

Morocco 16th – 25th February 2007

Participants

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Arne, Stefan and Johan after seeing Northern Bald Ibis near Tamri. Jadang!
All photos by Olof Jönsson

Literature

We used Dave Gosney's "Finding Birds in Northern Morocco" and "Finding Birds in Southern Morocco" that cover most sites in the country. In addition, trip reports by Batty (2004) and Bonser (2005) were found most useful.

Itinerary

- 16.2 Copenhagen – Casablanca – Moulay Bouselham
- 17.2 Oued Loukkos – Merdja Zerga – Forêt de Sidi-Bettache
- 18.2 Forêt de Cedres – Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali – Col du Zad – Zeïda
- 19.2 Midelt – Erfoud – Rissani
- 20.2 Lake Merzouga – Café Caravan – Derkaoua
- 21.2 Derkaoua – Errachidia – Boulmane du Dades
- 22.2 Tagdilt Tracks – Ouarzazate – Sous Valley – Agadir
- 23.2 Oued Massa – Tamri – Oued Sous
- 24.2 Agadir – Oualidia – Casablanca
- 25.2 Casablanca - Copenhagen



Birding in the Atlas mountains.

Diary (Stefan Magnusson)

Friday 16th February

We leave Casablanca airport at about 15:00, about 1 hour later than expected due to problems getting our booked car at AVIS. Planned to start with Double-spurred Francolin but realise that time is getting to short. Instead aim north to reach Moulay Bousselham and Marsh Owl before dusk.

The roads are good but we have misjudged the distance and get a bit worried if we can reach the campsite in time. We enjoy a handful of Black-shouldered Kites and Common Bulbuls during the transport. Little Swift, Spotless Starling, Magpies (*mauretanica*) and Pallid Swifts just outside the airport terminal.

An enormous roost of well over 1000 Cattle Egrets somewhere along the road and quite a few Marsh Harriers over the fields.

We reach the campsite just in time and enjoy a calling Little Owl on a low wall a 100 metres from us. Not much time to find the owls before it gets dark. We manage to find “the only” present Marsh Owl at the campsite (according to the local guide Hassan) hunting over the fields. Some 7 owls should be present somewhere on the south side of the marsh but we never needed to visit them. A flock of Greater Flamingos feeding in the water.

If short on time it could be a time-saver to connect with some guide to get to this area. Another team of Swedish birders located these owls (with help from a guide) during morning hours.

Night at Hotel Le Lagon in Moulay Bousselham.

Saturday 17th February

Month's of expectations boiling in our bodies. Woke up at 04.00 (a good 2,5 hours before sunrise). Took a walk but realised that the dark of night was just as hard to watch birds in as at home.

Morning at Oued Loukkos proved just as fantastic as we had hoped. Red-knobbed Coot, Purple Gallinule, White-spotted Bluethroat, Subalpine Warbler, Glossy Ibis, Ferruginous Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Little Swift, White Wagtail (*subpersonata*), Whiskered Tern, Squacco Heron, Black-winged Stilt, Common Kingfisher and Great White Egret. A bunch of Spotless Starlings in a flock of commons and the difference in colour close to the difference between male and female Blackbirds!

Noon at Moulay Bousselham and a large roost of gulls present. Auduoin's Gulls and Slender-billed Gulls among lots of *graellsii* and *michahellis*. Most surprising a full-albino (*graellsii*) gull. We get harassed by a bunch of Common Bulbuls.

We reach Forêt de Sidi-Bettache - the site for Double-spurred Francolin - early evening (after some problems finding the right road). Amazingly two birds are flushed right from the parking-lot as our car drove in (and all managed to see the birds). Great! We spend an hour searching for the birds but they are not to be found. Barbary Partridge and Stone Curlew are heard.

The plan was to spend next morning here but as francolin already secured we drove the evening towards Atlas Mountains and a nice hotel just N Azrou (where we spent the night).



View over Oued Loukkos.

Sunday 18th February

Early mornings in Atlas. A short miss on the turnoff to Forêt de Cedres provided Long-legged Buzzard which surprised us with its small (common buzzard-like) proportions. Same applied for the Ravens. Wood Pigeon and a bit surprising a gang of Rock Sparrows in the surroundings of a mountain hut.

We reach Forêt de Cedres without further delays and without problems find a whole bunch of Levaillant's Green Woodpeckers, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Short-toed Treecreeper, Eurasian Nuthatch, Firecrest and Eurasian Jay.

To our delight we also find a bunch of Barbary Apes and spend a whole sack of peanuts to the delight of all parties. A singing Cirl Bunting and a few Blackcaps in the bushier parts. When checking out from the hotel a large falcon appears. Surprised (and a bit disappointed) to see it is "only" a Peregrine...

