and primary coverts), so often cited in the literature on the base of Forsman 1997, was as usual only observable at close range and works - as many other primary pattern features in raptors - much better in photos than in the field.

45. Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Observed almost daily throughout, with concentration of 5 immatures 13.5 in Göksu Delta as the largest number. Otherwise among the most common raptors (although never numerous). Probably a good deal of migrating birds involved; 2 sec. Cal. Years migrated Hopa 17.5. Most seen were immatures, based on freshly moulted p1-3 in otherwise unmoulted wing; This is in line with Forsman (1997), who informs that older birds always have several generations of dissimilar worn flight feathers caused by incomplete yearly moult.

Breeding population in Turkey 2000-8000 pairs. Breeds in dry country with scattered trees and bushes, often along hillsides which are used for hunting.

46. Booted Eagle *Hieraeetus pennatus*

13.5 1 pale morph Tarsus. - 18.5 1 dark morph Abdahan.

Not a very common Turkish breeder with an estimated population on some hundreds pairs (Forsman 1997).

47. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Rather scarcely distributed with 25 migrating Hopa 17.5 in a few hours and 9 Basmarschmag 16.5 being the maximum counts. The autumn raptor counts at Borcksa in 1976 gave 5775 birds. Spring migration supposed to be intensive, but no details known.

Gensbøl (1994) mentions 100-1000 breeding pairs in Turkey with strong decrease in recent years, probably caused by hunting and more extensive agriculture, leaving fewer carcasses and garbage available for this notorious scavenger.

48. **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Common in extensive wetlands, to some degree agricultural lands. Most seen 13.5 20 Göksu Delta - 15.5 15 Sultan Marshes - 19.5 7 Ercek Gölü - 23.5 25 Göksü Delta, but present in most suitable habitats. The majority were younger birds, only a few adult males seen. 3 2 cal. Years migrated Hopa 18.5 during the massive raptor migration.

Breeding population in Turkey 2000-8000 pairs (Gensbøl 1995), mainly concentrated to extensive marshland with a somewhat scattered population.

49. **Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

13.5 1 adult male Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 15.5 1 adult female Kogunga - 17.5 1 ad. male Abdahan - 18.5 3 males (of which 2 adults and 1 3 cal. Year) and 2 adult females small waterpond near Kars (probably a small breeding concentration) - 19.5 2 ad. males near Igdir.

Montagu's Harrier is a rather scarce breeder in Turkey, with a population between 200 and 1000 pairs, with a very patchy distribution in extensive steppe landscape mixed with wetlands. It seems we hit one of the better areas between Ardahan and Ararat.

50. **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus*

16.5 1 2 cal. Year Baskarschmag - 18.5 1 2 cal. Year migrating Hopa.

The observation 16.5 was photo-documented. A rather tricky individual, first suspected on flight set similar to Hen Harrier (with both higher and lower, but still stiff wing-beats compared to the "ballet-dancing", red-kite like of most Montagu's); compared to Montagu's, the head was larger, the arm longer and broader with straighter leading edge and the hand shorter - differences in jizz and flight set are in most cases surprising effective!

The bird showed unusually dark head-markings, making the head mainly dark at distance. The pale neckring was narrower than usual, but complete (at most incomplete and restricted to sides of hindneck in Montagu's), the dark neck band being very extensive and almost complete in this individual. In 1 year, head-pattern is the most striking difference between Pallid and Montagu's. Pallid have a complete pale neck-ring (often whish and contrasting to warmer-tinged underparts), enforced by the extensive dark neck-band. Both areas are at most much weaker defined and concentrated to sides of neck in Montagu's, which furthermore shows broader and more extensive pale areas around eye, creating an open-faced look compared to the more "negative" of Pallid.

Also, the inner primaries differs. In Montagu's, all primaries have black tips to create a complete black surrounding to the wing-tip, as a continuing part of the large dark secondary panel. Few birds have more worn primary tips by spring, and may appear less well-marked. Pallid lacks the dark tips to the inner primaries, instead showing weak greyer tips. This creates a larger pale area between the dark secondary panel and the narrow black wing-tip. In Pallid, the primary bases are frequently white, creating a pale "boomerang" around the carpal; this normally lacks in Montagu's (but may be present in up to 1%). However, this "boomerang" - so often cited as a main character (but moderated somewhat by the creator of the idea, Forsman 1997), is rarely prominent enough to create a main feature in 1 year, but a more important character in older females.

The plumage was completely juvenile. Most Montagu's at this time have a more advanced moult, with larger parts of head, body, inner coverts and in 90% the central tail feathers renewed to create a "blob" at the tail-tip (Forsman 1997, Malling Olsen 2002, A. Corso & KMO pers. obs-). A still fully juvenile migrating bird by May is more likely to be Pallid than Montagu's - however, go for jizz, head-pattern and inner primary tips in spring. I cannot too often cite Håkon Delin's wise words concerning ID of Pallid versus Montagu's Harrier from Eilat, 1992: "If the two were as common as Common and Rough-legged Buzzards at home, we will learn to regard them as even more different from each other."

ID of harriers is e.g. covered by Forsman 1997, but most recently by Malling Olsen 2003 (in Swedish).

In Turkey, Pallid Harrier is scarce migrant. At Borcksa in autumn 1976, 133 were noted (compared to 124 Montagu's Harriers, but many probably left unidentified at that time). There is a tendency for the spring migration to follow a more westerly route than in autumn, with peak numbers noted Sicily and South Italy (max. 130 in 2001) (Corso & Cardelli 2004). Noticably is a recent report on 200 Montagu's/Pallid Harriers passing Kazbegi, Georgia 9.5 2004 (Alfrey & Spittle 2004). Most supposed to be Montagu's according to the time, with the main passage of Pallid Harriers generally peaking earlier in spring, probably April. C- Leth (in litt.) noted 35 Montagu's and two Pallids migrating in just one hour at Kagbezi early May 2005.

51. **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*

A surprising widespread breeder, noted daily in numbers, with 8 at Baskarschmag as the largest concentration. Otherwise common in open landscape, preferring drier and more hilly, less vegetated habitat than Common Buzzard, such as semi-desert. Commonly encountered in pylons along roadsides, especially in Central Anatolia. A very nice black morph showed itself perfectly well near Iğdir 22.5.

The Turkish population is between 2000 and 10.000 pairs (Gensbøl 1995).

52. **Common (Steppe) Buzzard** *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

Most noticeable was 255 2 cal. Years migrating at Hopa during the massive Honey Buzzard migration 18.5. One wonders about the numbers earlier in spring; a suspected peak must appear late March-mid April (the peak time of Eilat, with yearly maximum counts of 465.000 and daily record exceeding 100.000). Even tens of thousands breeding in Turkey leaves an enormous number theoretically passing Hopa region in spring! More research needed!

Otherwise frequently observed, especially in wooded areas, although never matching Long-legged Buzzard in numbers. Some beautiful foxy-red birds observed.

The breeding population of Turkey is estimated to 5.000-25.000 pairs (Gensbøl 1995) mainly in the northern part of the country.

The autumn passage at Borcksa/Arhavi in NE-Turkey is massive, with 205.000 counted in 1976. Controversially, the species is noticeably scarcer in Eilat in autumn, where majority crossed Red Sea via Yemen to Djibouti and on to the wintering quarters in East Africa.

53. **Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

18.5 saw an extensive migration along the Black Sea Coast: at around 08:00 245 passed Rize in a single group, and between 10:15 and 12:20 3.615 passed Hopa. The migration was easily observed from the outskirts of the town; we predicted the light easterly wind to make the crossing immediately east of the town, which proved right!

Regarding the very large migration noted autumn 1976 at Borcksa (137.600), we suspect this region to be a main migration routes used even in spring; Honey Buzzard is rather scarce breeder in

Turkey with the few hundreds pairs mainly concentrated to the NE (Gensbøl 1995). At Eilat, 250.000-850.000 pass each spring with a peak early May (Shirihai 1996) with daily records exceeding 200.000!. Of these, a considerable part eventually heads for Europa via Iskenderun into Central and Western Turkey, but still leaving hundreds of thousands possible heading for Eastern Russia and Cenral Asia. In theory, days with 50-100.000 could pass Hopa area first part of May, but this is still to be discovered! 9.5 2004 1190 passed Kazbegi, Georgia (Alfrey & Spittle 2004)
Other migrants observed were 17.5 19 Ovitdagi Gecedi pass - 19.5 17 Halikista - 20.5 1 Gulicar - 21.5 1 Birezik.

54. Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

18.5 1 Kars - 19.5 1 Ishak Pasa.

55. Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*

17.5 13 passing Hopa during the big raptor migration. - 20.5 1 ad. male Sariskona (in deciduous forest 15 km. east of Baykan).

The breeding population of Turkey is estimated 100-1000 pairs, mainly in western and central part, although probably overlooked in eastern part; Ortvad et al (2004) found the species breeding at Maden Kopronasi, and our observation of an adult male also indicates breeding outside the range given (Cramps & Simmons 1980, Gensbøl (1994). Prefers deciduous forest with plantation in hilly areas.

Thua autumn migration at Borcksa in 1976 gave 290 birds. At Eilat, up to 49.000 has been noted in a spring, and in autumn, up to 44.000 North Israel; at Bosphorus, autumn counts have reached over 7000 (Gensbøl 1995) . Clearly, the majority follows the route from Israel/Palestine heading westwards at Iskenderun near Adana. Spring numbers at Hoba remains unknown, but a peak could be expected in the latter part of April.

The identification from Sparrowhawk during migration is not too difficult; the narrower hand, especially evident when soaring, creates a wing-shape more similar to a falcon (especially Lesser Kestrel); while soaring Sparrowhawks bears reminiscence to Hen Harrier regarding wing-shape - Levant here have more of a Pallid Harrier impression! The wing-beats are shallower and the flight route straight - slightly undulating in migrating Sparrowhawks, and the tail often looks short with slightly rounded corners. Inpetesting, in "mystery bird competitions" Levant is often misidentified as a Goshawk, which is rarely the case in Sparrowhawk. This gives an idea of the jizz, althpugh the much larger size of Goshawk will appear more than evident in the field..

56. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Scattered throughtout, with almost daily observations. Breeding confirmed Ibis Wadi, Birezik.

57. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

13.5 1 Adana - Erdembi. - 15.5 4 near Kayseri - 20.5 6 ad. males Van Fort (a breeding site for the species) - 20.5 3 Sanli Urfa - 21.5 1 ad. male Birezik "Ibis Wadi". Several unidentified Common/Lesser Kestrels observed.

1000-6000 pairs breeds Turkey, scattered throughtout the country.

58. Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

15.5 2 ad. Sultan Marshes. - 15.5 2 near Sivas - 16.5 1 Sivri Kaya - 17.5 1 Ardahan - 18.5 1 Serpmetas - 19.5 1 South Van Marshes.

Several thousand pairs breeds scattered throughout Turkey.

59. Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

16.5 1 2 cal. Year female Sivri Kaya. - 18.5 1 female Igdir - 18.5 1 2 cal. Year female Serpmetas
Migrant to an unknown degree; daily autumn counts of several thousands in as well Burgas
(Bulgaria) and Northern Israel indicates heavy passage through Central and Southern Turkey in
autumn, which potential large concentration to Adana region. Spring migration seemingly follows
a more westerly route across the Mediterranean, with thousands passing Sicily.

60. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus brookei*

13.5 1 imm. Göksu Delta - 14.5 1 Kalki Dag..

A rather widespread breeder with a population between 500 and 2000 pairs, mainly in mountain
areas throughout the country. Represented by the rather small and dark ssp. *brookei*; the large and
often pale tundra breeding form *calidus*, which in many cases are plumagewise closer to Barbary
Falcon (but almost invariably larger) and - more serious to Saker Falcon - must migrate through
Turkey, and possibly winters regularly. In spare, these plumagewise often tricky birds luckily in
flight are true Peregrines, showing rather uniform underwing and short broad arm against long.
Pointed wings, differing from the evenly broader wings with longer arm and rounder, fuller wing-
tip (as well as clearly bicoloured underwing in all (but pale adult) Saker Falcons.

61. Caucasian Black Grouse *Tetrao mlokosiewiczi*

19.5 4 males and 2 females Sivri Kaya. The birds were easily observed in the afternoon app. 500
m. south of the minaret in Sivri Kaya (and immediately south of the cemetery) from the main road.
They all appeared in dwarf rhododendron vegetation above the tree limit, often performing their
strange display on exposed snow patches. The birds proved very easy in May, but retreat much
higher up in the mountains during summer and may be hard to get in late summer/autumn.

Alternatively, take the track at the cemetery and follow the track behind some small hills into the
mountain. Trekking for about an hour brings you closer to the leks of the males. The Gem gives
further directions for alternative locations at Sivri Kaya.

200-1000 pairs breeds in NE Turkey, restricted to few spots in the Pontic Mountains, with Sivri
Kaya as the best known, another area is Ayder near Artvin (H. Vikkelsø Rasmussen in litt.). The
population has decreased, but the estimates might be too low with many potential areas still
unvisited.

The breeding habit is alpine meadows with dwarf rhododendrons and birches between 1700-3300
m, often including steeper, more vegetated parts. (Tucker & Heath 1994)

62. Caspian Snowcock *Tetraogallus caucasicus*

15.5 4 Demirkacik and 1 Kalki Dag.

The birds in the morning were easily heard from the top of the hill, to where the tractor takes you.
However, revealing signs proved a hard task! The calls are however a most distinct part of the
soundscape: like far-crying Curlews with a touch of a Loon! Most actively heard calling in the
morning, but the bird at Kalki Dag was heard in the afternoon.

