

Jordan, March 30th – April 9th 2007

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Compared to its neighbour Israel, Jordan is a country with relatively few visiting birders and during our stay we met only one. Apart from a ringing station at Azraq and a bird station under construction at Aqaba Sewage Plant there were few other signs of ornithological activity. The country should nevertheless be regarded as a first-class destination for birders with varied habitat types, some very spectacular locations and being situated very favourable in respect to migrating routes. We did see a total of 143 species during our stay which we found satisfactory considering we did not visit areas north of Amman nor did we find the time to do any serious birding by the Red Sea. The lack of other birders also meant we had to find everything by ourselves. Jordan also has some very interesting historical sites that are worth visiting. Among them is Petra, the world famous prehistoric city, which is certainly not to be missed. Jordanians are very friendly, helpful and hospitable. We always felt very safe travelling in Jordan and when people gave us their favourite phrase “Welcome to Jordan” we certainly felt they meant it.



Blackstart, Wadi Fidan.



Masked Shrike, Aqaba.



Collared Pratincole, Aqaba.

Day 1, March 30th, Amman Airport - Azraq

We arrived in Jordan at sunset and just before the lights faded out a few Feral Pigeons just managed to be the first birds of the trip. After arranging with the rental car from Thrifty, a 4WD Toyota Rav4, we headed east towards Azraq. Despite several warnings about hairy driving conditions at night-time in Jordan, it proved to be rather painless with decent road conditions and drivers consistently using their headlights. After little over an hours drive we checked in at the Azraq Resthouse.

Day 2, March 31st, Azraq and Shaumari

Early morning was spent birding around the resthouse. A Masked Shrike by the pool made for a pleasant start while two Woodchat Shrikes were found by the olive tree plantations right on the outside. Lesser Whitethroat and Chiffchaff were numerous along with Collared Dove and Laughing Dove. A late Finch's Wheatear was accompanied with a Black-eared Wheatear and a Northern Wheatear by the parking area while the trees in the roundabout by the main entrance held a female Semi-collared Flycatcher. Two Red-rumped Swallows flew by while a

small group of Desert Finch and two White-cheeked Bulbuls were foraging in the nearby trees. The first Steppe Buzzards were already up circling before breakfast and before we left for Shaumari 120 of them had passed by along with an Egyptian Vulture, an Osprey and a Black Kite. As we left we came across two Namaqua Doves sitting on a wire along the avenue leading up to the main road. By the main road itself a splendid male Subalpine Warbler showed well in a tree.

After turning right off the main road towards Shaumari Wildlife Centre we spent some time birding the surrounding desert areas. Crested Lark, Greater Short-toed Lark and Temminck's Horned Lark were all numerous. A male Marsh Harrier patrolled the edge of the reserve while a Short-toed Eagle, a Black Kite and 20 Steppe Buzzards passed overhead. Good numbers of passerines were found along the fenced area with 3 Hoopoes, 3 Redstarts (one male ssp *samamisticus*), 2 Black Redstarts, 8 Northern Wheatears, 1 Desert Wheatear, 4 Isabelline Wheatears, 5 Black-eared Wheatears, 2 Woodchat Shrikes, 1 Great Grey Shrike (ssp *aucheri*) and 8 Red-rumped Swallows as most notable. The best bird, however, was a Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin that suddenly revealed itself on the fence. Once inside the reserve we went up the observation tower from where we could see the captive bred Arabian Oryx and Wild Ass. Apart from this there were not very much else to see but a few Spanish Sparrows amongst the House Sparrows and another female Semi-collared Flycatcher.

The hours flew by and we eventually had to head for Azraq Wetland Reserve, though more birding around Shaumari definitely would have been rewarding. At the wetland reserve we paid a small entrance fee and followed the loop boardwalk that makes a small part of the reserve accessible. Graceful Warblers made their presence known through their distinctive song and White-cheeked Bulbuls were common. By one of the small pools inside the reedbeds we managed to pish out and obtain excellent views of a Moustached Warbler while 2 Bluethroats revealed themselves without additional efforts. A single Little Egret was surprisingly, or rather disappointingly, the only representative of the heron family seen. It should be noted, however, that we did not visit the reserve during an optimal time of the day. By the pools some 30 Coot and 3 Common Moorhen were the only birds swimming around. A Sparrowhawk and a female Marsh Harrier patrolled over the reeds. By the bird hide we heard a Water Rail calling and two Grasshopper Warblers were singing. The latter being a very rare species in Jordan. After completing the walk we drove around the reserve to have a look at the Qa which, regrettably, was totally dried up this year. What we saw was a Great Grey Shrike, 5 Hoopoes and 3 Namaqua Doves.