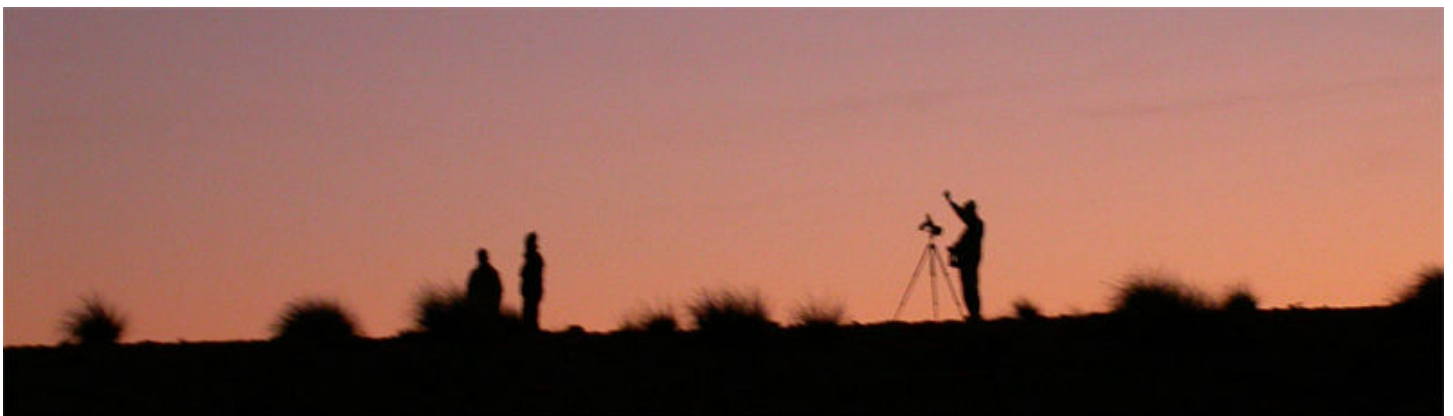
Drive south towards the desert. A short stop at Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali and a bunch of Ruddy Shelducks as well as Horned Larks and our first clinched Thekla Lark. We climb the mountains Just N of Col du Zad to get a shot at Crimson-winged Finch but fail. On a top, a bit surprising, Johan spots a group of 6 Egyptian Vultures up in the air. A migrating species not in many reports from Morocco.

Zeida at early evening. In mid town our first Lanner Falcon aiming at some pigeons. We spend an hour and a half on the plains to get views of Dupont's Lark but fail. A few magnificent Red-rumped Wheatears and quite some Lesser Short-toed Larks (a good flock of 160). Before completely dark we hear the first singing Dupont and their unrealistic sad song. When turning on the car we spot a Jackal in the car-lights right in front of us.

We spend the night in Midelt and have our first Tajine at dinner.



Barbary Ape in Fôret de Cedres.



Listening for Dupont's Lark at dusk.

Monday 19th February

The plan is to reach the desert so stops along the way are only short. As soon as we reach lower altitude birds are increasing. We manage to spot Black, Whitecrowned, Mourning and Desert Wheatears from the car (Mourning being a good bonus!). Two Choughs on a cliff-top. Desert Lark, House Bunting, more than a handful Blue Rock Thrush, Eurasian Crag Martin and a Little Swift flying into nest in a (the only?) car tunnel on the stretch. The second Lanner of the trip is sitting on a power-pylon.

The first real stop is a random wadi 10 km south of Erfoud. Our first flock of Trumpeter Finch, a pair of Southern Grey Shrike (one showing intermediate characters) and an out of place Little Ringed Plover. Stefan fascinated by some “bugs” approaching from a bush - but when finding out it actually is GIANT ticks - start panicking.

Check-in at a hotel in Rissani and another random Wadi 10 km S of Rissani (under a large bridge). Spectacled Warbler, Tristram’s Warbler, Sardinian Warbler, a female Moussier’s Redstart and Hoopoe the most exiting birds.

An older report tell us about a wadi 5 km west of Rissani where previously Pharaoh Eagle owl has been reported. We follow the mountain ridge a 2 km to the spot where the bird previously has been seen and scan the ridges without any luck.

As darknes fall we suddenly hear a distinct “bo-o” from the cliffs (but no bird visible). At dusk the calls are more frequent and just before (to) dark the bird flies of the cliff and over the top (gone in a second).

A really great experience and good surprise that the bird is still present!



Trumpeter Finch south of Erfoud.

Tuesday 20th February

In front of us the most exiting day of the whole trip!

We start by checking out the “Merzouga lake” (Dayet Srji) and to our surprise find it filled with water. Lots of birds present why we decide to walk all the way around the lake (a rough 12 km/4,5 h project it would turn out...). But still: Barbary Falcon, Marbled Teal, Ruddy Shelduck, Ferruginous Duck, Red-throated Pipit, Desert Wheatear and lots of waders on the first stretch. Olof calls for attention on a pale wheatear and to our surprise it is a good female Isabelline Wheatear. We continue around the lake and get a good bunch of common waders along with Spectacled Warbler, Lesser Short-toed Lark, Quail (10 in a tight flock!), a fly-by Cream-colored Courser, singing Hoopoe Lark, Stone Curlew to mention the most exiting.

Short before noon we set for the sand-dunes and the cafes to search for the Desert Sparrow. We make the mistake of driving through Merzouga and meet all kinds of crazy tourist-attracted people harassing us with different gestures, trying to break into our car and chasing us with motorcycles. The first two Laughing Doves of the trip stood out as the most intelligent creatures of the town.