See diary for arrangement of transportation by tractor to the main site (however, the species must
be widespread up there in all suitable habits). Walking will take some efforts - either follow the
tractor track from behind the mountaineers centre at Cucurbak (and turn left after some kilometres
when the tractor track divides) or the strenuous trek through the deep gorge behind the mountaineers
centre or in the steep gorge - both sites are described in Gosney; alternatively try to camp within the
remote area of Aladag (see main direction in Kristensen 1999, commenting on "The Gen"). Note,
however, that arranging the twitch on your own without transportation by tractor or four-wheel drive

are among the toughest way of birding, and perfect condition together with experience with trekking/climbing essential.

A new site - the "chromium mine" seems to be the best accessible place later in the summer, where the birds disappear higher up in the mountains.

Recently, the species have been found at Sivri Kaya, further along the track described under Caucasian Black Grouse, where also heard throughout the day from the main road (Ortvad 2004). Also occurs at Ayder near Artvin (H. Vikkelsøe Rasmussen in litt.).

As for the Grouse, May is far the easiest month, as the birds display lower down than in summer. The Turkish population is estimated to 200-2000 pairs, restricted to the Aladag/Demirkazik range and the Pontic mountains. The habitat is steep slopes with low vegetation with areas with large rocks, (used for song-posts), well above the tree-line, in the alpine and subalpine zone between 1800 and 4000 meters (lowest early in the season).

The population in Turkey remains poorly known, apart from the Demirkazik population; investigations of mountain ranges of Erciyes Dagi (south of Kayseri) and Mount Ararat-range would probably lead to discovery of new populations.

Note: For the adventurer (and with possibilities of going into Georgia) a future "gamefowl galore" could prove possible: combining Sivri Kaya/Ayder with a visit to Kazbegi in Georgia. In May, this will add Caucasian Snowcock (as well as Great Rosefinch, *Güldenstädt's Redstart* and *Pied Wheatear*) to your trip lists!!! (Alfrey & Spittle 2004, C. Leth in litt.). "Without dreams you become mad", as Danish song-and-dance-man Kim Larsen says..

63. **Black Francolin** *Francolinus francolinus*

13.5 1 male + 1 female Akgöl, Gåoksu delta - 22.5 2 heard gravel pits north of Birezik, at the western bank of Euphrat.

Probably under 1000 pairs present in Turkey; the largest population in the region of Gökusu and Tarsus Deltas, the traditional site being coastal scrub on the southern shore of Akgöl Lake, between the village and the new observation tower. Most observers hear several singing here, but we were probably too late, eventually to be gifted by the sight of a free posing pair in the outskirts of the village! A more controversial observation was made when hearing the characteristic "telegraphic song" of two males in Birezik. The habitat is low-lying areas near water, such as at coastlines, in scrub along river or in swamps.

64. **See See Partridge** *Amnoperdix griseogularis*

22.5 4 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik - 22.5 2 small wadi opposite Isik Restaurant, Birezik.

Found in dry or semi-dry habitat, such as wadis with short vegetation on top, in the vicinity of water, frequently up to 2000 m. (although the known sites near Birezik and Halfeti are much lower). Compared to Sand Partridge of the Middle East, prefers less dry, more vegetated habitat. The call was noted as a rather far-crying series "o-e o-e o-e...." with the regularity of a waterdrop!; also a hoarse and nasal series of "kück kück..." was heard..

65. **Chukar** *Alectoris chukar*

Rather widespread, and observed in a number of habitats, from dry steppe-like agricultural landscape to mountains up to 3000 m. (at the Snowcock site at Demirkazik). Nowhere common, and mostly singletons seen, although 2-4 Ishak Pasa 18-19.5 and 3 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik 21.5..

66. **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

22.5 1 Durnalik.

67. **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

19.5 1 South Van Marshes - 22.5 1 Euftrat River south of Birezik.

68. **Common Moorhen** *Gallinago chloropus*

Scattered observations of a few birds in wetlands and along channels, most 20 Euftrat river south of birezik.

69. **Common Coot** *Fulica atra*

Locally common in wetlands; most noted 13.5 600 Lake Akgöl, Göksu Delta and 15.5 100 Sultan Marshes - 17.5 30 Ardahan - 17.5 30 Cildir Gölü - 19.4 40 Erzek Gölü - 19.5 250 South Van Marshes. A pair with pull as well as 125 adults at Euftrat south of Birezik 22.5.

70. **Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio caspius*

13.5 4 Akgöl Lake, Göksu Delta of this grey-headed taxon, sometimes regarded as a species of its own. The Göksu Delta holds the entire Turkish population of 100-200 pairs.

71. **Common Crane** *Grus grus*

17.5 1 at nest in swamp area east of Ardahan - 18.5 1 at nest in large swamp near Iğdir.

The Turkish population is 100 -300 pairs, mainly in the highlands of Central and Eastern Anatolia.

72. **Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

16.5 3 between Erzinzan and Meskan. A strangely distributed breeder in Turkey, with very patchy distribution, apart from being more widespread along rivers in Pontic area (Cramp & Simmons 1983)- as indicated by our observation.

73. **Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

13.5 4 Lake Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 19.5 7 Bendimari Marsh, Lake Van - 20.5 2 South Van Marshes - 24.5 8 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

74. **Black-winged Stilt** *himantopus himantopus*

Scattered observations on 1-5, apart from 13.5 100 Lake Akgöl, Göksu Delta and 19.5 15 Erzek Gölü..

75. **Red-winged Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*

13.5 12 Lake Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 24.5 1 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

The Turkish breeding population is 500-5000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1994), although Cramp & Simmons (1983) mentions below 1000 pairs. The species prefers dry steppe or semi-desert (often *Artemisia*-steppe) with salt-lakes and inland marshes and permanent water and a good supply of insects. The main population is found in the Central Anatolia and at Göksu and Tarsus Deltas.

76. **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

24.5 4 adult Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

77. **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

19.-20.5 12 South Van Marshes (mainly at Gosnay site 1, where several breeding pairs present).

78. **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae*

20.5 4 ad. South Van Marshes - 22.5 2 Euphrat river south of Birezik.. In all cases unusually small and dark birds with very bright reddish orange base to bill (and restricted compared to *hiaticula*), the Arctic breeding taxon *tundrius*. The species do not breed in Turkey

79. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

15.5 25 Sultan Marshes. - 24,5 800 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

The Turkish breeding population is between 5000 and 15.000 pairs, of which along over 1000 in the Tarsus Delta Area. The main breeding population is found along south coast and in Central Anatolia. Breeds in sandy beaches with barely any vegetation, and on salt-marshes near permanent water.

80. **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

24.5 1 ad. summer plumaged Tuzla Gölü.

81. **Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Widespread, but never very common in suitable areas such as wetlands: most 8.5 20 Iğdir - 19.5 10 Erzek gölü 19.-20.5 10-30 South van Marshes.

82. **Spur-winged Plover** *Vanellus spinosus*

13.5 6 Lake Akgöl, Göksu Delta and 12 middle of Göksu Delta - 23.5 20 Göksü Delta - 24.5 5 Tuzla Gölü.

1000-5000 pairs breeds in Turkey, mainly Aegean and Marmara region, along the southern coast and in central Anatolia. found in wetlands intermixed with drier areas such as salt-marshes along channels and lagoons. It seems not to be especially attracted to man-made wetlands versus the situation in Africa and India (Tucker & Heath).

83. **Ferruginous Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

20.5 18 adult in summer plumage South Van Marshes.

84. **Little Stint** *Calidris minutus*

15.5 21 Sultan Marshes - 20.5 275 South Van Marshes (>90% summer plumaged, just a few with scattered winter feathers). - 20.5 1 Diyarbakir.

85 **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

13.5 3 Göksu Delta. - 19.5 10 South Van Marshes and 20.5 75 South Van Marshes.

86. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

13.5 1 Lake Akgöl, Göksu Delta.- 16.5 2 Baskarschmag

87. **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

15.5 2 Sultan Marshes - 15.5 1 Sivas.

88. **Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

19.5 1 Erzek Gölü. - 20.5 3 South Van Marshes - 24,5 2 Tuzla Creek.

89. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

17.5 2 Ardahan - 19.5 2 Erzek Gölü - 24.5 1 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

90. **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

Spread observations in wetlands, most 20.5 100 south Van Marshes, with 10-50 regular at other sites, e.g. Ardahan, Iğdir and Erzek Gölü.

91. **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

17.5 15 Ardahan. - 18.5 1 Caldiran.

92. **Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

19.5 1 South Van Marshes - 24.5 1 Tuzla Creek.

Late wintering birds, as the species do not breed in Turkey.

93. **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

19.5 1 male South Van Marshes - 20.5 14 females in a group flooded field near Diyarbakir - 21.5 18 migrating N Euphrat south of Birezik - 24.5 1 2 cal. Year Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta..

94. **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

20.5 56 in summer plumage in a dense flock South Van Marshes.

Up to 5-900 has been noted at Van Gölü in May on migration.

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

18.5 50 at colony wetland near Kars. - 18.5 1 Serpmetas - 19.5 50 Erzek gölü - 19.5 50 South van Marshes. - 20.5 18 migrating N (2 adult, 16 2 cal. Year) and 2 ad.+55 2 cal. Years resting South Van Marshes. - 24.5 20 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

96. **Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*

19.5 2 ad. Erzek Gölü - 19.5 2 2 cal. year South Van Marshes - 20.5 2 ad.+2 2.cal year migrating N + 1 ad. resting South Van Marshes. - 24.5 15 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

Some thousand pairs breeds in Turkey, mainly in Central Anatolia.

97. **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

15.5 1 ad. in summer plumage small lake between Sivas and Beziirkas.

500-1500 pairs breeds in Turkey, mainly in Central Anatolia.

98. **Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*.

Common along Mediterranean coastline, with gatherings up to 50 Göksu and Tarsus Delta; all ages represented here. Inland noted 16.5 12 Baskarschmag along rivers as well as 17.5 25 Hopa - Savsat (20 at Artvin)..

Dominant large gull along NE Black Sea Coast 17.5 , with large gathering along whole distance between Derepazari and Hoba; most 700 at Rize and 350 Arhavi: among checked adult gulls, all showed characters of Yellow-legged (broad black wing-tip with restricted white/ strong yellow legs /heavy, bulbous-shaped bill and pale eyes) (Malling Olsen & Larsson 2005); situation more problematic in immatures, but most Yellow-legged observed; ID based on "herring-gull jizz" black and heavy bill, traces of black mask, rather dark underwings (contrasting well to whitish belly) and strogger, more Herring-gull like pattern in greater coverts than the watered of Caspian.

Breeding range in Turkey scattered, mainly confined to Aegean and Mamara Seas and the northwest Black Sea Coast, and again along NE Black Sea Coastline; situation in between there unknown, but could well include large colonies. .

99. **Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans cachinnans*

18.5 noted in the gatherings of Yellow-legged Gulls along Black Sea Coast between Derepazari and Hoba. Numbers much lower than in Yellow-legged, and solely including immatures (mainly 2 cal. Years). At most 20 (among 700 Yellow-leggeds) at Rize and 35 (among 350 Yellow-leggeds) Arhavi.

ID based on jizz, pale base to slender bill, characteristic shape with smallish head, curious long legs, "push-up bh" breast and "street-wear hanging belly" as well as almost complete white undersings in many (for a more "scientific" and fuller explanation, see e.g. Malling Olsen & Larsson 2005).

100. **Armenian Gull** *Larus armenicus*

Locally abundant, noted mainly in 3 areas:

Area 1: Started to appear Ardahan (45, of which 15 adult and 30 immatures) , with 500, mainly adult, eventually noted 17.5 near Aktas Gölü (and closer to Cildir). The numbers indicated at breeding population on several hundreds pairs here, previously barely noted in the literature.

An isolated observation was 3 birds 18.5 at Halikista.

Area 2: 18. 5 also saw 90 at marshes of Caldiran, mainly adults, and probably local breeders from barely known breeding grounds. In this area, also 5 were observed at Serpmetas, and on 19.5 300 were noted at Caldiran., mainly feeding on a local garbage dump. . .

Area 3 The entire Van area presented hundreds. At Lake Erzek, 150 were counted. In the Van Area e.g. 100 was counted Bendimari Marshes, 500 at the garbage dump near Van Hills, 125 South Van Marshes on 19.5 and 250 on 20.5 - 20.5 250 near Sevas (mainly at garbage dump) - 20.5 75 near Tatvan and the last 20.5 - a flying bird near Bitlis,

The Turkish population is at least 2500 pairs (of which 2000 Lake Van and 500 Tuz Gölü) (Malling Olsen & Larsson 2005), The species was plentiful everywhere around Lake Van, but also surprising common in the NE with hundreds - mainly adults - at Cildir and Aktas Gölös, also 100 near Caldiran near Iranian border on 20.5. This indicated further breeding sites and population increase in the NE compared to recent knowledge.

Interbreeding with Yellow-legged gull has been noted at Beysehir.

101. **Siberian Gull** *Larus heuglini*

18.5 1 adult and 1 2 cal. Year Rize and 1 adult near Arhavi, Black Sea Coast. All birds large and rather herring-gull like in jizz and size, and both with pale upperparts matching Lesser Black-backed Gull *intermedius/graellsii*; the local occurring Lesser Black-backed Gull is the very black and slender *fuscus* (Malling Olsen & Larsson 2005). The 2 cal. Year bird have completed almost half of the flight feather moult, and basically (as expected for both *fuscus* and *heuglini*) looking "one year older" than *graellsii/intermedius* would do, caused by more advanced moult.

102. **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

13.5 20 Akgöl Lake, Göksu - 19.5 4 South Van Marshes - 24.5 35 Tuzla Gölü - 24.5 20 Tuzla Creek. 24.5 2 Tarsus.

5.000-15.000 pairs bred Turkey.

103. **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*

17.5 1 ad. Ardahan. - 18.5 1 ad. Serpmetas.