Northern Wheatear, Shaumari



Temminck's Horned Lark, Shaumari



Graceful Warbler, Azraq

Day 3, April 1st, Azraq – As Safawi – Dead Sea

We once again started the day with a walk around the resthouse. Masked Shrikes were obviously on the move and a male and a female were amongst the first birds encountered. Apart from that a male Rock Thrush was the only addition to the species list from the previous day.

After breakfast we headed towards As Safawi and the basalt desert. On the way there we had a Steppe Buzzard a few Kestrels and a feeding group of 3 Desert Wheatears and 2 Black-eared Wheatears. As we continued east past As Safawi there were not much to see, and eventually we just stopped randomly by the road to have a go at the target bird – the black morph Mourning Wheatear. We obviously picked the right spot for after just a short while a dark wheatear came flying right towards us and landed only a few meters away! This was the only bird we were able to see for miles around so it all seemed to be a good portion of luck involved. We then continued further east along the remains of the old road running in parallel with the highway. This resulted in 3 Bar-tailed Desert Larks and a few Crested Larks. On our way back we made a stop by a small water treatment plant (?) on the south side of the road immediately before you enter As Safawi going west. 2 Little Ringed Plover, 2 Little Stints and a Ruff constituted the first waders of the trip, while 3 Red-throated Pipits, a Woodchat Shrike trying to catch them and a Bluethroat all made the stop worthwhile.

Back in Azraq we quickly packed our things and left for the Dead Sea. On the way there we unintentionally picket up a hitchhiking policeman we thought pulled us over. As we reached Amman and said goodbye to our passenger our plan to quickly pass by the city failed totally. Instead we got totally lost and ended up down town during the rush hour. We can by no means recommend this to anyone! After fiddling about for quite some time we eventually managed to find a way out and continued to the Dead Sea hotels area. Immediate additions to the species list were Yellow-vented Bulbul, Rock Martin and Cattle Egret. We rounded off the day with a late dinner outside one of the Mövenpick hotel restaurants where we enjoyed a Barn Owl hunting over the palms.

Day 4, April 2nd, Dead Sea – Suwayma – Petra

We started the day at Suwayma National Park. Just after the signposted turn-off from the Dead Sea Highway we found some Namaqua Doves sitting on a wire along the road. Closer inspections revealed that there were at least 9 birds in the area. A Hoopoe was singing as did a Great Grey Shrike and several Graceful Warblers. We then continued towards the Dead Sea until we reached the anonymous park administration building where we went for a walk along some small creeks with tamarisk scrub. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler was quite common in the area but rather difficult to get descent views of. More cooperative were several Great Grey Shrikes and Woodchat Shrikes perching on top of bushes. We also had our first White-breasted Kingfisher in a distance. Dead Sea Sparrow, our main target species in this area, was found in old grown tamarisk in front of the funfair. We counted 12 nests and registered at least 6 singing males and two females. After this we left the park and continued to the cultivated areas further north where we obtained good views of 2 White-breasted Kingfishers and a Little Egret. We then returned to the hotel and went for the mandatory lie-down in the Dead Sea.

With Petra as our next destination and a long drive ahead of us we had to leave early and continued south along the Dead Sea Highway. Just before we reached Wadi Mujib we made

a stop just to admire the view. As we glanced at the escarpment above us we spotted a head with two massive horns sticking up. They belonged to one of two stunning males Nubian Ibex that, once realising they were being observed, retreated back into the mountains. We also had a look at the impressive wadi itself, enjoying close views of Rock Martins flying below us. While ascending up into the mountains, shortly after turning off towards Karak, we found a pair of Mourning Wheatear accompanied by two Desert Larks. Mourning Wheatear proved to be quite common all the way to Petra. A few Isabelline Wheatears were also seen. Finally at Petra we just made the organized night walk through the Siq to the Treasury. A European Scops Owl was calling eagerly as we left the hotel and as we sat down by the Treasury waiting for the Bedouin musicians to start playing a Hume's Tawny Owl started calling, just to make a most memorable evening even better.