Found our way in by a passage just N Merzouga (pick any towards the dunes!) and immediately got rewarded with two Cream-colored Cursors and a Hoopoe Lark just by the car. Soon found the sandy road towards the cafes (a 20 km drive). To our amusement we found ourselves in the middle of a large car-rally (several hundreds of cars) driving opposite us on the narrow sandy road. There was a mix of fear and amusement in driver Olof's eyes!



Soon reach the cafe/Kasbah "Caravan" just south of Jasmina where we got good advice from our fellow Swedes that the sparrows were present (apparently found after hours of search on a scan of frustration from a distance of 2 km. Good stuff!). After a short search we find the male on top of a goat house (4*4 m?) chasing away House Sparrows from its nest in a hole (where at least also a female was present). Wonderful - The target bird of the trip clinched!

We drive through the desert to reach the Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua (where we plan to spend the night), but as rain has started we are a bit misfortuned with other desert species.

Last site of the day is a wadi 500 m S Auberge Kasbah Said where some birders had had African Desert Warbler a few years ago. Again one of the most sought after species of the trip. We get lovely views of Hoopoe Lark and a male Desert Wheatear right where we park the car. After a short while Olof calls for attention on a small pale bird flying into a very small isolated bush. It seems to good to be true when the small orange warbler jumps out of the bush only 2 metres away from us, tails up, looking at us with its lemon-yellow eyes.

The feeling, you just cannot describe to a non-birdwatcher, is crawling all over our bodies!

We run around like machines in the wadi and when Stefan almost steps on an Egyptian Nightjar which flies for a few seconds and then perches on open ground 20 metres in front of us, we understand it just won't get any better (earliest reports say beginning/mid March for the species!). Another 1 or 2 African Desert Warblers in the wadi before we leave for the Kasbah.

Night at Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua. A bit expensive but nice and well worth it after this day. Served us the first beer of the trip! And the second and the third...



Sand dunes in Erg Chebbi.

Wednesday 21st February

Early morning at Wadi north of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua. Tristram's Warbler, Spectacled Warbler, Sardinian Warbler and Moussier's Redstart (of the more common wadi-inhabitants in this area). Also Desert Wheatear. The first Desert Lark along with the only Lesser Kestrel (male) of the trip.

We continue at Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua where Arne finds the first full adult male Moussier's Redstart of the trip (it took us several days!). Also the first Northern Wheatear of the trip. When leaving the Kasbah another Bar-tailed Desert Lark on the plains.

Next stop is some dry bushes just north of the road only 10 km W Errachidia (right where a milestone states "Guelmima 55"). This is the first site for a party of Fulvous Babblers (also Desert Wheatear and Northern Wheatear).

About 15 km further west another wadi with Fulvous Babblers (along with Desert Wheatear, Sylvias, Moussier's Redstart and Hoopoe).

Wadi 43 km west of Errachidia the third party of Fulvous Babblers (probably meaning this stretch – given some time - is very good for connecting with the species!). We gave this wadi a good walk (since Scrub Warbler and African Desert Warbler had been reported). We fail on these two but get good views on Desert Wheatear, Moussier's Redstart, Lesser Short-toed Lark, Hoopoe Lark, Spectacled Warbler, Bar-tailed Desert Lark, Desert Lark, Cream-coloured Courser. Best of all two male Thick-billed Larks that Johan hand-picks in the scrubs. A very good find since it probably will save us some time at Tagdilt tracks the next morning!

Night at Hotel La Vallée des Oiseaux in Boulmane de Dades. Cheap, dirty, damp and probably to cold even for the roaches... double-BRRR... Watch out for the prices as they tried to fool us to pay more than we should (a lesson you, unfortunately, should bring with you everywhere in Morocco).



Thick-billed lark west of Errachidia.

Thursday 22nd February

Early morning at Tagdilt track to find some Sandgrouses but since good with water everywhere we fail to locate any. The visit is only very brief since we soon find the goal species Temminck's Lark feeding just next to our car. Stefan shouting out "squirrel" on it to the delight of the other party-members... On the short time we saw two male Isabelline Wheatears and a Red-rumped Wheatear. Already before 09.00 we were driving towards Souss-Valley and Agadir.

Not much birding this day as we have quite a transport ahead of us. Still some good observations along the road. Arne finding the first Bonelli's Eagle of the trip near Tazenakht (an adult bird), a 50 Black Kites over Quarzazate and also one Black Stork flying over mid town. Beautiful!

We reach the mouth of the Souss valley and although hardly any good reports the last decade we search eagerly for the Dark Chanting Goshawk and (more seriously) for Tawny Eagle. Most noticeable a Short-toed

Eagle, some Black Kites and White Storks. Stefan in most appreciation of finally finding a scorpion after having turned a million stones during the trip. “Jadang”!