104. **Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*

24.5 2 2.cal. year Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

105 **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*
24,5 5 2 cal. Year Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

106. **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*
16.5 1 Erzincan - 16.5 2 Baskarschmag - 18.5 2 Halikista - 24.5 2 Tuzla Creek

107. **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*
13.5 6 ad. Akgöl , Göksu Delta - 15.5 8 near Nidge - 15.5 25 Sultan Marshes - 17.5 110 Ardahan -
21.5 8 Euphrat south of Birezik.
Around 1000 pairs breeds in Turkey, mainly in central anatolian wetlands.

108. **White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*
16.5 3 ad. Erzincan - 17.5 175 Ardahan - 17.5 2 Ardahan-Cildir - 17.5 200 Cildir Gölü - 18.5 275
Kars - 18.5 1 near Kars - 18.5 30 Iğdir - 18.5 13 Caldiran - 19.5 80 Caldiran - 19.5 4 bendimari
Marshes, Van Gölü - 19.5 47 Erzek Gölü - 19.5 20 ad. South Van Marshes- 20.5 135 adult + 3 3
cal. Years + 5 2 cal. Years South Van Marshes - 21.5 35 ad. + 1 3. cal. Year + 3 2 cal. Year Euphrat
south of Birezik - 24.5 5 ad. Tuzla Creek.

The species do not breed in Turkey, but is well known for its massive migration between African winter quarters and breeding sites in East Europa and Central Asia. The migration peaks in May (there are reports on 20.000 passing Eilat in a few hour's in a single day early in May!). What we witnessed was a rather massive migration of this most impressive tern- but by no way exceptional. Anyway, among the aestecical highlights of May birding!

109. **Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*
14.5 15 Demirkazik - 19.5 15 Van hills; feral pigeons, in a babylonic mixture of plumages, present in all larger cities excluded.

110. **Wood Pigeon** *columba palumbus*
Few noted with 21.5 4 Birezik as highest count..

111. **Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocta*
Common throughout - among the most well spread Turkish birds (living well up to its Danish name: Turkish Dove!). Most sen 24.5 150 Tarsus Delta West, but hardly away from any locality.

112. **Turtle Dove** *Sterptopelia turtur*
Only notes in the south: 21.5 2 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik - 23.5 6 Demircili - 23.5 2 Imamli - 23.5 1 Aphroditias - 24.5 6 Tarsus Delta west
Should be widespread in Turkey, but the lack of records from other than the southern part of our route might indicate, that the migration not had come to an end; most breeding sites are occupied rather late, by May (Cramp & Simmons 1985).

113. **Laughing Dove** *Sterptopelia senegalensis*
13.5 3 Adana - 15.5 1 near Dorigal - 20.5 1 near Gaziantep - 22,5 1 Adana. - 245 1 between Tarsus and Adana..

The species have a rather strange distribution in Turkey, being present in the Istanbul area, but lacking until a patchy distribution between Göksu and Birezik. We found the species on several occasions in parks of Adana.

114. **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Scattered observations throughout, most 14.5 6 Kalki Dag - 15.5 3 Sultan Marshes - 18-19.5 3-5 Ishak Pasa.

115. **Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

At the "famous owl café" in Birezik a juvenile heard on the evening of 20.5, and an adult with a juvenile seen 21.5.

116. **Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Two taxa noted: *Noctua*: 20.5 2 Van Castle and 1 South Van Marshes (unidentified to taxon, but does not look as pale as *lilith* noted earlier) - 20.5 2 near Sanli Urfa - 21.5 1 Euphrat south of Birezik - 23.5 1 Demircili.

Lilith - the paler desert breeding form: 18.5 1 Igridir - 19.5 1 Erzek Gölü

117. **Scops Owl** *Otus scops*

20.5 1 heard in the evening at the "owl café", Birezik, performing its typical "kyup kyup kyup..." call loudly about every 2-3 second.

118. **Bruce's Scops Owl** *Otus brucei*

21.5 1 adult showed itself very well at the "owl café", Birezik, posing freely in the trees just above the main building. The bird was never heard, but apart from wings penetrating slightly above the tail in certain positions, all plumage characters observed and documented by several, most satisfied teams.

The species is sometimes reported from other areas in the Birezik region as well as from Halfeti. The call would in most cases be the safest character if the bird is not seen well: a loud and quick series of diluted "wooh wooh wooh" - repeated once a second, thus quicker than the much more far-crying and slower series from Scops Owl.

119. **Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*

Scattered observations: 13.5 6 Silifte - 14.5 10 Demirkazik, at lower part of the gorge - 17.5 2 migrating Hopa - 19.5 6 South Van Marshes - 23.5 2 Imamli - 24.5 1 Tarsus.

120. **Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*

13.5 2 Silifke.

The southeast corner of the true Mediterranean region seems to be among the best areas for this otherwise rather difficult species in Turkey.

121. **Common Swift** *Apus apus*

Seen throughout, but rather scarce in the first part of the tour. 17.5 25 migrating Hopa was the first larger numbers, followed by 20.5 130 South Van Marshes - 20.5 100 near Birezik - 22.5 100 Adana - 25.5 80 Adana Airport.

122. **Little Swift** *Apus affinis*

21.5 4 Birezik, about 1 km. north of the bridge on the eastern side of river Euphrat. This consists one of the few known breeding sites in Turkey.

123. **Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

Regularly noted throughout, but mainly singletons apart from 2 Ishak Pasa 19.5 - 21.5 2 "Ibis wadi" Birezik - 21.5 3 Birezik fruit plantations.-

124. **Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

15.5 1 Sultan Marshes.

A very locally distributed species in Turkey, population between 100 and 1000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1994).

125. **White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*

24.5 2 Tarsus Delta West along a well-grown channel in lush plantations.

Proved harder than expected to track, using the directions in "the Gem", and was not present at the given sites 12-13 in Göksu Delta. Seem to prefer wooden areas with scattered canals and wires for lookout post, but kept well hidden during most of the stay. Not necessarily a bird of wetlands, as often seen away from water in areas where more widespread, such as in India (own observations.). The total Turkish population estimated to about 100 pairs (Cramp & Simmons 1985).

126. **Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*

21.5 2 fish ponds along river Euphrat south of Birezik - 21.5 1 gravel pits north of Birezik along west bank of Euphrat..

A species with a southern distribution in Turkey, to be looked for even at Göksu and Tarsus Deltas along slowly streaming rivers, preferable with fish ponds. Population estimated to ca. 200 pairs in Turkey (Cramp & Simmons 1985).

127. **European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*

Common and widespread, especially attracted by bee-farming!, but regular throughout, apart from being absent from the NE .. Largest numbers 13.5 25 Akgöl, Göksu - 15.5 24 at colony Dorigal - 15.5 20 Kayseri - 16.5 20 Maden Koprunasi. - 17.5 20 migrating Rize - 17.5 75 migrating Hopa - 18.5 16 Iğdir - 19.5 11 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 14 Van hills (of which 11 migrating north) - 19.5 10 Erzek Gölü - 20.5 29 Tatvan - 21.5 20 along River Euphrat south of Birezik - 21.5 60 gravel pits north of Birezik along western bank of River Euphrat (the former locality for Blue-cheeked Bee-eater,), including a breeding colony -

Total Turkish population- well distributed throughout the country has been estimated to between 10.000 and 100.000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1994).

128. **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*

Positively, still common and frequently observed in lowland areas, often perching from wires in open landscape. Still rather scarce in Central Anatolia (although noted most places, most 8 between Adana and Tarsus), but absent from Ardahan, the NE region and most of the far East - cleverly ignoring the harsh conditions there.

. 19.5 5 Erzek Gölü was by far the largest numbers since we left Göksu.. Again regular west of Lake Van , e.g. 8 Batman - Diyarbakir - 21.5 7 Birezik fruit plantations - 21.5 10 along River Euphrat south of Birezik - 21.5 10 gravel pits north of Birezik (at the bee-eater breeding site) -

Total Turkish population estimated to between 5000 and 50.000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1994, but probably decrease in recent years- although less serious than in Eastern Europe.

129. **Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

16.5 1 Gelinkaya.

130. **Syrian Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus syriacus*

19.5 2 Ishak Pasa (one having imitated Great spotted Woodpecker in enforcing the territorial drumming by using metal caps on telephone wires!) - 21.5 3 Bizerik fruit plantations - 22.5 2 Isikli - 23.5 1 Demircili

131. **Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus medius*

16.5 1 between Erzinzan and Mescan, in deciduous forest along river with scrubs.

132. **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus minor danfordi*

23.5 1 Imamli.

The ssp. *danfordi* shows, compared to North European populations "Full black band behind ear-coverts reaching back of head" (Cranp & Simmons 1985), which created a darker head impression than expected from Scandinavian birds.

134. **Common Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

Locally widespread in arable and flat grassy land. Most noted in the East with maximum 16.5 10 Baskarschmag - 17.5 15 Ardahan - 17.5 20 Aktas Gölü. - 17.5 25 Cidilir Gölü - 18.5 80 between Kars and Halikista - 18.5 10 Serpmetas - 19.5 30 Erzek Gölü.

135. **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*

Widespread throughout; frequently observed in open landscape, ranging from village edges to dry arable land, salt-steppes and low hills with low herb vegetation. However, rather scarce in most areas - most in the south. Largest numbers: 21.5 40 Birezik - 23.5 50 Göksu Delta - 23.5 25 Kurkulus - 24.5 20 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta - 24.5 65 Tuzla Creek.

This racial situation is complex, with a lot of individual variation observed - ranging from very pale, sparsely streaked birds to darker, more well streaked with distinct dark streaking across breast. Thus, we support Svensson (1994) in regarding all as ssp. *meridiornalis* contrary to dividing subtle variants into several ssp. (such as *caucasica* (Taurus to Caucasus) and *subtaurica* (Anatolian plateau, as sometimes proposed). Wear and colour adaptation to different habitats seems a better explanation here. At most, dividing out documented birds into distinct ssp. takes more and longer travels, more specific studies than possible on just one trip - and hundreds of skins and photos for comparison - this is a bird report, not a Ph. D.!

136. **Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea*

18.5 3 Ishak Pasa. - 19.5 3 Ishak Pasa.

137. **Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla brachydactyla*

13.5 6 Göksu Delta - 15.5 10 Sultan Marshes - 18.5 4 between Kars and Halikista - 23.5 15 Göksu Delta - 23.5 10 Kurkulus - 24.5 15 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta - 24.5 40 Tuzla Creek - 24.5 5 near Adana..

We retain nominate ssp. as explanation to our birds, which shows some variation regarding plumage, especially concerning rufous tinge to crown. Certain birds from the south indeed rather "red-crowned", but in same areas, bird with barely any reddish in crown present. Also, upperparts varies from slightly to heavily streaked within same areas. Underparts otherwise very whitish, the

dark patch at the sides of the breast was sometimes invisible (in crouched posture), but when neck stretched, appeared distinct.

The song was short, performed in "short steps", and lasting at max. 5-6 seconds; a monotonous, dry rattling with hardly any imitations.

Mainly seen in dry, flat arable land and semi-desert with small herbs and short grassy vegetation - in Göksu and Tarsus numerous in same areas as Crested Lark.

138. **Asian Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cheelensis aharoni*

15.5 55 Sultan Marshes.

This distinct form, often treated as a species separate from Lesser Short-toed Lark (as we do here) was studied and photographed for several hours. The taxon appears rather large and greyish for a "Lesser Short-toed", with similar clear primary projection compared to the (about) non-existing of Short-toed Lark. The taxon appears rather full-feathered - somewhat "fluffy" compared to what is expected from Lesser Short-toed Lark (and especially Short-toed Lark). All birds gave a grey and rather uniform overall impression. They showed narrow, but mainly rather distinct dark crown streaks and the mantle was slightly streaked as well (with more variation than in crown, some just narrowly streaked, others with broader, more distinct streaks). Underparts were very pale sandy grey, invariably with an evenly distributed band of narrow streaks across the breast. In some, these streaks were very indistinct, in others broader and more distinct; such birds often showed streaking continuing onto flanks. The head pattern was weak with the dark eye surrounded by a broader pale area and narrow dark eye- and malar streaks, creating a "sleepy look" - never disturbing a rather unpatterned appearance. Supercilium at most slightly paler, never distinct. The bill was short and conical, appearing all pale. The broad white tail-sides (created by the all white t6) was frequently seen when the tail was spread.

The song was performed in carousel-like spirals, and appeared quick, dry and "upsped", including short elements of imitation of other steppe species.

The habitat was dry, flat salt-steppes with scattered vegetation of *Salix* and very scattered, open scrub. *Aharoni* are supposed to appear in similar habitat throughout Central Anatolia, and have recently been seen e.g. at Eregli Marshes, as well as in the dry areas between Adana and Gaziantep. Dense populations probably occur in dried areas near great saline lakes.

The ID from other forms are recently covered by Göller & Schwalbe (2005), which described the birds based on observation of the same taxon, *aharoni*, that is present at the Central Anatolian steppes. Our observations fit well the description given here. Compared to *aharoni*, Lesser Short-toed Lark in Turkey are smaller and less compact with more distinct streak across breast and in the darker, more olive-tinged mantle (this streaking was noted in a minority of our *aharoni*, but we explain this by wear, as the two taxon are well separated in distribution in Turkey, with Lesser Short-toed occurring in the eastern and north-eastern part of the country; e.g. often seen around Lake Van), and there is often a darker tip to the bill. Also, the innerwebs of the outer tail feather is dark in *heinei*, all white in *aharoni*.

Recently, Svensson (2003) vividly described his attempt to track the species in Kazakhstan, where the taxon *leocophaea*. Unluckily, the team never succeeded in finding the species "live", but studied the skins at the Zoological Institution in Almaty, as well as Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens heinei* in the field as well. They noted *leucochaena* to be smaller than *heinei*, but otherwise their distribution fits very well the observations made in Central Anatolia;..