Desert Wheatear, As Safawi



Namaqua Dove, Suwayma



Dead Sea Sparrow, Suwayma

Day 5, April 3rd, Petra

We had a whole day in the glorious red-rose city of Petra ahead of us as we once again strolled along the Siq. Through the narrow gap above us 29 Steppe Buzzards passed by raising our expectations for the raptor migration literally sky-high. However, the only other raptors we were to see this day were the local Kestrels! Two female Sinai Rosefinches were found inside the Siq. Inside the city itself we especially found an area around a dried out creek close to the lower “camel parking area” productive. Here we saw 8 Red-rumped Swallows, 1 House Martin, 2 Rock Thrushes, 5 Mourning Wheatears, a Blackstart, a male Redstart (ssp samamisisicus), a Scrub Warbler, 4 Eastern Orphean Warblers, a Common Whitethroat, several Lesser Whitethroats, 2 Blackcaps and an Eastern Bonelli’s Warbler. Rock Martin, Yellow-vented Bulbul and Short-tailed Raven were numerous. We also got several glimpses of Sinai Rosefinches, but regrettably never any good close-up views of the stunning males. We then made the walk up the 800 or so steps to the Monastery. In the lower section going up we had breeding Blue Rock Thrush and Tristram’s Grackle. At the top 3 Pallid Swifts and 2 Desert Larks were noted. Apart from the fantastic view and the Monastery itself, the thing that excited us the most during this excursion was a male Sinai Agama. We had been told by local people that it was too early to see them, so the unmistakable blue-headed lizard came as a big surprise.

Day 6, April 4th, Petra – Aqaba

We had breakfast outdoors on a height a little bit behind and above the Forum Plaza Hotel. A Chukar was calling from a rock giving great and prolonged views as did a Scrub Warbler foraging on the ground. Apart from that and a few Steppe Buzzards up circling there were

little else to get excited about, so we soon left Petra and started the drive along the Kings Highway towards Aqaba. Steppe Buzzards continued to migrate as we drove south while Rock Thrush and Isabelline Wheatear made for notable roadside sightings.

We checked in at the Aqaba Gulf Hotel for three nights, had a quick lunch and then went to the palm plantations close to the giant flag pole right behind the public beach. This is an area where local people are growing vegetables and the small parcels are creating prime and varied feeding habitat for migrating birds. The birds attracted to this oasis are soon getting used to people's presence so it is relatively easy to obtain good close-up views of them. Rose-ringed Parakeet and House Crow were expected additions to the trip list as we arrived. The latter being very common, with several pairs breeding in the palms. 5 Hoopoes were knocking about while an impressive 15 Masked Shrikes had established themselves with well-defined feeding territories. 5 Tree Pipits and 3 Red-throated Pipits were seen as well as 12 White Wagtails and 5 Yellow Wagtails (1 ssp *beema*). It was exciting to find the second Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin of the trip, this one being a very confiding individual. Other species worth mentioning were a Cattle Egret, a Turtle Dove, 2 Wrynecks, a Bluethroat, 3 Redstarts, a Black-eared Wheatear, 2 Desert Finches and 20 Ortolan Buntings. We also got a good variety of warblers with 30 Blackcaps, 20 Lesser Whitethroats, 2 Common Whitethroats, an Eastern Orphean Warbler, 3 Chiffchaffs and an unspecified *Acrocephalus* species. The highlights, however, were a female Rüppell's Warbler and an Upcher's Warbler we were able to observe over a long period.



Scrub Warbler, Petra



Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Aqaba



White-breasted Kingfisher, Aqaba

Day 7, April 5th, Aqaba

It was early morning, and we returned to the parcels to find a number of new species compared to the previous day. That included a White-breasted Kingfisher, 6 Yellow-vented Bulbuls, 2 Common Nightingales, a Song Thrush, a male Sardinian Warbler, a female Semi-collared Flycatcher, a Woodchat Shrike, 3 Spanish Sparrows and 6 Cretzschmar's Buntings. An Osprey circled over the Red Sea. The two goodies, the Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin and the Upcher's Warbler were still present.