Early evening at the bridge over Oued Sous at Taroudant. Also called “The wadi of used diapers”. This a site where Red-necked Nightjar has been reported. We decide to give it a try but before dark spend some time in the wadi. Johan is quick on two Woodchat Shrikes. Spectacled Warbler as well as Sardinian Warbler (as in every wadi). A Little Owl is flushed and is later heard calling. Most fun is a flock(!) of 7 Hoopoes flying by. Certainly enjoyable in flock! We spend some time on a oddly marked small lark (probably a Short-toed) but it is a skilled skulker. Getting dark but no sounds from the Red-necked Nightjar. Suddenly find Olof jumping up in the air, shouting, as a large toad has confronted him in the complete darkness.

We try to avoid snakes, scorpions and diapers as we head for the car and drive the last 70 km into Agadir.

Night at Hotel les Palmiers in Agadir. We had a very good pizza at the nearby restaurant. Johan founding the most memorable expression “thank you, bonjour!” to flatter the waiter.

Friday 23rd February

Early wake-up as this is the last day of full birding. Three heavy species to encounter this day. Black-crowned Tchagra, Plain Martin and Bald Ibis. It is not without concern we schedule the day.

Just by the turnoff towards Oued Massa a young Great Spotted Cuckoo in a bush. Great start. When leaving the car we find seven (7!) birds around the bush! A Stone Curlew flying around. In the town of Massa a few Laughing Doves and soon (after some dwindling bad roads) we find ourselves on the parking lot of Oued Massa. Some new species of the trip: Spoonbill, Common Pochard, Little Grebe, Common Teal and Gadwall. Enormous amounts of warblers (most of the already seen species, but also one Subalpine Warbler). It does not take long until the first Black-crowned Tchagra flies by and lifts some burden of our shoulders. We enjoy a flock of Sandwich Terns actually with two adult Gull-billed Terns intermingled. Some Audouin’s Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*graellsii*) and a few Yellow-legged Gulls (*michahellis*). We see a lot of birds (mostly herons) flying out the channel towards the Atlantic coast but otherwise not much to mention. Our first Dunlin and Sanderlings.

Move on towards village of Massa but are struggling to find the “bridge” over the Oued as mentioned in some reports. We reach some fields behind the town and start walking towards the Oued (but it does not seem to be

the right spot). Wonderful views of the second Bonelli’s Eagle of the trip (this a 2 cy bird), Black-shouldered Kite, another Subalpine Warbler, Corn Bunting, Zitting Cisticola, another Great Spotted Cuckoo but the only brown Martins turn out to be Sand Martins.

We decide we have to walk back to the car and try to find the right spot just as a brown swallow with dark coverts and “plain” underside speed away over our heads. Someone instinctively shouts “Crag Martin!” and we all follow it until it disappears in a few seconds ...but wait a minute... As we are discussing the brief impressions we start to question the bird: What is a Crag Martin doing out over the fields? Shouldn’t we have seen windows on the tail? Wasn’t it too small and do Crag Martins ever practice that fluttering flight? It certainly had no breast-band... While the unpleasant feeling spreads in our bodies that we might have missed a Plain Martin we decide to chase after the bird. It does not take long until we find a few birds flying around (and even into holes in the sand). Small, brown Martins without breast bands, what a feeling!



Black-shouldered Kite in Massa.

We are now well ahead of schedule and decide to head for the last “blaster” of the trip (and the endangered population of Bald Ibis near Tamri). We get a fine in town Tamri for crossing a full-drawn line in mid town which is quite expensive (400 Dirham) on Moroccan money-level. Feels a bit awkward since it was the only way passing a parked lorry, but no wise man would start arguing... Soon (about 15.00) find ourselves 7 km N Tamri and start scanning fields and over the sea. Very soon Johan finds a few flocks of Bald Ibises flying over the sea!

Last site is the lagoons at Oued Souss and a shot at Red-necked Nightjar at dusk. We are surprised to see such amounts of birds present. Flamingos, Spoonbills, Black-winged Stilts, Audoin’s Gulls. Some good new species: Red-breasted Merganser(!), Pied Avocet, Bar-tailed Godwit and Ruddy Turnstone. But it is impossible to determine species in the smaller Calidris-flocks. The age-representation of 30 2 cy Mediterranean Gulls (and no older ones) surprises us.

Dark and we hear a distant “tocking” of Red-necked Nightjar from the palace gardens although a Stone Curlew doing its best to destroy all possibilities.



Northern Bald Ibises near Tamri.

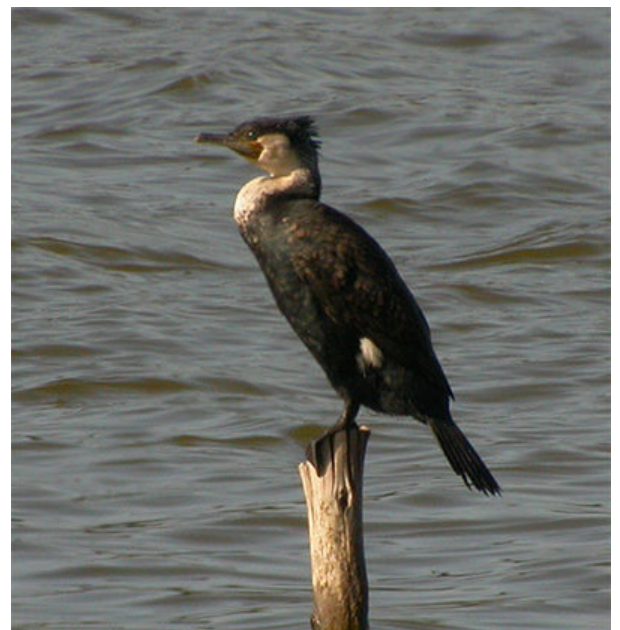
Saturday 24th February

Leave early from Agadir (05:00) for the (about) 600 km transport to Casablanca. About half way we find an area with about 40 Calandra Larks and rather good flocks of Corn Buntings. Some smaller larks on the roadsides but we do not stop to check them out (probably contributing to the dip on Short-toed Lark on this trip).