140. **Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra*

Locally observed in arable land and flat grassy plains. Absent from large parts of the east where mainly replaced by Bimaculated Lark (but could well be overlooked among the masses of more spectacular birds!). Most 15.5 10 Sultan Marshes - 23.5 10 Göksu Delta

141. **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata*

Locally common in grassy flat or slightly rolling country, generally on stonier ground and in slightly higher elevations with larger amount of natural vegetation (small herbs and bushes) than Calandra Lark, with which almost no overlap noted. . Especially common in the far East, most 16.5 20 Baskarschmag - 18.5 50 between Kars and Halikista - 18.5 10 Halikista - 18.5 10 Iğdir - 18.5 5 Serpmetas - 19.5 15 Van Hills - 20.5 2 Siverik

142. **Shore Lark** *Eremohila alpestris penicillata*

14.5 1 Demirkazik - 14.5 4 near Cucurbak - 16.5 9 Ovitdagi Gecedi (2800 m.) - 18.5 5 Ishak Pasa - 18.5 4 Tendurek Gecidi Rakum (2644 m.) - 19.5 5 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 2 Caldiran.

Occurs from highland plains to stony covered hillsides with sparse vegetation up to the snow-cocered, hardly vegetated region. All observations were made above 1700 m.

A strange-looking taxon! The yellowish-white throat was completely surrounded by black, in certain males leaving a characteristic "black-faced" impression. The yellow tinge to throat was in some cases weak enough to create a white-throated impression, this supposed to occur by wear. Males showed curious long, bowed "viking-helmet" horns, and such birds often showed a strong pinkish-buff tinge to hindneck. Upperparts otherwise rather pale brownish-grey, at most with very faint greyer streaks. Females had less developed black head-pattern, often slightly pale-spotted forehead, shorter horns and greyer- more streaked mantle.

Certain birds matched *bicornis* (S Asia Minor and Levant; (Svensson 1994), Lebanon (Cramp (1988) in nape to mantle being almost uniform pinkish-buff and face white. Cramp (1988) decides that "species examined from Ankara and Taurus belongs to neither race". Probably, this is caused by individual variation in *penicillata* as such birds also observed well to the north, away from range of *bicornis*.

143. **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

Locally common, most 20.5 1000 South Van Marshes and 21.5 at least 5.000 gravel pits north of Birezik (at breeding colony). Otherwise regularly seen in hundreds.

144. **Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Widespread in hilly and mountain areas. 13.5 4 Pozanti - 14.5 2 Canardi - 14.5 10 Demirkazik - 14.5 2 Cucurbag - 14.5 1 Kalki dag - 16.5 1 Basmarschmag - 16.5 2 Gelinkaya - 16.5 10 Ovitdagi Gecedi - 17.5 2 Hopa - 17.5 3 Artvin - 17.5 1 Ardahan - 18.5 1 Iğdir - 19.5 5 Van Hills - 20.5 5 Baykan - 22.5 10 Durnalik

146. **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Common throughout, most 18.5 550 Caldiran - 19.5 900 Erzek gölü. - 20.5 2000 South Van Marshes - regularly seen in hundreds at suitable places..

147. **Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*

Rather common in the south. 13.5 20 between Adana and Erdembi - 13.5 10 Silifke - 13.5 1 Tarsus - 13.5 2 Canardi - 20.5 2 Batman - 21.5 10 gravel pits north of Birezik - 24.5 10 Tarsus Delta West

148. **House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

Scarcely noted throughout, most 20.4 30 South Van Marshes - 21.5 30 Birezik

149. **Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

14.5 3 below Kalki Dag - 14.5 1 Nigde - 16.5 1 Basmarschmag - 22.5 1 Isikli - 23.5 3 Göksu Delta

150. **Water Pipit** *Athnus spinoletta coutelli*

14.5 3 Demirkazik, at highest point - 16.5 20 in a group Ovitdagi Gecedi pass (at 2800 m.).

The local ssp. *coutelli* in breeding plumage has paler brown and heavier streaked upperparts and duller rufous-tinged underparts with heavier streaking on breast and flanks than European breeders. The pinkish flush, typical to European bird, are almost absent, and some birds appear just pale brownish in underparts with hardly any rosy visible.

Breeds on mountain slopes with large rocks and short grassy vegetation above treeline, probably over 2000 m. in Turkey, where widely distributed in high mountains.

151. **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

16.5 3 Sivri Kaya - 17.5 2 Izikdere - 18.5 1 Ishak Pasa

152. **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

Surprisingly scarce: 16.5 2 Ispir - 16.5 1 Izikdere. - 17.5 1 Dereparazi - 17.4 4 Hoba - 17.5 1 Ardahan - 18.5 2 Kars were the only observations. All birds resembled *alba*..

153. **(Black-headed) Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava feldegg*

Common in wetlands, marshes and more arid areas close to water throughout. Most noted 13.5 25 Göksu Delta - 15.5 24 (of which four migrating north) Sultan Marshes - 17.5 15 Ardahan - 19.5 8 Erzek Gölü - 19.5 20 South Van Marshes - 20.5 40 South Van Marshes - 21.5 10 Euphrat south of Birezik - 23.5 25 Göksu Delta - 24.5 35 Tuzla Gölü, Tarsus Delta.

All males were most typical in displaying jet-black and clear-cut, glossy "helmet" - we never noticed any with white traces of supercilium, as sometimes seen in otherwise pure *feldegg*.

Controversially, females were as variable as ever, with some being "ghost versions" of males, others closer to e.g. *flava* with pale supercilium, but invariably duller and greyer head. As usually, the call was harsher than in western European birds; this appears to all eastern taxa. Compared to Citrine Wagtail, it is less strong and rolling, but it takes a lot of experience to learn the differences - and basing the ID of a Citrine e.g. as a vagrant on call only is never recommended.

A strange hybrid was observed and documented at Serpmetas 18.5. The head was mainly black, but with thin yellow and irregular supercilium, especially behind eye and a greyish tinge to neck (especially hindneck) and face.

154. **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola werae*

17.5 2 males Ardahan. - 20.5 9, of which 4 males and 3 females South Van Marshes.

The species is traditionally found at South Van Marshes, which indeed proved a good locality, but should be looked after in any suitable habitat: wet marshes with scattered bushes or well vegetated lake-sides with muddy banks and along slowly flowing rivers. Especially, the extensive marshes around Ardahan (where we by chance found the species) and down to Ararat looks more than promising for holding a population. The extension of breeding range into Turkey is of relatively new date; Cramp (1985) does not include Turkey in the breeding range, but just notes the species as vagrant to Turkey. . .

The taxon *werae* noted. Compared to the Siberian breeder, *citreola* it is slightly smaller with relatively longer legs (many measured). Males are often duller yellow and lack the cold greenish-

yellow tinge typical to *citreola* - some *werae* males has a slightly browner undertone to the yellow head and underside. The upperparts are often somewhat duller with less developed and clear-cut neck-bar (although it may be as pronounced), and the flanks invariably are pale (or with grey confined to upper flanks. This appears even to females; any *citreola* studied, e.g. in Siberia, have had creamy grey flanks (which tends to enforce the white wing-bars - especially in 1 year birds). The characters are constant enough to retain the two as good taxa, versus the statement in Alström and Mild (2003), who made an unsatisfactory attempt to lump the two, based on claimed "overlap".... The breeding ranges are furthermore well separated (although an overlap zone probably exists in Central Asia), with *citreola* inhabiting North Russia, and *werae* Central Asia, probably increasing in Turkey and invading Eastern Europe. To provoke: there are better reasons for treating the two as separate species than to lump them.

155. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Restricted to the northend and eastern part, where mainly found in hilly or mountainous areas along streams. 16.5 5 Sivri Kaya - 17.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 1 Rize - 17.5 2 Hoba - 17.5 2 Ardahan

156. Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

14.5 2 middle gorge, Demirkazik - 16.5 3 Sivri Kaya - 16.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 10 Debeperazi - 17.5 1 Hoba.

Apparently mainly a mountain forest bird here; in parts of ranges confined to high mountains (e.g. in Nepal, I have noted the species solely in areas above 3000 m. in the Everest Range)

157. Common Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

17.5 1 stream near Dereparazi.

158. White-spectacled Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Locally common in towns, gardens and orchards along the SE coast on to at least Birezik. Regular between Göksu and Birezik, with most noted 13.5 8 between Adana and Silifte - 13.5 10 Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 21. 5 6 Birezik town - 23.5 3 Demirzili and 24.5 8 Tarsus Delta West.

159. Common Accentor *Prunella modularis*

16.5 4 Sivri Kaya. - 17.5 3 Izikdere

160. Radde's Accentor *Prunella ocularis*

14.5 4 (of which one singing) Demirkazik, in the steep parts between the "observation cliff" and the gorge, at about 2700 m. The song was noted at being somewhat similar to Common Accentor, but paler and quicker, with a more "silvery" quality.

Found between 2000 and 3000 m. (in Aladag mainly 2400-2800 m.) on steep rocky and stony slopes with dwarf vegetation (small, thorny bushes and dense groups of juniper and barberries), often near streams, in the last vegetated areas just below snow-line (the narrow subalpine zone of xerophytic vegetation).

Occurs in mountains from Aladag and eastwards, including Nemrud Dag, Samdi dag, Cilo Dag and Kavusshap Dag (Cramp 1988, Tucker & Heath 1995). Patchily distributed in Aladag area (where we saw the species, here also regular at Kalki Dag (see direction in e.g. Gosney 1992 and Kristensen 1999). Now frequently observed in high-lying slopes in Sivri Kaya, At Mount Arabat, only one old observation before 1914. Should be searched after in any suitable habitat described. Population 500-5000 pairs, but probably larger (Tucker & Heath 1995)

161. **Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris montana*

16.5 1 Ovitdagi Gecedi at 2800 m., attracted to snow-covered buildings.

Breeds in mountains above 1800 m. on sunny, steep slopes with large rocks and just sparse vegetation. We missed the species at Demirkazik and Aladag, where it is normally found, often even higher up and in less vegetated hilly sides than Radde's Accentor.

. The ssp. *montana* are slightly paler and more buffy brown than *collaris*.

162. **Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria*

14.5 2 highest up at Demirkazik, both at around 2800 m., above the "wallcreeper gorge".

A much sought after speciality, in which we succeeded well in observing it from the "observation cliffs" of the Snowcocks. It is more frequently noted in the gorge, where 3-4 birds were noted prior to our visit. This area seems to be the most reliable in Turkey, although a population also exists in the Eastern Pontic mountains. Another possibility is Sivri Kaya, where the species have been seen in recent years, mainly on steep cliffs 1-2 km. south of the village, on the western side of the road.

Found in mountain areas with very steep, almost vertical large cliffs and in deep gorges with scattered vegetation of small grassy tussocks, used for nesting. .

163. **Robin** *Erithacus rubicola*

16.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 2 Dereparazi - 17.5 1 Hoba.

164. **Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Rather thinly distributed, with singing birds heard on some occasions: 13.5 2 Göksu Delta - 13.5 1 Canardi - 13.5 2 Curcurbak - 15.5 3 Curcurbak - 16.5 3 Gelinkaya - 17.5 1 Ikizdere - 17.5 1 Ikizdere - 20.5 1 Sevas - 24.5 6 Tarsus Delta West.

Prefers well vegetated deciduous woodland, often in slightly hilly country where usually associated with dense vegetation in valley bottoms near streaming water.

165. **Rufous-tailed Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes syriacus*

13.5 2 Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 19.5 1 Erzek Gölü - 20.5 1 Tatvan - 21.5 1 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik - 21.5 4 orchards north of Birezik - 23.5 4 Göksu Delta - 24.5 12 Tarsus Delta West - 24.5 6 Tuzla Creek.

Widespread in arid, open areas with bushes and in orchards, young deciduous wood with clearings in the southern, humid part of Turkey.

The ssp. *syriacus* have greyish-brown upperparts, differing from the redder of the western nominate form.

166. **White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis*

22.5 4 Isikli - 22.5 12 Durnalik.

This very attractive species was easy here in lush vegetation consisting of orchards, growths and lush deciduous forest with larger trees, used as song-posts; the song was regularly performed from the middle of the crown for long periods, but the robin rarely delivers excellent views.

The song was strong, like a up-speeded large *Sylvia* (like an excited speaker having 2-3 Red Bulls before performing...), also consisting of thrush-like repetitions.

The species is widely distributed throughout in S and E Turkey, mainly above 1000 m in hilly areas with lush vegetations, scrubs and patches of trees. Usually found in the more well vegetated parts.

167. **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus samaisicus*

14.5 1 male Kalki Dag.

168. **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* (*ochruros* and *phoenicuroides*)

14.5 10 Demirkazik - 14.5 3 Kalki Dag - 16.5 1 male Ovitdagi Gecedi - 16.5 male *semirufus* and female Sivri Kaya - 19.5 7 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 2 Gulicar (*ochruros*) - 19.5 2 Ishak Pasa

Strangely, both two ssp. occurred, often side by side, showing a certain amount of intergrading; the majority were *ochruros*, but both two ssp. seen frequently. This appeared throughout the area...: *Ochruros* (Central and E Turkey) male blackish with greyer crown to hindneck and red confined to hindbelly and under tail-coverts (diffusely offset from greyish-black belly) May exhibit a slight paler panel across secondaries, as more pronounced in European birds.

Phoenicuroides (N and E Central Asia (Svensson 1994) blacker in breast and upperparts, with better defined greyish "cap" and red belly to under tail-coverts, sharply offset from black breast).

Semirufus (Middle East) resembles *phoenicuroides*, but is averagely smaller. **Note:** *Rufiventris* (N Iran and eastwards to Himalaya and China) noted as very similar to *phoenicuroides*. However, Birds from at least northern India (Rajasthan) often much blacker with a bluish tint and very deep red underparts and tail (could be mistaken for one of the blue flycatchers in sharp sunlight!) and often found in different habitat such as dense woodlands (own. obs., India and Nepal).. Further work requested in establishing the relation between the red-bellied, eastern taxa.