We now intended to visit Aqaba Sewage Plant, but in order to do so we needed to obtain permission. It is still not possible to obtain one at the entrance (despite long-lasting rumours of that soon to become the case) so we had to go searching for the person capable of issuing one for us. That proved to be quite complicated and we wasted a few hours following all sort of well-meaning people's directions that always proved to be incorrect. At last we ended up

asking at the tourist information centre (probably where we should have started in the first place) where they immediately knew where to send us. Mr. Salaam Labadi at the Jordan Society for Sustainable Development was the man we were looking for, and within an hour he had done all the necessary paperwork and got the right signatures. He also provided us with a map over the area.

Having no more time to waste we rushed away and soon arrived at the unfinished bird station building where we parked the car. The lush green forest was full of birds and all four species of swallows filled the airspace above. A superb male Collared Flycatcher and an Eastern Bonelli's Warbler soon competed for our attention. However, quite eager to finally see some water birds, we quickly walked through the forest to get to the pools and the more open areas. Once there we immediately found the first of 4 Little Green Bee-eaters together with a Wryneck and an Ortoloan Bunting. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler were common with some 15 of them being counted during our stay. A small pool held a Little Grebe. We continued to the heavy vegetated ponds at the eastern boundary of the plant where we found a decent selection of waders with the complete list being 60 Black-winged Stilts, 25 Spur-winged Plovers, 2 Little Ringed Plovers, 4 Wood Sandpipers, 3 Green Sandpipers, 5 Common Sandpipers, 2 Spotted Redshanks, a Greenshank, 3 March Sandpipers, 12 Ruff and a most welcomed White-tailed Plover. Several feldegg-type Yellow Wagtails also found shelter in the swamp. At this point we also got brief looks at 4 Collared Pratincoles, a Pied Kingfisher and a Whiskered Tern. Walking towards the observation "tower" we flushed a group of ducks consisting of 30 Teal and 25 Garganey completing the rather unimpressive list of ducks together with 4 Northern Shoveler and 24 Mallard. Even more modest was the list of raptors with one each of Marsh Harrier, Steppe Buzzard and Sparrowhawk. But hey, we were by no means complaining!



Yellow Wagtail (feldegg), Aqaba



Little Gull, Aqaba



White-tailed Plover, Aqaba

From this moment on we concentrated on a large mixed group of herons and gulls sitting by one of the ponds. 4 Great Cormorants, 3 Great White Egrets, 33 Little Egrets, 30 Grey Herons and a single Night Heron were fairly easy to pick out. As we got closer we were also able to identify the gulls as 3 2nd calendar year Pallas's Gulls, 20 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 50 Black-headed Gulls and 10 Slender-billed Gulls. An adult Little Gull was a rare find in Jordan with less than 10 previous records. A female Eurasian Curlew with a ridiculously long bill got us to fantasise about its far-eastern cousin for a while.

By the western boundary of the complex you get within 200 meters from the Israeli border and a certain degree of caution has to be exercised. To avoid provoking the Jordanian military guards, constantly keeping an eye on us from their watch towers, we crossed from one side to

the other using the pathway between the last two ponds rather than walking along the fence. As Mr. Labadi had closely instructed us, we did not at any time point our cameras towards the fenced areas. On our way over a party of 4 Kentish Plovers, 3 Little Ringed Plovers and 2 Little Stints landed in front of us. We also got within a few meters of the 4 Collared Pratincoles we had seen earlier. From the reeds behind the fence 11 herons suddenly took to their wings and we assumed they were some of the Grey Herons previously recorded. However, a closer look revealed they were all in fact Purple Herons with the beautiful colouration of their plumage showing well in the evening sunlight. As we reached the other side we noticed one of the guards walking towards us. He did not speak any English so we just handed over the permission, fortunately written in Arabic. After a short while he seemed satisfied, smiled and returned to his tower. Several other guards, however, started shouting to each other and, suspecting that it was us that caused this commotion, we found that this was the moment to retreat. We had almost made it back to the car when a guard came running after us telling us to stop. We had no other choice but to follow him back to the watch tower where we did manage to see our first two Arabian Babblers without even thinking of lifting our binoculars. After a short while a patrol car drove up beside us and we were told to get up in the back. With none of the guards speaking English we must admit we found the situation a little bit uncomfortable. We were then driven to a military checkpoint and finally met an English-speaking guy, probably the man in command. At first he seemed rather strict and he asked us all sorts of questions and looked through some of the pictures we had taken. Finally, the atmosphere changed and he admitted that he could not understand why we put so much effort in just seeing birds. Birdwatchers are still an oddity in Jordan. He then put on a smiling face and they drove us back to our car assuring that we would leave immediately. It must be said that they at all time behaved politely in a non-hostile manner and we do suspect that they did this mostly for the fun of it. We were in any case quite happy with what we had seen and returned to Aqaba with a story to tell.