A few hundred metres from our stop to watch the Calandra Larks we get a tough reminder of the Moroccan traffic. A large truck has gone over the mid-line, forced out a meeting car from the road which in turn has hit a man beside the road. Crushing the windshield of the car and by the jerks of his body, we sadly understand he will not survive the hit.

You can not stress this enough: Expect the worse in Moroccan traffic! Roads are narrow and bad, trucks as a rule don’t stick to their side. There are children/people everywhere along (and even on) the roads. You find bikes, even motorcycles, in the complete darkness driving without any lights. People cross the roads without even taking notice of you. Cars make U-turns on the middle of the highways (without anywhere to go). It is a pity we had to drive into this on an otherwise wonderful trip to Morocco!

We drive on towards Casablanca along the coast and soon find the stretch of marshes north of Oualidia. Wetland pools with waders, gulls, ducks and herons. We make some shorter stops along the way and this indeed is a wonderful area! The most important (in order of appearance): Rock Sparrow, Marbled Teal, Red-crested Pochard, Common Shelduck,



“Moroccan” Great Cormorant.

Audoin's Gull, Slender-billed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, House Bunting, Quail, Caspian Tern, Greater Flamingo and Sandwich Tern. A small group of White-winged Black Terns creating some confusion (hardly in any reports but said to winter in numbers in Gambia). Olof sharp-eyed on a Marsh Sandpiper among good numbers of waders of different species. Claimed to winter in small numbers (but way-off our bird-book maps). Arne another good pick on a single Plain Martin, what a blaster if we hadn't seen it yesterday!

Stefan enjoying the possibility to shout out "Bonxie!" (Scottish for Great Skua) over the sea. Johan most fascinated by a persistent Zitting Cisticola claimed to have been following our car the whole day (these birds are everywhere!).

We aim to find a good spot to seawatch from on the last hours of this trip but the unpleasant traffic-incident of the morning has pushed us a bit off focus on the birds.

Night at Hotel Atlas close to the airport. Good standard and still a quite fair price (about 500 Dirham a person).

Sunday 25th February

Flight home. Through the airport windows we see a larger flock of Pallid Swifts. Leaving this, there really is only one thing more to say:

"Thank you, bonjour!"

Species list (*Olof Jönsson*)

- 1. Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*
2 Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2, 60 on alpine meadows between Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali and Col du Zad 18.2, 70 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 1 Café Yasmina 20.2.
- 2. Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*
5 Oualidia 24.2. One of the birds was shot wounded and couldn't fly away as it tried to get away from a dog. A hunter in the area was carrying two dead ones as well...
- 3. Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*
2 Dayet Srji 20.2.
- 4. Gadwall** *Anas strepera*
1 pair Oued Massa 23.2 and 1 male Oualidia 24.2.
- 5. Common Teal** *Anas crecca*
3 Oued Massa 23.2 and 7 Oualidia 24.2.
- 6. Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
50 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 100 on different locations along the road between Azrou and Midelt 18.2, 10 Oued Massa 23.2 and 50 Oualidia 24.2.



Ruddy Shelduck in Dayet Srji.

7. **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*
40 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 8 Dayet Srji 20.2, 2 males Oued Massa 23.2 and 3 Oualidia 24.2.
8. **Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*
100 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 50 Oued Loukkos 24.2.
9. **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*
12 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 8 Oualidia 24.2. Apart from these observations the species is often seen in Oued Massa and Lac de Sidi Bou Ghaba (Gosney Northern, page 10).
10. **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*
20 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 10 Oualidia 24.2.
11. **Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*
30 Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2, 30 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 30 Oued Massa 23.2.
12. **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*
4 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 3 Dayet Srji 20.2.
13. **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*
2 Oued Massa 23.2.
14. **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*
1 female flew westwards at Oued Sous 23.2. Quite a surprise!
15. **Barbary Partridge** *Alectoris barbara*
1 calling bird heard from the “parking lot” in Forêt de Sidi-Bettache 17.2 and 5 flushed at Oued Massa 23.2.
16. **Double-spurred Francolin** *Francolinus bicalcaratus ayesha*
2 birds were flushed in late afternoon at the “parking lot” between Sidi-Yahya and Sidi-Bettache 17.2 (Gosney Northern, page 11, site 1). No birds were heard at dusk even though we stayed in the area until it got dark. We got really lost trying to find this place! The biggest problem for us was to find the village of Sidi-Yahya from Temara and I don’t know how we got there, but we did. Coming from Temara, there is a roundabout just before Sidi-Yahya with a sign towards Sidi-Bettache. Drive towards Sidi-Bettache and you will soon reach Sidi-Yahya. In Sidi-Yahya it is VERY IMPORTANT that you take the right turn signposted in Arabic just at the end of the downward slope pretty much in the middle of the village. You will soon know if you are on the right road if you see any stones with the distance to Sidi-Bettache written on them. If you have found the right road you can use the description in Gosney from here. I’m afraid we can’t provide any description on how to go to Sidi-Yahya from Temara since we got really lost there...
17. **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*
13 flushed at Dayet Srji 20.2 and 2 calling in the afternoon at Oualidia 24.2.
18. **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
5 Oued Massa 23.2 were the only ones we saw.
19. **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

4 Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2.