Females appeared either grey (as expected from European breeders) or paler brownish.

169. **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Rather common. Most noted 16.5 5 Ovitdadi Gecedi and 19.5 25 Ishak Pasa. Prefers hilly areas with sparse vegetation, but found up to high mountain slopes.

The ssp. *libanitica* occurring in Turkey differs in males having slightly paler grey (less bluish-tinted) and with restricted, paler creamy breast. The tail-bar are said to be narrower. Females frequently noted as more male-like (Svensson 1994).

170. **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*

Rather common throughout, mainly in dry, flat habitat such as steppes and semi-desert, also slightly sloping hillsites with stones and low herb vegetation; often especially numerous in areas inhabited by *Souslik*, which burrows were seen used for nesting in Sivri Kaya. Only overlapping extensively with Northern Wheatear at Sivri Kaya.

Most 15.5 14.6 6 Cucurbak - 15.5 50 Sultan Marshes - 19.5 20 Ishak Pasa.

171. **Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca*

Rather scarce, mainly in the east and south, only with very scattered observation in Central and Northeast Anatolia. Most seen 19.5 5 Van Hills - 22.5 3 Isikli - 22.5 7 Durnalik.

Often noted by observers as widespread; this was not quite our experience! Maybe later in the summer, more fledged young adds to its number.

Melanoleuca males in worn spring plumage often appears string white and black, as we also experienced this time. Some strange female notes, such as one very uniformly looking bird with greyish creamy head and underparts, cold greyish (but unpatterned) mantle and rather uniform dark wings. This bird exhibited dark brown under wing-coverts. It was associated with a male, but the dark underwing pattern is normally a male character.

172. **Finch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finchii*

18.5 11 Halikista (at least 2 pairs feeding young) - 18.5 1 between Halikista and Tuzlea - 18.5 near Iğdir - 18.5 1 female Ishak Pasa - 19.5 2 Sivri Kaya

Locally distributed in hilly, rocky steppes and hill-sides, preferring entrances to ravines with cliffs and large rocks as well as sparse, low vegetation. The species is distributed from southern Central Turkey and eastwards; we found them surprising local, with local dense population (a parallel situation to noted between Eilat and the Negev in Israel for Mourning Wheatear *O. lugens*). Other reliable areas are Demirkazik (vales behind the mountaineers hostel).

173. **Red-tailed Wheatear** *Oenanthe xanthopyrma*

22.5 1 male Isikli - 22.5 1 female Durnalik highest up, in the "moon landscape".

Thinly distributed, the species have been noted almost yearly in the areas. We did follow the direction by Lindblad 2002 for the Isikli site; instead of parking in Isikli village itself, drive a further 5-800 m. to the west or before reaching the village from the main road) along a dirt road. At the edge of the orchards, a slope, used for sheep grazing, is found to the west, penetrating to some vertical cliffs. The first part of the area proved to be *the* site.

Found in sparsely vegetated or harsh hills or mountains above 1700 m., preferring areas with large rock and steep cliffs close to sparsely vegetated, but not necessarily steep slopes, often preferring the least vegetated areas ("moon-scaped") for breeding and feeding in flatter areas. Found in SE Turkey; the most reliable spot is Nemrud Dagi Mountains; the famous archaeological site (**not** to be mistaken as Nemrud Dagi close to Van Lake - the area with the crescent-shaped). In this mountain area, several pairs breed and the species is normally a stake-out along the "new road" to the top of the heads of stone, especially in stony and bushy, shallow gorges. Nemrud Dagi is easily reached from the west, whereas getting there from the east means a crossing of the river Euphrat by ferry near Siverik in direction towards Kahta, which only leaves each second hour; see Hendriks 2004 for details.

174. **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Few observed.

175. **Stonechat** *saxicola torquata rubecula*

15.5 1 male near Sivas.

Stonechat is mainly a lowland bird in Turkey, but never commonly registered.

176. **Caspian (Siberian) Stonechat** *Saxicola maura armenica*

19.5 2 (pair) south of Erzek Gölü (above a small track leading southwest immediately at the small wetland on the south side of the road passing mouth of Erzek Gölü).

This very distinct taxon is apparently thinly distributed in highland areas in the eastern Turkey, observed frequently westwards to Nemrud Dagi. It occurs in agricultural country or in dry, flat or hilly country with bushy and rich vegetation of herbs, often near water. Still, few birders look especially for Stonechats for others than the tick - it is recommended to make more studies to establish the exact borders between the more westerly distributed *rubicila* and *armenica*, which is supposed to occur at higher elevations.

We observed our birds prolonged. The male appeared beautifully black and white, similar to *maura*, but with slightly less broad white sides to hindneck, somewhat deeper rufous tinge to breast (continuing slightly onto flanks) and slightly smaller white shoulder patches. The black mantle has narrow greyish streaking. The rump was broad and pure white, "enlarged" by narrow white bases to all tail feathers (just covering app. 25% of each feather, based on photos taken). Judged from photos, the primaries were strongly worn, indicating 2 ca. year male, which could explain the less clear black upperparts and narrower white shoulder patches than seen by adult males in skins, and in live *maura* in Siberia (own obs.). .

The female was paler than *rubicola* showing a rather pale overall impression, whitish rump and pale head-markings with slight pale supercilium (diffuse behind eye), whitish throat bordered below by a diffuser dark bar and indication of a broad whitish-grey neck-sides, evident in certain angles. Underparts pale creamy, most intensive at breast.

177. **Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

14.5 2 Demirkazik - 17.5 1 male Savsat - 18.5 1 male Ishak Pasa - 19.5 1 male Ishak Pasa

Always associated with rocks, and found in bot lowland and mountains in rocky countryes, especially in wadies and other landscape with vertical stand of rocks; frequent near buldings (but apparently to lesser degree in Turkey than in Spain). 5000-50.000 pairs breeds Turkey (Tucker & Heath 1995), away from large parts of N and Turkey..

178. **Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*

14.5 2 males Demirkazik - 16.5 1 hale + 1 female near Maden koprunasi - 16.5 1 male Ovidagi Gecedi - 18.5 2 males + 1 female Ishak Pasa - 19.5 1 male Van Hills

Breds rocky mountains and sloping hills-sides with large stands of rocks, grassy meadows and small stands of and herbs. Mainly a mountain birds, usually found above 1700 m. 5000-50.000 pairs breeds throughout Turkey in highlands..

179. **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

17.5 2 Izikdere.

180. **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

13.5 2 Pozanti - 16.5 1 Sivri Kaya.

181. **Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

13.5 1 Göksu Delta - 14.5 3 Kalki Dag - 16.5 4 Izikdere - 17.5 5 Izikdere - 17.5 3 between Hopa and Borcksa - 23.5 4 Demircili - 24.5 3 Tarsus Delta West - 24.5 1 near Adana.. .

182. **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus amicorum*

14.5 1 male Demirkazik.

Very local in Turkey, where found in high mountain areas above tree limit up to snow limit. . The ssp. *amicorum* resembles *torquatus*, but has slightly paler wings.

183. **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

19.5 2 South Van Marshes and 22.5 3 Isikli; probably late migrants.

184. **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

14.5 1 Demirkazik - 17.5 3 Dereparazi - 17.5 10 between Riza and Arhavi - 17.5 8 Hopa - 17.9 9 between hopa and Borcksa - 17.5 1 Savsat

185. **Eastern Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensis crassirostris*

22.5 1 Durnalik - 23.4 1 Demirzili.

Crassirostris itself looks like a giant version of Lesser Whitethroat with dark head and white eyes. The song was noted as strong and somewhat Nightingale-like with intervals of monotonous, thrushlike notes intermixing with harsher notes, and as such not unlike a veried song of Olive-tree Warbler.

Found in well grown macchia with bushes and trees, often single large trees used as song-post. Turkish population >5000 pairs, seemingly lacking in Central Anatolia (Shirihai et al. 2001).

186. **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

13.5 1 Pozanti - 14.5 2 at the entrance to the wadi at Demirkazik - 14.5 1 Kalki Dag - 22.5 7 Durnalik.

187. **Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

14.5 2 at the entrance to the wadi at Demirkazik - 16.5 3 Delinkaya - 16.5 3 between Gelinkaya and Maden Koprunasi - 17.5 2 between Hopa and Borcksa - 20.5 2 Tatvan.

188. **Menetries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea rubescens*

Common in Birezik Area 21.5, where noted: 20 "Ibis Wadi" (including several breeding pairs) - 1 orchards 4 km. north of Birezik - 5 along river Euphrat south of Birezik -

The species have a very characteristic habit in rising and waving its tail up and down (in the manner of a happy dog!) - a habit not seen in other similar species (which not waves the tail to itself other than indistinct!). Furthermore, the tail is contrasting darker than the upperparts (the most striking feature of the otherwise notorious non-descript female). The ssp. *rubescens* male has pale grey underparts, in a minority with a very slight rosy tinge to forebreast. Thus, they resemble Sardinian Warbler *S. melanocephala momus* (of southern Levant), but the duller blackish cap diffusely merges into the mantle (which often has a sandy undertone). In *momus*, the blacker cap is sharply divided from the grey mantle and the tail is paler. Also, the edges to tertials are broader and diffuser than steh sharper and narrower whitish in *momus* (partly based on Shirihai et al. 2001). The song resembles other *sylvia*-warblers, especially Subalpine Warbler, but is slightly richer with series of hard notes. The call is a dry rattle

Menetries's Warbler breeds in SE Turkey only, with Birezik being the classical site to observe the species. It occurs in dry, arid to semi-arid lowland with scattered bushes, scrubs and tamarisk stands, mainly in wadis, and often near water (the vicinity of river Euphrat might explain the dense population of the Birezik Area).. *Rubescens* occurs between Gaziantep and eastwards south of Lake Van. The ssp. *mystacea* (the darkest and richest coloured ssp.) occurs rarely in central Eastern Turkey north of Lake Van in similar habit, but noted up to 1700 m. Total Turkish population 1000-10.000 pairs (Shirihai et al. 2001).

189. **Rüppell's Warbler** *Sylvia rueppellii*

23.5 1 female Demirzili - 23.5 4 males Imamli.

Found in dry, hilly areas with dense macchia scrub and scattered lower trees, used for song-posts. The song is typical for the family (especially resembling Sardinian Warbler), being a musical, chattering warble with dry notes intermixed with quick series of clearer notes.

Distributed throughout Western and southern Turkey eastwards onto Gaziantep region. Population estimated to between 5000 and 50.000 pairs (Shirihai et al. 2001).

190. **Graceful Warbler** *Prinia gracialis*

13.5 4 Akgol, Göksu Delta - 21.5 6 along Euphrat south of Birezik - 21.5 1 gravel pits north of Birezik - 23.5 6 Göksu Delta - 24.5 4 Tuzla Creek.

Patchily distributed in dry areas with low scrubby vegetation in southern lowlands. The song is a insect-like rattling.

191. **Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*

23.5 2 Göksu Delta.

In Central Turkey, mainly restricted to the delta areas of Göksu and Tarsus.

192. **Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

13.5 1 Cucurbak - 16.5 7 Gelinkaya - 21.5 3 marshes along eufrat south of Birezik - 23.5 2 Göksu Delta.

193. **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

19.5 3 Erzek Gölü - 20.5 1 South van Marshes.

194. **Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*

Common in reed beds and well vegetated lake-sides throughout . Most noted 13.5 15 Göksu Delta - 13.5 7 Sultan Marshes - 19.5 5 Erzek gölü - 20.5 6 South Van Marshes - 21.5 9 Euftrat south of Birezik - 24,5 10 Tarsus West Delta.

The ssp. *fuscus* is averagely less warm tinged in upperparts than *scirpaceus* with sandy rump, sometimes hardly differing from greyish-brown upperparts. The underside is averagely paler with at most slightly yellowish-buff suffusion to underparts (warmer buffish in *scirpaceus*). Many birds showed a contrasting greyer hindneck, at most rare in *scirpaceus*.

195.. **Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*

16.5 3 Delinkaya.

196.. **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola*

19.5 3 and 20.5 6 South Van Marshes.

Found in low patches of broken reeds in extensive wet meadows, a few also singing in reed beds. A flock of 5 noted together in a patch of low, dead and broken reeds in an area of low sedges and grass (a habit also noted by Ortvad 2004). A similar habit of occurring in small groups was noted in the steppe lakes of Kasakhstan in June 1989 (own obs.).

An eastern species with a very restricted breeding range in Turkey, mainly in Van area. South van Marshes is the traditional site, but recently, a number have been found also at the small lake south of Erzek Gölü. To be looked for in similar habitat along Van Gölü and in the wetlands of the east, probably best around Ardahan, Kars and Idgir area west of Mount Ararat, as the habitat here looked promising.

197. **Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Common in extensive areas of tall reeds along lake-sides. Most noted 13.5 3 Lake Akgöl, göksu Delta - 19.5 3 Erzek Gölü - 19,5 5 south Van Marshes - 20.5 5 south Van Marshes - 21.5 30 Euftrat south of Birezik - 24.5 15 Tarsus West Delta - 24.5 10 Tuzla Creek.

198. **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Hippolais pallida eleica*

Common in the south, most noted 21,5 40 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik - 21.5 >20 Euftrat south of Birezik - 22.5 4 Durnalik (mentioned here, as occurrence doubted for the area by Ortvad 2004). Scarce in the far East with singletons noted Ishik Pasa and Van Hills (but 20.5 3 South Van Marshes). Not noted from the Pontic mountains and in the NE; an isolated observation in slightly higher elevation than would be expected made 15.5 Kayseri. 24.5 a pair with two youngs Tuzla Creek.