Eastern boundary of Aqaba Sewage Plant



Purple Heron, Aqaba

Day 8, April 6th, Wadi Rum

It was time for a full day's excursion to Wadi Rum and we left early. After an hour drive we turned off the Desert Highway and entered the mighty landscape and the red sand. A handful of Trumpeter Finches, a couple of Long-legged Buzzards and the more common White-crowned Black Wheatears kept us entertained as we slowly made our way in. According to the Andrews guide the Hooded Wheatear is hard to pin down, and indeed he is right. We carefully scanned the rocky slopes along the road for quite some time without finding any. As we reached the Rum settlement we drove to some historical ruins beneath the enormous rock

wall where the Verreaux's Eagle used to be seen up until 2004. We can only hope that it will return one day. However, what we found here were a pair of Rock Thrush, a Bluethroat, several Eastern Orphean Warblers, 2 Wrynecks, a Tree Pipit, a Black Redstart, a few Sinai Rosefinches, a Masked Shrike and more common species such as Tristram's Grackle, White-crowned Black Wheatear, Desert Lark, Laughing Dove and Brown-necked Raven. 10 European Bee-eaters also migrated by, surprisingly the only ones seen during the whole trip. We also had another Arabian Babbler, but this time in the form of a local guide very eagerly trying to persuade us to go birdwatching with him. Although we repeatedly turned down his offer he kept turning up during the rest of the day.

Having a 4WD, we ventured out into the desert beyond the village on our own. This was not really a very risky manoeuvre into the vast unknown, as the local guides continuously shuttled tourists in and out of it. We hardly saw any birds at all in the desert, but the scenery was spectacular. It must be a fantastic place to spend a night, but we did not do so this time. As we returned to Rum village we did some birding in the gardens. This resulted in a Hoopoe, 2 Eastern Bonelli's Warblers, 2 Masked Shrikes, 2 Woodchat Shrikes, 8 Redstarts, a Whinchat, a Semi-collared Flycatcher, 2 Black-eared Wheatears, 4 Rock Thrushes, a Sinai Rosefinch and 2 Ortolan Buntings.

Day 9, April 7th, Wadi Araba – Finan – Dana

We left Aqaba at dusk with high hopes for a day's birding in Wadi Araba, with the Arabian Warbler being our no.1 target species. We drove north along the Dead Sea Highway and made the first attempt by a promising area of acacia woodland a few kilometres south of Rahma. No Arabian Warblers were seen but we did find 2 Little Green Bee-eaters, 2 White-crowned Black Wheatears, an Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, an Eastern Orphean Warbler and 2 Blackstarts. By the turn off towards Rahma we got a glimpse of what probably was a Cyprus Wheatear. As we continued north the wind picked up and sand started drifting around. This didn't keep raptors from migrating and it soon got evident that quite a few of them were on the move in a north-easterly direction. During the next few hours a total of 2 Egyptian Vultures, 2 Short-toed Eagles, an impressive 24 Steppe Eagles, 4 Black Kites, a March Harrier, a 2nd year Pallid Harrier, 2 Long-legged Buzzards, 150 Steppe Buzzards, a Sparrowhawk and an unidentified large falcon were seen. We also had the first and only 3 Booted Eagles of the trip, all dark phased birds.



Steppe Eagle, Wadi Araba



Little Green Bee-eater, Wadi Araba



Booted Eagle, Wadi Araba

We eventually turned right on to the road heading east towards Qurayqira and Wadi Fidan. This is the site described in the Andrews guide. A short stop was made by the bridge crossing

Wadi Abu Dubana, where we had a few Red-rumped Swallows and a Great Grey Shrike in addition to some migrating raptors. We also flushed a large Desert Monitor from a bush. From this point on we made several stops by acacias using playback of Arabian Warbler. We ended up in a superb acacia woodland just north-west of Qurayqira where we at last found 2 Arabian Warblers that we were able to enjoy for quite a while. After this we continued past Qurayqira with the intention to drive up the dirt road to Dana. Before we got far we met with some guys from the Feinan Ecolodge that told us that this road was impassable even with a 4WD, and apparently had been so since 1997. There was nothing else for us to do but to turn around and take the road to At Tafila before heading south again to Dana along the Kings Highway. By doing so we also faced a red wall coming fast towards us. We had never before seen anything like it, but it was not hard to understand that it was in fact a sand storm! As it hit us everything turned orange and visibility fell to as little as 10 meters. Sand quickly piled up on the road and it kind of reminded us of driving in a blizzard in Norway.