20. **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus*
5 Moulay Bouselham 17.2, 10 Oued Massa 23.2, 5 Tamri 23.2 and 5 Cap Bedouza 24.2. Unfortunately we were unlucky with the winds so we didn't get any good seawatching.
21. **Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*
20 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 20 along the coast between Oued Massa and Tamri 23.2 and 10 Oualidia 24.2.

Moroccan Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus*
10 Oued Massa 23.2 and 5 Oualidia.
22. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
Very common except in mountain and desert areas. Daily totals: 2000 16.2, 1000 17.2, 50 18.2, 10 19.2, 40 22.2, 500 23.2 and 500 24.2.
23. **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*
5 Oued Loukkos 17.2. The birds were seen flying over the reeds where the marshy area begins on your right hand side as you are driving along the Oued from the bridge.
24. **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
50 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 east of Tazenakht 22.2, 5 Oued Massa 23.2 and 40 around Oualidia 24.2.
25. **Great Egret** *Egretta alba*
1 Oued Loukkos 17.2. Still rather rare in Morocco.
26. **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*
10 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2, 1 Errachidia 19.2, 5 Oued Massa 23.2, 15 Oued Sous 23.2 and 10 Oualidia 24.2.
27. **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*
1 adult migrating north with black kites Ouarzazate 22.2. A nice surprise!
28. **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*
Rather common. 100 on different locations 17.2, 60 migrating north Col du Zad plus an additional 40 along the road 18.2, 40 along the road 19.2, 100 landing in late afternoon to spend the night in the Sous Valley plus an additional 10 along the road 22.2 and 2 south of Casablanca 24.2.
29. **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*
250 Oued Loukkos 17.2.
30. **Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita*
20 flying over the sea off the cliffs 7 km north of Tamri 23.2. The birds are easy to see in the Tamri area. Search in the Tamri lagoon west of the village, from the road along the fields the nearest 9 km north of Tamri or at the cliffs 9 km north of Tamri.
31. **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*
4 Oued Massa 23.2 and 67 Oued Sous 23.2.
32. **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*

30 Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 100 Moulay Bouselham 17.2, 12 Oued Sous 23.2 and 70 Oualidia 24.2.

33. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Totally 16 birds seen. 5 along the road between Casablanca and Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 1 pair Larache 17.2, 3 along the road between Moulay Bouselham and Sidi-Yahya 17.2, 1 Fôret de Sidi-Bettache 17.2, 1 Sous Valley 22.2, 1 pair west of Massa 23.2, 1 east of Safi 24.2 and 1 south of Casablanca 24.2.

34. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Totally 45 migrating north around Ouarzazate 22.2 and 50 circling over the Sous Valley in late afternoon 22.2.

35. Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

6 adults migrating north together over Col du Zad 18.2. A really nice surprise!

36. Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

1 rather early individual was hunting in the Sous Valley 22.2.

37. Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Common except in mountain and desert areas. A total of 60 birds were seen, for example 20 Oued Loukkos 17.2.

38. Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Totally 11 birds were seen, 1-3 daily except around the Erg Chebbi area.

39. Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus cirtensis*

4 around Forêt de Cedres 18.2, 4 along the road between Midelt and Errachidia 19.2, 1 west of Errachidia 21.2 and 2 in the Sous Valley 22.2.

40. Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus*

1 adult west of Tazenakht 22.2 and a 2nd c.y. bird Oued Massa 23.2.

41. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

1 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 2 Oued Massa 23.2 and 1 Oued Sous 23.2.

42. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

1 adult male north of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2.

43. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

A total of 120 birds seen. Daily observations in various numbers.

44. Merlin *Falco columbarius*

1 female east of Safi 24.2.



Long-legged Buzzard near Fôret de Cedres.

45. **Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus erlangeri*
1 adult Zeïda 18.2 and 1 adult north of Errachidia 19.2.

46. **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus brookei*
1 adult north of Azrou 18.2.

47. **Barbary Falcon** *Falco pelegrinoides*
1 adult Dayet Srji 20.2.

48. **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*
2 heard Oued Loukkos 17.2.

49. **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
10 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 4 Oued Massa
23.2 and 5 Oualidia 24.2.

50. **Purple Swamp-hen** *Porphyrio porphyrio porphyrio*
8 Oued Loukkos 17.2.