A characteristic, widely distributed warbler of flat and hilly, well vegetated areas, preferring dense scrub with bushes; gardens and open wood; also in gardens. Generally at lower elevations up to

1700 m... Rather nondescript, being similar-shaped and sized to Reed Warbler with olive-tinged upperparts, whitish underpart, shorter primary projection than Upcher's and especially Olive-tree warblers and long bill with pale lower mandible. At most shows a very faint pale panel across secondaries. Constantly moved tail downwards. Song at distance similar to Reed Warbler, but often with 4-5 tones constantly repeated in a cyclic manner, appearing playful (but to a lesser degree than in the notorious "happy" and variegated song of Melodious Warbler *H. polyglotta* of the Western Mediterranean!). Compare Upcher's Warbler below.

199. **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum*

23.5 2 Demircili (at the upper cemetery) - 23.5 2 Imamli.

The largest warbler apart from Great Reed Warbler. A large and slender, mainly greyish warbler with orange-yellow lower mandible and broad pale panel across secondaries (if not too worn, which is not the case in winter/spring). The song is remarkable similar to Great Reed Warbler, especially at distance, at closer range appears more varied.

Occurs at lower latitudes (up to 1000 m) along W and S coastline of Turkey in well vegetated areas such as gardens, orchards, oak-woods and plantations. Restricted to the Mediterranean area, and does not appear east of Iskenderun, although it has been noted eastwards to around Narince (Hendriks 2004). 1000-10.000 pairs breeds Turkey (Tucker & Heath 1995).

200. **Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida*

21.5 2 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik - 22.5 3 Isikli - 22.5 15 Durnalik.

Larger and greyer than Eastern Olivaceous Warbler with slightly paler panel across secondaries, slightly longer primary projection and darker tail. Before landing, frequently spreads tail and hangs legs. Frequently moves tail sideways, lightly spread, thus not dissimilar to the tail movements of Menetries' Warbler, but less extreme. Could be regarded as an intermediate between Olive-tree and Olivaceous Warbler. Song more varied than in Eastern Olivaceous, but with similar cyclic repetitions, often appearing fuller in tone (more similar to Nightingale) or even with thrush-like repetitions vaguely recalling Blyth's Reed Warbler (if Eastern Olivaceous have a song similar to Reed, and Olive-tree to Great Reed, there is more a touch of Marsh Warbler to the song of Upcher's).

Breeds in macchia with orchards, plantations and almond growth, and in scrubby hill-sides with bushes. In areas occurring alongside Eastern Olivaceous, generally appears in dryer, more sloping areas at slightly higher elevations.

In Turkey distributed in a thin line between Göksu and Birezik, with small, apparently isolated population in SE Turkey (Kurdistan) (Cramp 1992).

201. **Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

16.5 3 Gelinkaya - 19.5 1 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 1 South Van Marshes - 21.5 1 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik. - 22.5 4 Isikli - 24.5 1 Tuzla Creek.

Many observers (e.g. Kristensen 1999) have been surprised by observing Willow Warblers in Turkey, where it is not attempted to breed. This is easily explained by migration is still on its way in May; in Mediterranean passage generally mid March to mid May, latest in the East; but in the Gulf States, passage onto mid June, and at Eilat the late peak as late as 20 May with rearguards 12-18.6 (Cramp 1992, Shirihai 1996). These birds are probably extremely northern breeders; the same situation appearing for other "non breeding species" observed well into June.

202. **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus orientalis*

21.5 1 at the "Owl Café", Birezik.

Normally only observed Western Turkey, from sea-level to 1700 m. in forest of oak, birches and beeches as well as fir forest (Cramp 1088).

203. **Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita abietinus*
17.5 3 Ardahan - 19.5 2 south Van Marshes

204. **Mountain Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus sindianus lorenzi*
16.5 8 Gelinkaya - 16.5 1 Iskipolat.

Similar to Siberian Chiffchaff (Chiffchaff of the greyish Eastern taxon *tristis*), but generally darker and browner with upperparts browner, underparts duller brownish-white and head pattern different; have broad whitish supercilium, and prominent before and above the eye (where broadest) to slightly behind the eye. Sometimes joining over base of bill. Legs and bill are black; bill often looks small and short, frequently with paler tinge to base of lower mandible.

Song is similar to Chiffchaff (western forms), but generally higher-pitched, and often includes an extra tone: like "cilf- cilp - calp - cilp-cilp-calp" or "ti ti ty - ti-ti-ty" with last tone being lower than the two first. Certain individuals performed a song rather similar to Chiffchaff taxon *tristis*, being more cyclical and complex than in western birds.

In Turkey restricted to the NE Pontic mountains from Trabzon and eastwards. The habitat is dense willows and mixed forest (especially with poplars and tamarisk) in sloping areas near streams and rivers, between 1700 and 3000 m. Another reliable site is Sivri Kaya (where populations locally are dense), but we never tried there (Shirihai 1987, Cramp 1992),.

205. **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus*

16.5 2 Sivri Kaya - 16.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 2 hotel Genesisiz, Ikizdere - 17.5 1 between Hopa and Borcksa.

Similar to Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilodes* (and often regarded as a ssp. of this species), but generally greener in upperparts (the brightest colored almost as green as Wood Warbler *P. sibilatrix*), and yellow in supercilium, face and breast. There is variation on these points, and the brightest birds have entire face to breast yellowish (colour similar to juvenile Blue tit or even Wood Warbler), others are duller olive-tinged in upperparts with barely any yellow, apart from parts of supercilium and ear-coverts. The wing-bar is generally broader than in Greenish Warbler.

Song very similar to Greenish Warbler. Call similar to Greenish Warbler (tse-li, somewhat similar to call of White Wagtail), but often includes an extra tone, thus appearing three-toned. tse-tsi-ly. This is evident when experience the larger wintering population at Goa, India (following studies of Greenish Warbler days before in Rajasthan, India, as none by KMO Oct.-Nov 2004)

Breeds NE Turkey in the Pontic mountains between 900 and 3000 m. forest (spruce, mixed or deciduous), often dense and rather old with clearings, patches of birches and bushes, and often near rivers. Probably widespread from Trabzon and NE from here. Reaches at least westwards to Suleima Monastery (see "The Gen"), where traditionally found, but probably easier between Sivri Kaya and Izikdere, e.g. rather easily found around village of Sivri Kaya on both sides of the river), but according to disturbance from streaming river, even easier a little further away from the stream itself, such as valleys and woodland at Izikdere.

206. **Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*
14.5 1 Kalki Dag.

207. **Grey Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*
16.5 3 Gelinkaya - 19.5 3 South Van Marshes.

208. **Great Tit** *Parus major*

13.5 1 Pozanti - 13.5 2 Canardi - 14.5 5 Kalki Dag - 21.5 2 Birezik

209. **Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*

16.5 1 Gelinkaya - 17.5 2 Hopa.

210. **Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

13.5 3 Pozanti - 14.5 7 Kalki Dag - 16.5 1 Ikizdere - 17.5 3 Ikizdere - 17.5 2 Ardahan

211. **Sombre Tit** *Parus lugubris anatoliae*

22.5 2 Isikli - 22.5 4 Durnalik - 23.5 2 Demirzili - 23.5 4 (pair with two youngs Imamli).

The ssp. *anatoliae* as similar to the nominate form, but have blacker crown and throat; more brownish-tinged than nominate from Balkans (Svensson 1992).

Breeds on well vegetated slopes with mixed wood, often patches of fir forest and near gardens and orchards.

212. **Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus tephronotus*

13.5 4 Pozanti - 14.5 2 Maden Koprunasi -

the ssp. *tephronotus* is much duller than European birds, in general with shorter tail. It shows broader black head-streak than *europaeus*, rather dark grey upperparts and extensive dark streaking in underbody.

213. **Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus*

16.5 2 Gelinkaya - 19.5 1 Ishak Pasa.

214. **Krüper's Nuthatch** *Sitta krueperi*

23.5 4 Imamli.

Found in coniferous forest, especially pine forest in slightly hilly country, mainly 1000-2500 m., but frequently down to sea-level. Breeds around approximately western half of Turkey, population 10.000-100.000 pairs (Tucher & Heath 1995).

215. **Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta neumayer*

14.5 2 Demirkazik Mountain - 14.5 2 near entrance to Demirkazik Groge (pair with nest) - 18.5 5 Ishak Pasa (including nesting pair) - 22.5 3 Isikli - 23.5 1 Aphroditias

Breeds in dry, rocky and sunny slopes and wadis with stands of large, isolated rocks, and just low vegetation. Found up to 2100 m., but frequent down to sea-level. Turkish population 50.000-500.000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1995).

215 **Eastern Rock Nuthatch** *Sitta tephronota*

22.5 1 Isikli - 22.5 3 Durnalik

Larger than Rock Nuthatch with longer and heavier bill and broader, more angular black line behind eye; from sides, the width and angling is surprising easy to see, and gives a reminiscence to a Badger! In flight, the combination of long. Strong bill and bluish upperparts creates a strange association to a small kingfisher - an association I never get in Rock or Common Nuthatch. The flanks and under tail-coverts often shows a buffish to rusty tinge; this may however be weak, and at the least patterned birds, it matches the slightly sandy tinge of Rock Nuthatch.

Breeds in similat area as Rock Nuthatch, but often in slightly flatter areas with smaller rocks, and generally more stands of vegetation (often seen creeming here, which is rarely observed in Rock Nuthatch). Very local in Turkey, where Isikli/Durnalik area forms an isolated patch from the Nemrut Dagi population and the larger breeding areas of the extreme East (especially SE of Lake Van).

216. Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Common at the start of the tour (where many migrants involved). Most noted 13.5 14 Akgöl, Göksu Delta (many migrants) - 13.5 10 Göksu Delta - 15.5 30 Sultan Marshes. In the north and east only few, most 19.5 7 and 20.5 5 South Van Marshes. Surprising scarce 23-24.5 in areas where many were seen 13-14.5, which indicates that a lot of migrants involved.

217. Red-headed Shrike *Lanius senator niloticus*

19.5 1 male Erzek Gölü - 22.5 2 Durnalik..

218. Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*

13.5 2 males Göksu Delta - 23.5 3 Demirzili - 23.5 2 Imamli - 24.5 3 Tarsus Delta West

Breeds in Turkey in the warm Mediterranean zone in Western Turkey and in the Southern part of Anatolia - mainly follows the Mediterranean, but with isolated small population in the SE. Breeds mainly in small woods and plantations of e.g. citrus and olives, thus preferring more well vegetated areas than other shrikes apart from Red-backed. Bird seen in more arid areas may be migrants.

Turkish population estimated to 5000-50.000 pairs.

219. Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

Widespread and common in open country, especially in Central Anatolia, where largest numbers noted was 13..5 15 Akgöl, Göksu Delta - 13.5 9 Göksu Delta - 15.5 38 Kayseri - Sariskla - 15.5 13 Sariskla - Sivas .

Scarcer in the east, with 18.5 11 between Halikista and Tuzlea and 18.5 4 Serpmetas as the largest counts here, but mainly singletons observed the rest of the tour, indicating a fall of migrants 13.5 (as largely absent from same areas 23-24.5, as seen in Red-backed Shrike). .

220. Common Magpie *Pica pica*

Widespread, but scarce throughout.

221. Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius anatoliae*

17.5 1 Deperapazi.

The ssp. *anatoliae* belongs to to *atricapilla*-group, which are characterised by black crown, whitish head and rather clear brown upperparts.

222. Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhucorax pyrrhucorax*

14.5 20 Demirkazik (medium to lower part) - 14.5 10 Kalki Dag - 16.5 1 Sivri Kaya - 18.5 2 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 2 Ishak Pasa.

Breeds in mountains with steep cliffs, generally 1200-3000 (or even higher) m in Central Anatolia, Pontic Mountains and in mountain regions of the east; population thus well separated from each other. Population 5000-50.000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1994)..

223. Alpine Chough *Pyrrhucorax graculus*

14.5 60 Demirkazik (at highest part).

Breeds in high, barren mountains, where seen in flocks highest up, in an almost playful manner.. Distribution is similar to Red-billed Chough, but avoids lower altitudes, and probably do not occur below 1500 m. (probably 2000).

Even when red bill not observed, easily identified by wing shape and tail; Alpine has shape not dissimilar to Jackdaw, Red-billed with much squarer, rectangular wings with striking broad hand and shorter tail, thus having a shape of its own.

224 **Common Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

Common throughout, most noted 15.5 40 Sivas - 17.5 30 Ardahan - 17.5 30 Cildir - 17.5 100 Aktas Gölü - 18.5 30 Kars - 19.5 25 Erzek Gölü - 19.5 25 South Van Marshes - 20.5 215 South Van Marshes - 20.5 25 Sevas - 21.5 20 Birezik

The birds in Turkey, compared to Scandinavian bird, generally showed paler grey sides to head, and are sometimes included in the ssp. *soemmeringii* (e.g. by Svensson 1992). What we call "True" *soemmeringii* in winter in south Scandinavia would, however show a full broad white crescent behind the grey head-sides, which was not observed in Turkey, where the birds reminded us of the palest *monedula* observed in winter in South Scandinavia (where probably originating from Finland and eastwards). The Turkish population is sometimes referred to as *pontocaspicus* (although not warranted by Cramp & Perrins 1994)

225 **Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

Common in Central Anatolia, most noted 15.5 15 Kayseri - 15.5 20 Sivas - BeziRKas - 16.5 65 Erzinan - 17.5 70 Baskarschmak (several in breeding colonies) - 18.5 30 Kars (coloni) - 18.5 30 Iğdir - 19.5 50 Dogubekazik - 19.5 55 Erzek Gölü - 20.5 15 Tatvan.

226 **Hooted Crow** *Corvus corone*

Common throughout., most noted 16.5 20 Baskarschmak - 17.5 20 Hopa

227 **Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

Scarce in mountain and hilly country, most noted 16.5 2 Sivri Kaya and 17.5 4 Artvin.