Arabian Warbler, Wadi Fidan



Hoopoe Lark, Wadi Araba



Black Stork, Wadi Araba

By the time we reached the Dead Sea Highway we had got out of the storm though the wall of dust and sand remained visible further east as we drove north. After a short time we came across a party of other victims of the sand storm. Just by the road 103 brownish White Storks had gone down all eagerly trying to turn white again. A few hundred meters further north we found another group of 49 storks soaring, and as we pointed our binoculars towards them we were amazed to see that they were all Black Storks. To our knowledge, this has to be one of the largest flocks of Black Stork ever to be seen in Jordan. As we continued north we came across a freshly vegetated desert area where we flushed a Hoopoe Lark from the side of the road. It was soon evident that the bird was breeding and after a short time we found the nest with 3 newly hatched young and an egg placed in a small bush only 10 m from the road. While we observed the two adult birds feeding the young a male Montague's Harrier, an unidentified 2nd year Montague's/Pallid Harrier and a couple of Kestrels passed by. As we turned right towards At Tafila and started climbing through the ever so impressive mountainous landscape we eventually caught up with the sand and had a rather uneventful drive to Dana. Finally there we made an unsuccessful attempt to find Syrian Serin before it got dark. Greenfinch and Twite were present and we got the first Orange-tufted Sunbird of the trip. After a tasteful dinner at Dana Guesthouse we had a go at Hume's Tawny Owl using playback but even this proved to be unsuccessful. The wind and the dusty air might not have been the ideal conditions for the owl. 3 European Scops Owls were constantly calling though, making the evening a memorable one nevertheless.

Day 10, April 8th, Dana – Amman Airport

We woke up to a stunning view over Wadi Dana with several Chukar and European Cuckoo calling from the hillsides below. It didn't take long, however, before heavy mist came in, ruining the view and making birding rather difficult. Surprisingly, we still managed to see one each of Marsh-, Pallid- and Montague's Harrier passing by, the last two being splendid males. A Steppe Eagle and a few Steppe Buzzards also defied the poor conditions and migrated close by. We could only wonder what we missed as visibility rarely allowed us to see more than a couple of hundred meters. In the hillsides above Dana Village we found several Cretzschmar's Buntings singing, Black-eared Wheatear were common and the male Orange-tufted Sunbirds had a busy time chasing each other around. We also found 5 Rock Sparrows by the road. Right above the guesthouse was a beautiful oak valley where, most unexpected, 2 Pale Rock Sparrows were found feeding anonymously on the ground. The species was found breeding at Dana in 1993, but the status of the species seems rather uncertain. Later attempts to relocate the birds failed.

Around lunch, the weather eventually cleared up and we drove to Barra Forest to search for the serin. Having passed the forestry building and descended down the steep road we stopped by a dried out creek where a dirt road went off to the right. We had just got out of the car when two Syrian Serins took off from a bush nearby. Fortunately, it didn't take long before they returned, and it proved to be a pair busy building a nest. That is, the female did the building with the male following close on her tail singing whenever he got the opportunity. Another male was also seen in the same area. Quite happy with the serins we returned to the guesthouse and spent the remaining time looking for raptors. An Egyptian Vulture, a Long-legged Buzzard, a Sparrowhawk and a few Steppe Eagles were on the move while two Short-toed Eagles were scanning the hillside for prey. Although looking hard for Lesser Kestrels among the local Kestrels flying about we did not find any. Neither did we see any Griffon Vultures, only their empty nest sites that was shown to us by the local guide.



Orange-tufted Sunbird, Dana



Syrian Serin, Dana



Egyptian Vulture, Dana

Heading north towards the airport we took the rather dull but faster Desert Highway to get there before dark. With little other than barren desert along the way we did however manage to see another Finch's Wheatear, a Temminck's Horned Lark and a couple of Masked Shrikes, the latter being so regular in all habitats throughout the trip. From the hotel room (!) we finally got the last addition to the trip list as we observed and heard 3 Stone-curlews on a nearby field as the sun set.

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