228. **Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris tauricus*

Common, especially in northern part of Anatolia, where abundant in arable land and villages; flock up to 50 noted here - e.g. 15.5 45 near Niğde - 15.5 40 Sarisla - 15.5 55 near Sivas - 16.5 100 near Erzinan - Scarcer in the far East, but with 18.5 50 Serpmetas - 19.5 30 Ishak Pasa being largest numbers..Again more numerous westwards, e.g. 19.5 80 Van Marshes - 20.5 215 South Van Marshes - .

The ssp. *tauricus* was studied. It generally appears blacker than *vulgaris* with more purple, oily gloss, but extensive green gloss on head (in sharp sunlight in good contrast to rest of body). The overall spotting and the pale edges to coverts and tertials were much weaker than in *vulgaris*, thus bearing reminiscence to Spotless Starling *S. unicolor*; however, *tauricus* invariably showed broad white crevrons in under tail coverts (lacking or at most (1 year females) very narrow in Spotless) and most shows pale spots in mantle, lacking in Spotless (but in some *tauricus* worn off). Further differences are (Malling Olsen 2003, with comments on certain aspects by L. Svensson & M. Hellström in litt):

1. Bill usually stronger with more curved upper mandible in Spotless (where might appear intermediate in shape between the spike-like of Starling and the thrush-like of Rosy-coloured starling). Furthermore, many Spotless males shows more extensive bluish grey base to bill than in Common Starling.

2: Most Spotless shows much longer elongated feathers in throat and hindneck, to create "lion's head or Bob Marley dread-locks. This is never as pronounced in Common Starling.

3: Legs often striking bubblegum-pink in Spotless, always greyer pink in Common Starling.

4: Underwing bicoloured in Spotless with black coverts in clear contrast to paler flight feathers. Common Starling shows uniform underwing.

In southeastern Turkey (east of Gaziantep and the plains of E Anatolia), the population is regarded as belonging to ssp. *purpurascens*, which probably intergrades a lot with *tauricus*. (Cramp & Perrins 1994) We found differences small; certain birds looking less glossy and thus blacker than North Anatolian birds, but more studies required.

229. Rose-coloured Starling *sturnus roseus*

18.5 8 Iğdir - 18.5 10 Serpmetas - 19.5 1 ad. Van Hills.

Rather low numbers; frequently large colonies and flocks of hundreds are reported by many visitors. Notorious however irruptive, with breeding probably occurring widespread in Eastern half Turkey in certain years, none in others.

230. Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

16.5 2 Gelinkaya - 21.5 1 Birezik (at the "owl café).

231. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout, with hundreds everywhere near Göksu and Adana - otherwise 15.5 140 Kayseri. Scarcer in the North and East, but again common from the SE, most 18.5 75 Iğdir - 18.5 100 Ishak Pasa - 21.5 hundreds Birezik - 23.5 200 Imamli - 24.5 700 Tarsus Delta West. - 24.5 500 Tuzla Creek.

232. Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispanioloides*

13.5 20 Akgol, Göksu Delta - 13.5 15 Göksu Delta - 22.5 20 Isikli - 24.5 200 Tuzla Creek.

Found in arable country, including semi-arid open landscape with wadis and stands of tamarisk in Western Turkey, along Mediterranean and in Southeastern Part of Turkey. Seemingly local.

233. Dead Sea Sparrow *Passer moabiticus*

Only noted Birezik 21.5, where 5 (of which 1 nesting male) plantations 4 km. north of the bridge - 10 Euphrat south of the bridge - 1 male gravel pits north of Birezik.

Very local in Turkey, where traditionally observed at Birezik; other areas includes very small, isolated populations in the south between Silifke and Eastwards to around Diyarbakir. Mainly to be expected between Euphrat and Tigris valleys. Found in dry lowland country near rivers and waterpools, nesting in bushes and trees, especially stands of Tamarisks.

234. Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

14.5 5 Dermirkazik (at the entrance to the wadi) - 14.5 60 Cucurbak - 16.5 5 Maden Koprubari - 16.5 1 Ovitdagi Gecedi - 18.5 2 Halikista - 19.5 20 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 1 Caldiran - 19.5 20 Van Hills - 22.5 6 Isikli.

Widespread in rocky, hilly areas with low vegetation and larger rocks; also mountains above treeline up to probably >3000 m. Mainly distributed in SW part of Turkey, following Mediterraneans, but also in the far East east of Black Sea (Cramp & Perrins 1994)

235. **Yellow-throated Sparrow** *Gymnornis xanthocollis*

21.5 3 Birezik 3-4 km. north of the bridge (in plantations on the eastern shore of Euphrat).

Breeds mainly in dry lowland, where preferring plantations with well spread trees, plantations and and growths. Apparently attracted to pylons and wires, and seemingly common i plantations in slightly hilly landscape. Very local Southern Turkey with the Birezik population (including Halfeti) as the best known, but may weel prove to be more widespread; also frequently seen at Settimio Severo´s roman bridge near Narince (Hendriks 2004) .

236. **Pale Rock Sparrow** *Carpospiza brachydactyla*

20.5 1 Sariskana 15 km W of Baykan - 21.5 1 "Ibis Wadi", Birezik

Localy, nomadic breeder in the southernmost part of Turkey from Gaziantep and eastwards. Found on arid hillsides with ravines, slopes and low grasses; sometimes more well-grown low thickets and growths.

Mainly found at Durnalik ("the moonscape" = the highest, least vegetated parts of the small mountain areas present, see derection in "the Gen".), Birezik ("the dry parts and grassy slopes of the "Ibis Valley") and at Nemrud Dagi near Narince.

237. **Snow Finch** *Montifringilla nivalis*

14.5 20 Demirkazik (upper åarts) - 16.5 4 Ovitdagi Gecedi - 18.5 2 Tenduruk Gecedi Rakum - 18.5 1 Serpmetas.

Oocal in high mountain areas above 1700 m. Occurs well above treeline in grassy and stony hillsides with large rocks and cliffs, frequently feeds on sloping grassy hull-sides. A ture mountain bird, wich somewhat isolated population in Aladag range and arain from NE Pontic mountain and on the borders to Caucasus; also high mountains E of Lake Van, where often seen in passes.

238. **Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coeleps*

13.5 6 Pozanti - 13.,5 3 Canardi - 14.5 1 Kalki Dag - 16.5 5 Sivri Kaya - 16.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 3 Izikdere - 17.5 1 Depeparazi - 17.5 1 Artvin.

The birds from Sivri Kaya and eastwards looked slight different from *coelebs* in haes having a bluer tinge to hood (which appeared somewhat more restricted than in *coelebs*) and breast pinkier with reddish being confined to breast, in some leaving contrasting pale, sometimes greish-white belly. They mantle in at least one showed few geen feathers

239. **Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina bella*

Scarce throughout, most 18.5 25 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 20 Van hills - 22.5 10 Isikli - 22.5 10 Durnalik

The ssp. *bella* is similar to *cannabina*, In male, head paler and mantle geryish-brown (hazel), leaving a paler overall impression, which enforced the extensive red in breast and forehead; The ssp. is destribed as showing paler and less extensive red than *cannabina* (Cramp & Perrins 1994), but this not supported in series of photoes of birds from Ishak Pasa, where the red was extensive, only a tinge paler and more prange-toned than the carmine-red of *cannabina*, so probably some variation in this ssp.

240. **(Asian) Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris brevirostris*

18.5 1 Ishak Pasa - 18.5 8 Somkaya

The taxon *brevirostris* is distinctly different from the *flavrostris*-group (N and NW Europe). This, together with the isolation between the nominate and the Asian population indicates that they better are treated as different species: Northern Twite *C. flavrostris* and Asian Twite *C. brevirostris*. However, no main research has yet been done. Here is something for a forthcoming Ph D!!!

We noted *brevirostris* as being similar shaped to *flavrostris*, but less fluffy. The upperparts had broader dark streaking, the head-pattern was stronger and "more depressive" and the breast deeper buffish with conspicuous broad dark streaks, in males often enough to create a striking clear contrast to the white underparts. The rump was deeper rosy (sometimes noted as whishish (Cramp & Simmons 1994) and the greater coverts bar stronger, creating a single white wingbar, which is often conspicuous and surprising broad in flight (compare Mongolian Trumpeter finch!). Voices say to differ too.

It breeds in mountain slopes in Eastern half of Turkey, often with grassy and herbal vegetation on stony background, or in harsher mountainous areas with hardly any vegetation. Distributed patchily in mountain areas of central and Eastern Turkey

241. **Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

Rather common, most noted 23.5 16 (incl. pair with young) Demircili - 24.5 20 Tarsus Delta West.

242 **Common Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

Scarce throughout, most 23.5 10 Göksu Delta.

243 **Serín** *serinus serinus*

23.5 1 Demircili - 24.5 1 Tarsus Delta West..

244 **Red-fronted Serín** *Serinus pusillus*

14.5 male in the mid wadi at Demirkazik - 18.5 2 Ishak Pasa.

Breeds in mid to upper range of mountains in upper parts of tree-line, preferring areas of birch or pines (Aladag). Often occurs on slopes with stand of trees, bushes and large stones.. Also in deep wadis and stony, grassy sides with large amount of rocks (Ishak Pasa). Mainly above 1000 m.

In Turkey mainly distributed in hills and mountains in mid to central range, such as Aladag mountains (and in the west at Uludag), and in the Pontic Mountains (regularly observed in the surrounding of Sivri Kaya) as well as in the far East. Many observers see a lot more than we did, especially in the Demirkazik Area.

245. **Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

16.5 1 Sivri Kaya.

Note: the call here was identical to Bullfinch of NW Europe, not the "trumpet call", which has been associated with Caucasian breeder during extensive discussion autumn and winter 2004/2005, where many such birds - probably from Siberian populations - were noted throughout North and West Europe.

246 **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythacus kubanensis*

16.5 3 Sivri Kaya - 17.5 1 Izikdere - 17.5 2 Hopa - 19.5 3 Sivri Kaya

The ssp. *kubanensis* is similar to *erythacus*, but males often with more extensive red in underparts, reaching belly. In Turkey, breeds in montane area of the north, especially to the NE Pontic mountains, where found in well vegetated valleys, in willow scrub and open woodland, mainly somewhat higher up than we did try..

247 Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopectus sanguinea*

18.5 15 Serpmetas - 19.5 3 Ishak Pasa. - 19.5 2 Van Hills

Breeds in mountains above 1700 m. in almost vegetation-less mountains and large areas of volcanic soil, also stony slopes with low scrub and stands of juniper, above treeline. Distributed from southern Central Turkey and eastwards.

Other areas, where the species frequently is noted is Demirkazik/Aladag, Sivri Kaya area and Nemrud Dagi.

248 Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

18.5 1 male Ishak Pasa.

A species recently discovered in the extreme E Turkey in areas bordering Iran. Ishak Pasa is traditionally the main site, and up to 40 have been seen here. Frequently seen around the palace, but more commonly beyond the palace, especially in areas about 1 km. to the SE of the palace. Here, you will find a large parking and picnic area with some tea-stands. From the area closest to the palace, a track leads up to the mountains. After 1-200 meters there is a green hut and some barely visible ruins. The grassy and rocky slopes with larger arid areas here is the area where the species most frequently have been observed, eports comes. Probably breeds higher up, in unvegetated, steep hills, coming down to feed at the mentioned sites.

Other areas with recent report includes the highlands between Ishak Pasa/Dogabeyazik and Serpmedas, where the finch prefers the rugges areas of dark, volcanic soil, especially in the highest parts, around the pass Tendurek Gecedi Rakum (at the villages Somkaya and Gulicar), buy also at the village of Serpmetas. However, this is a sensible area with heavy military activities, and we were not admitted entrance to the sheep tracks into the rugged area, where the species recently have been observed.

A small bird, a little larger but much stockier than Linnet/Twite, in flight showing two white wing-bars, created by broad white median coverts and white bases to secondaries; greater coverts are rosy and the primaries rosy-glimpsing in flight, as the innerwebs are rosy. The rump is rosy, and there are white sides to the sides og the dark tail (pattern vaguely recalling genus *Oenanthe*. Males have extensive rosy face to breast; crown to mantle pale greyish-brown. The bill is pale creamy. Females resemble dull versions of males; juveniles rather nondescript pale greyish brown with short, pale bill and pale wing-bars (judged from illustrations vaguely recalling a miniature ang greyish Common Rosefinch female).The call could be compared to a hoarse Willow Warbler, often with a short introductory tone ("it does not play that beautiful on trumpet" as do Trumpeter Finch).

249 Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

21.5 3 Birezik (plantations 4-5 km. north of Birezik town).

Very local breeder in Turkey in the southern part of the Euphrat-Tigris Valley. Breeds in arid areas, semi-desert and mountain valleys with second growth and open plantations near water.

250. Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoenebaenus caspia*

19.5 2 males South Van Marshes.

The isolated population here shows a very strong swollen bill, which could be mistaken as a bill disease if you not are prepared for the gradual change in bill proportions from the small-billed birds of NWEurope to the heavy-billed of the SE-wards.

251. Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

16.5 4 between Gelinkaya and Maden Koprunasi - 16.5 1 Maden Koprunasi - 18.5 3 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 3 Ishak Pasa .

Breeds throughout Turkey, mainly in hilly areas with lush vegetation, plantations and grassy areas near streams. It should be noted, that the species occurs at many areas 2traditionally" regarded ad the home of Grey-necked Bunting. At Ishak Pasa both species were present, with rtolan bunting inhabiting the lower, well vegetated bushy part along streams, and Grey-necked higher up (we were somewhat surprized by studying how many reports that lacks observations from Ishak Pasa; most had only noted Grey-necked bunting here. ID is easy: Ortolan Bunting invariably shows yellow eyering (faintest in certain femaletypes, where indistinct and mainly restridted to forepart (own obs., Israel 1994) and an olive wash to the head, and rather warm brown, well streaked mantle. The yellow malar and throat is surrounded completely by grey (with an olive tinge) and the tertialt have well defined pattern of black in inner webs. The song is a beautyful slow version of Yellowhammer: "dzy-dzy-dzy-tsi-tyu" (has been compared to the introduction to Beethoven´s 5th symphony) and the call a weak, descending "ty-u".

252 .Cretzschmar´s Bunting *Emberiza caesia*

22.5 2 males Isikli - 22.5 3 Durnalik - 23.5 2 Demirzili - 23.5 3 Imamli

Population estimated to 10.000-100.000. pairs in Turkey. Breeds in W and C Turkey eastwards to the valleys near Gaziantep in sunny slopes with macchia, thorny bushes and in plantations. Among the three "grey-headed, eye browed and varm underpart-patterned" buntings is clearly prefers the varmest areas, and rarely found above 1300 m. The song is the beautiful of these species, but it sometimes include strange astmatic notes and in not as full-toned as in OrtolaneBunting. The short "spit" call is similar to Grey-necked Bunting, but the the species seeming never occur alongside. The British name is extremely difficult to spell. Why not rename it "Christmas bunting? After all, Senegal Plover is not very common in Senegal.

253. Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani*

18.3 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 3 Ishak Pasa - 19.5 4 Van Hills (Van Gils)

Breeds in SE Turkey in hilly, stony areas with field of short grass and herbs, always in rocky areas, and normally above 2000 m. To be looked after in any such area south and east of Lake Van; reported from Demirkazik this year, but circumstances unknown (Lars and Henrik Rask pers. comm.).

Vaguely similar to Ortolane Bunting in showing similar pattern, but the eye-ring is invariably white, the head has a cold bluish-grey tinge lacky any olive or geenish, the throat and malar are whitish-yellow and the grey breast-bar of Ortolane bunting lacking. In males, the underparts are more reddish-brown than the orange-tinged of Ortolane Bunting, often often appears "wooly" (clan-looking in OrtolaneBunting). The upperparts are cold greyish-brown with much finer and fainter streaking than in Ortolane Bunting; frequently the lower scapulars are reddish brown, in good contrast to rest of upperparts (clean and uniformly well streaked in Ortolane bunting), the tertials are fainter patterned (see e.g. Mullarney et al. 1999) with more even, but diffuser edges and brownish-tinged centres. The song is harsher than in OrtolaneBunting without the full tone of OrtolaneBunting, often more varied and with third tone being the strongest. The call is a short "stip" similar to Creszschmar´s Bunting.

254 Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea*

22.5 1 male *semenowi* - 22.5 15 Durnalik (og which at least 2 male *cineracea*; the rest spparently *semenowa*.

Rare breeder in dry, stony slopes with patches of macchia, scattered trees and open plantations. Turkish population estimated to between 500 and 5000 pairs (Byers et al. 1995).

In Turkey, *cineracea* is regarded as solely breeding in the W part of the country. The population is well separated from the restricted range of *semenowi*, which breeds in areas between Adana and Birezik (mainly noted in Durnalik/Isikli area) as well as in the far east, where rarer recorded; although rather common in Nemrud Dagi near Narince (see noted under Red-tailed Wheatear). Visitors to SE Turkish Kurdistan frequently notes the species.

Male *Cineracea* has lime-yellow restricted to throat, malar and face, with grey hindneck to upperparts (showing faint greyish-brown streaks), grey breast and flanks and paler whitish belly. Male *semenowi* has lime-yellow throat, malar and underbody with the grey of breast of flanks being slightly yellowish-tinted. Often head appears olive-yellow onto hindneck. Upperparts otherwise as *cineracea*, but streaking sometimes slightly warmer tinged brown (photos, skins, Byers 1995.).

The song was noted as a 5-toned "tjy - tjy-vy - tse-li", with the last part being higher-pitched than the first two parts. It had a hoarse tone.

At Durnalik, two *cineracea* were observed (occurrence in the area of both ssp. has also been noted by Schwalbe 2001), but *semenowi* clearly dominates here. One *semenowi*-looking bird showed clear contrasting grey hindneck than most males; this could be a result of interbreeding (the same character apparent in the exceptional vagrant from Skagen, Denmark late May 2005; photos, www.netfugl.dk).

255 **Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cia*

14.5 10 Kalki Dag.

Found in dry rocky hillsides, slopes and ravines with sparse vegetation (Byers et al. 1995). We solely found the species at the site, which was a little surprising. Here, we found it in the described habitat, at the edges of open fir forest, strangely in an area

256. **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*

Common throughout - among the most well spread passerines, being common in lowlands (between sea-level and 1200 m), especially in flat arable landscape, plantations and growths, orchards and macchia. Most seen 13.5 6 Silifte cemetery (the only time we came over a group; must be migrants); but scarce in Central Anatolia and Pontic Mountains (most 3 16.5 at Gelinkaya), and does not occur in montane region. Scarce in the far east, where lacking in most areas; again widespread west of Lake Van with most 22.5 10 Isikli - 22.5 20 Durnalik - 23.5 6 Demirzili - The Turkish population is very large: between 1 and 10 million pairs (Tucker & Heath 1995)

257. **Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra buturlini*

Common throughout in open landscape, especially in flat arable land. Lacks in mountain areas. No big concentrations noted, but the densest populations seemingly found in the flat arable land and grasslands of the far east; most seen around Erzek Gölü, but not in large number. .

The ssp. *buturlini* is said to be slightly paler, greyer and less streaked than *calanda*. These differences were at most very subtle (as also indicated by Byers et al. 1995), which notes "The species is often regarded as monotypic which seems to be a sensible position", but also notes that birds assigned to a certain race are found within the area of another. To be honest; in studied photos and in birds in the field we could not see any differences from breeders in Denmark (in which we are familiar), with certain birds appearing even more heavily streaked in upper- and underparts than an average Danish bird. However, we do not doubt the slight differences warranting a division into several subspecies in Byers et al. (1995), but note, that also in Cramp & Perrins there are interesting notes, e.g. - than "birds from Denmark and Iran are inseparable". Surely, it takes long series of birds to define something as subtle as this!

What was missed or never tried for (only specialities which are supposed to occur in our visited areas are mentioned) !!!! Including some thoughts of potential goodies to look for in the future.

Seabirds. Both **Yelkouan and Cory's (Scopoli's) Shearwater** are frequently observed from the coastline, but seemingly irregular from the area we went to (more are observed from the traditional holligae villages of Alanya and Antalya). Skuas would have been another possibility - spending some night at a controversial beach hotel would clearly have added our chances for "sea goodies". .

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypuis monachus*

Some hundreds pairs are present in mountainous areas. Within our itinerary the species is rarely observed, but there are regular observations from the valley between Igdir and Sivri Kaya, as described by Schwalbe (2001). The mountains of Kizilzham near Ankara would be a better choice.

Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus*

Halfeti is a regular site for this species, of which 50-500 pairs breed in Turkey, but we never visited this place. To be looked for especially in hilly country between Adana and Batman.

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

First recorded in WP by Lasse Laine near Hoba, the species is probably a rare migrant in the late part of the Honey Buzzard migration, to be looked for mid to late May along the NE Black Sea migration route. Now regularly observed during Honey Buzzard migration in Israel and not so difficult to identify as formerly regarded. Look for a large, broad-winged and short-tailed, "Bonelli's Eagle" version of Honey Buzzard!

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*

This scarce breeder has recently been reported from Aladag Mountains, and also from Maden Koprunasi (Ortvad 2004). 30-300 pairs breed in Turkey (Gensbøl 1995)

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

A rare breeder (10-100 pairs), rarely recorded by visiting birders, but with a patchy distribution including Central Anatolia and the east.

Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

Sometimes reported from Birezik area, although rarely now a days, and is probably only a vagrant. How many old reports refer to Peregrines?.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

Frequently observed hunting at Göksu Delta . A small population on 10-100 pairs breeds in southern Turkey.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

No recent reports in the actual tour reports, but the species should be present in steppe habitats near the large Central Anatolian lakes; e.g. observed by the early DOF expedition near Tuz Gölü around 1970, and should be possible in the vicinities of Lake Van, e.g. at the steppes of Bulanik.. Population 145-4000 pairs in Turkey (Tucker & Heath 1994).

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*

Irregularly noted near Bulanik NE of Lake Van; the area has recently been problematic to visit according to frequent PKK activities (Kristensen 1999) and was considered out of our possibilities; however, the species have been seen there by several observers since 2000, e.g. Schwalbe 2001.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

A real miss! The species is normally present north of Sultan Marshes (Gosney 8), breeding in low salt steppe, and have been observed several times in Göksu and Tarsus deltas, e.g. by Kristensen (1999). A more serious investigation of the salt steppes surrounding the large steppe lakes in Central Anatolia would probably have given positive result - but at least we had a five hour try at the described sites north of Sultan Marshes.

Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*

Formerly present near Halfeti, the species were told to be present this year near a village. The staff at the "owl café" offered guiding to the site - a local village - for at least 30 Lira for a try, which we obeyed. Breeding status in Turkey uncertain; maybe tens of pairs, but probably irregular.

Red-wattled Plover *Vanellus indicus*

The only WP site is the Tigris river near Cizre. Although a population of 5-10 pairs are present, and should be rather easy to observe, almost any observer has been chased away by the military, and regarding the recent political situation we found a try for this "indian stake out" both too risky and - especially - too time-consuming.

Other shorebirds. It is always possible to miss a number of shorebirds; **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellis* passes Lake Van regularly in May, and would have been expected, as well as there are several records of **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* from the region. Even rarer shorebirds can surely be turned up.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius caspius* have been known to pass through East Turkey en route between East Africa and Central Asia; there are reports of up to 14 at Lake Van in August as well as recent spring observations from Tarsus Delta (Cramp & Simmons 1983; Kristensen 1999).

Sociable Plover *Vanellus gregarius* (now becoming extremely rare) has formerly been known to migrate through eastern Turkey in spring (late March-May) as well as in autumn, and should be looked for.

White-tailed Plover *Vanellus leucurus* probably nested at Göksü Delta in 1971, regarding the recent spread of the species it is a potential future breeder and more regular visitor, preferring similar habitats as Spur-winged Plover.

Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*. On the range of extension, this species formerly was observed in Turkey; Tucker & Heath refers to 29 records 1900-1993. With so many scarcely visited wetland areas, especially in the East, migration observations at e.g. the extensive wetlands around Ardahan and west of Mount Ararat (with habitat similar to the parts of Merja Zerga, Morocco preferred by the last regularly observed Slender-billed Curlews) - would not come as a total surprise.

The breeding area is extensive quaking peatbog with sedge and horsetail *Equisetum* and small scattered *Salix* willows and birches *Betula*. Why not give such habitat a try if you visit such areas during breeding season?

Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*

A scarce visitor to the south coast, regularly observed at the coastlines of Göksu and Tarsus deltas. Less than 100 pairs breeds in Turkey, mainly in the West, winter offers the best opportunities along the south coast.

Pallas's Gull *Larus ichtyatus*

Mainly a winter visitor, this gull is sometimes observed onto May (e.g. at Van, May 2004 by Ortvad et al.). Up to over 100 have been seen in winter along the south Mediterranean coastline.

Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse

Often observed at Birezik in late mornings, but habitat destruction caused no records this year.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

Formerly bred at Birezik gravel pits 1-2 km. north of the bridge on the western shore of Euphrat, but disappeared following destruction of habitat. However, a large proportion of European Bee-eater was (again) present, so there might be hope for the future. Has recently been observed near Igdir.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

Sometimes observed by chance, e.g. the Rask brothers added one to their list in areas visited by us.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

Recent searches for the species at Van Hills and Birezik has apparently appeared fruitless, but the species is to be looked for - and listed after - in deep gorges in undisturbed areas. Note, that parts of the population breeding in the south may be of the small and pale desert form *aesculapus*, also known as Pharaoh Eagle Owl.

Brown Fish Owl *Ketuba zeylonensis*

A recent record from near Adana indicates, that the species still may occur in well vegetated wadies with permanent water. To be looked for in remote, well wooded area with streams and small lakes.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopus leucotus lilfordi*

As we flew directly to Adana, we missed the opportunity to visit the famous area, Akseki, for this elusive and distinctive form. However, we decided to let the species out of possibilities and it would have meant extra driving on about 1000 km. Most observers get the species by "taping" - a tactic we dislike. And other Akseki specialities were rather easy near Adana.

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*

Regular in the "Ibis Wadi" at Birezik, frequently drinking the small ponds in the bottom of the wadi.

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens*

Normally easy around lake Van, especially at Bendimari Marshes. However, poor weather prevented us from birding the actual areas.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Status in Turkey uncertain; has bred twice in the 1960ies (Cramp et al. 1988), and observed a few times in the eastern part of the country during breeding season. A species to be looked for in the far East (e.g. areas bordering Georgia, Armenia and Iran), especially at rocky slopes with sparse vegetation and scattered bushes - a habitat also favoured by Black-headed Wheatear.

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

Should occur in wetlands (Lake Akgöl, Sultan Marshes, Lake Erzek etc.), but never seriously tried for.

Plain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus neglectus*

Rumoured as recently discovered in the extreme southeast. A species to be looked for in low mountain scrup with scattered trees, especially acacias, especially between 2000 and 3000 meters near the borders to Iran and Iraq.

Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*

This attractive species is regularly reported from the Pontic mountains (e.g. near Delinkaya). Prefers rather old deciduous or mixed forests with dominance of ash, oak and alder; sometimes fir forest. Mainly found in hilly country along streams and rivers. Turkish population 1000-10.000 pairs (Tucker & Heath 1995).

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