51. **Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*
2 among red-knobbed coots in Oued
Loukkos 17.2, about 5 heard from pond
in Forêt de Sidi-Bettache 17.2, 100 Lac
Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2, 80 Dayest
Srji 20.2, 100 Oued Massa 23.2 and 60
Oualidia 24.2.

52. **Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata*
Approximately 500 in Oued Loukkos
17.2. Only 2 common coots were found
among them!



Red-knobbed Coot in Oued Loukkos.

53. **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*
15 Moulay Bouselham 17.2, 50 Oued Sous 23.2 and 30 around Oualidia 24.2.

54. **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
200 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 25 Dayet Srji 20.2, 1 Oued Massa 23.2, 40 Oued Sous 23.2 and 50 Oualidia 24.2.

55. **Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*
1 Oued Sous 23.2.

56. **Stone-curlew** *Burhinus oediconemus saharae*
2 flying around calling at dusk in Forêt de Sidi-Bettache 17.2, 1 seen Dayet Srji 20.2, 3 flying around calling at dusk east of the bridge over Oued Sous at Taroudant 22.2, about 10 heard at dusk near the Royal Palace at Oued Sous 23.2 and finally 1 heard at Hotel Atlas near Mohammed V Airport, Casablanca 24.2.

57. **Cream-coloured Courser** *Cursorius cursor*
1 flying by at Dayet Srji 20.2, 2 north of Merzouga 20.2 and 7 in wadi 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2.
58. **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
1 in wadi south of Erfoud 19.2 and 10 Dayet Srji 20.2.
59. **Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*
1 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 5 Moulay Bouselham 17.2, 100 Oualidia 24.2 and 20 Cap Bedouza 24.2.
60. **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
50 Dayet Srji 20.2, 2 Café Yasmina 20.2, 3 Oued Massa 23.2 and 50 Oualidia 24.2.
61. **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
1 Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 5 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 35 Oued Sous 23.2 and 50 in and around Oualidia 24.2.
62. **Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*
6 Oued Loukkos 17.2.
63. **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*
20 Oualidia 24.2.
64. **Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
5 Oued Massa 23.2 and 200 north of Safi 24.2.
65. **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
50 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 300 Oualidia 24.2.
66. **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*
1 Oued Massa 23.2 and 100 Oualidia 24.2.
67. **Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*
2 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 25 Oualidia 24.2.
68. **Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*
10 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 3 Oualidia 24.2.
69. **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa limosa*
60 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 6 Dayet Srji 20.2, 5 Oued Massa 23.2, 2 Oued Sous 23.2 and 25 Oualidia 24.2.
70. **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*
1 Oued Sous 23.2 and 5 Oualidia 24.2.
71. **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
1 Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 1 Oued Sous 23.2 and 5 Oualidia 24.2.
72. **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
10 Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 5 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 10 Moulay Bouselham 18.2, 5 Oued Sous 23.2 and 20 Oualidia 24.2.

73. **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*
2 Dayet Srji 20.2.
74. **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
1 Moulay Bousselham 16.2, 15 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 50 Oued Sous 23.2 and 70 Oualidia 24.2.
75. **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
1 Oualidia 24.2. Quite rare in Morocco.
76. **Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
1 Moulay Bousselham 16.2, 4 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 25 Dayet Srji 20.2, 2 Oued Massa 23.2, 2 Oued Sous 23.2 and 25 Oualidia 24.2.
77. **Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
2 Oud Loukkos 17.2, 6 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 2 Oued Sous 23.2.
78. **Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
2 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 1 Oualidia 24.2.
79. **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
2 Oud Loukkos 17.2, 2 Oued Massa 23.2, 1 Oued Sous 23.2 and 1 Cap Bedouza 24.2.
80. **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
2 Oued Sous 23.2 and 50 along the coast north of Safi and in Oualidia 24.2.
81. **Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*
1 flying north north of Safi 24.2. An unidentified skua seen at Oued Massa 23.2 was probably a great skua. Unfortunately we were unlucky with the winds so we didn't get any good seawatching.
82. **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*
30 2nd c.y. birds at Oued Sous 23.2 and 2 adults + 3 2nd c.y. birds at Oualidia 24.2.
83. **Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*
Pretty common along the Atlantic coast.
Not seen further inland.
84. **Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*
20 adults Moulay Bousselham 17.2, 10 adults Oued Sous 23.2 and 34 adults + 1 2nd c.y. bird Oualidia 24.2.
85. **Audouin's Gull** *Larus audouinii*
250 Moulay Bousselham 17.2, 30 Oued Massa 23.2, 10 Tamri 23.2, 10 Oued Sous 23.2 and 300 along the coast north of Safi and in the Oualidia area 24.2.



Roosting Gulls in front of a wild Atlantic Ocean.

86. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graellsii*
Very common along the Atlantic coast where thousands were seen daily. No records elsewhere. The other Swedish crew estimated that they saw more than 50000(!) birds around the harbour in Agadir one day!
87. **Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*
Common along the Atlantic coast, but not even close as common as lesser black-backed.
88. **Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*
2 adults among sandwich terns at Oued Massa 23.2.
89. **Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*
10 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 1 Oualidia 24.2.
90. **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*
2 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 10 Moulay Bouselham 17.2, 50 Oued Massa 23.2, 5 Oued Sous 23.2 and 30 Oualidia 24.2.
91. **Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*
1 Oued Loukkos 17.2.
92. **White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*
4 adults Oualidia 23.2. Surprising!
93. **Rock Dove** *Columba livia livia*
Flocks without apparent feral birds in them where 50 south of Col du Zad 19.2, 100 Tagdilt Tracks 22.2 and 50 Tazenakht 22.2. Feral birds seen daily in various numbers.
94. **Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*
3 Forêt de Cedres 18.2.
95. **Common Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus excelsa*
A total of 10 birds on different locations 17.2, 1 Forêt de Cedres 17.2 and 1 pair Oued Massa 23.2.
96. **Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*
Very common. Tens of birds seen daily, some days well over 100.
97. **Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis phoenicophila*
5 Merzouga 20.2, 3 Café Dunes d'Or 20.2, 2 Ouarzazate 22.2, 10 Oued Massa 23.2 and 2 east of Safi 24.2.
98. **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius*
7 together (!) east of Massa 23.2 and 1 Oued Massa 23.2. The seven birds were seen from the road from the main road towards Massa.



Great Spotted Cuckoo east of Massa.

99. (Pharao) Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo ascalaphus*

1 calling 5 km west of Rissani 19.2. The bird started calling at dusk and was calling for about 10 minutes. Joppo managed to get a short glimpse of it as it flew off westwards over the ridge to go hunting. Drive north from Rissani towards Erfoud. After you have left the town you will soon see a Ziz petrol station on your left. Just before the petrol station there is a road to the left, signposted towards Alnif and a few other places. Set your trip meter here and drive 4,9 km on this road until you reach a small bridge over a wadi near the “Alnif 84” km stone, park your car here. On the right you will have a ridge following the wadi on its west side. Walk north in the wadi for about 2 km until the ridge makes a rather sharp left turn, it almost looks like the ridge ends here but it doesn't. A few hundred meters further ahead you will see a low ridge on your right and some larger hills, maybe 15 m high, in front of you. Climb the first hill and face the cliffs. If you look a little to the left you will see some strange formations in the cliffs. To the left of these there is a small cave which is supposed to be the owls favourite cave. Before you reach the hill there is also spelled out with rocks in the sand “Eagle owl” and an arrow pointing towards the cave. As far as we know this site has been reliable for quite a few years now.



Little Owl, Taroudant.

100. Little Owl *Athene noctua glaux*

1 calling bird seen and heard at the campsite near Moulay Bousselham 16.2, 1 flying by in front of the car south of Larache at dawn 17.2 and 1 calling seen and heard east of the bridge over Oued Sous in Taroudant 22.2. The pale subspecies *saharae* occurs in desert areas in southern Morocco but we unfortunately didn't see any.

101. Marsh Owl *Asio capensis tingitanus*

1 seen hunting at dusk southeast of the campsite east of Moulay Bousselham 16.2 (Gosney Northern, page 6, site 3). At the site we met the Moroccan birder Hassan Dalil who wanted to guide us to the owls. After we surprised him by finding the bird he told us that only one bird had been roosting at the campsite lately. Apparently we were lucky enough to find that specific bird! Most of the birds nowadays roost in a marsh somewhere south of the channel that connects Merdja Zerga with the Atlantic. However, a Swedish crew saw 12 birds fly out from the campsite at dusk on November 25th 2006 so maybe the owls still use the site to roost from time to time. 4 birds were seen on day roost at the south end of Merdja Zerga 3.4 2005 (Gosney Northern, page 7, site 5) in the first area of juncus on your left side as you walk from the car park towards site 5. Other sites to find this species is at Barga where for example a Finnish crew saw 15 roosting birds in daylight on November 26th 2006 or at Lac du Sidi Bourghaba where a few single birds were seen hunting in 2006. Unfortunately we don't have any further specific information to provide about the alternative sites. Hassan Dalil, who can be found east of the campsite (he'll probably find you) can guide you to the alternative site at Merdja Zerga, against payment off course.

- 102. Red-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruficollis*
1 distant bird heard singing briefly along the wall of the Royal Palace at Oued Sous at dusk 23.2.
- 103. Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius saharae*
1 bird flushed in wadi south of Auberge Kasbah Said in pouring rain in the afternoon 20.2. Amazing! The area around Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua (Gosney Southern, page 27, site 3) and Auberge Kasbah Said is probably the best place in Morocco to find this species. Although all literature we have available says that the Nightjars don't arrive before March we were going to stay the night at Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua between 20.2 and 21.2 to make a desperate try to hear them in the nearby area or see them hawk insects over the pool during the night. We were a bit disappointed as the rain was pouring down almost all day on the 20th so you can only imagine our happiness as Stefan flushed the bird at Auberge Kasbah Said shortly after we had found an African Desert Warbler in the same wadi! For site description, see African Desert Warbler.
- 104. Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus brehmorum*
Common near the coast. Our only inland observation was 2 near Col du Zad 18.2.
- 105. Little Swift** *Apus affinis galilejensis*
1 Mohammed V Airport, Casablanca 16.2, 2 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 1 probably nesting bird was seen flying into the road tunnel between Tizi-n-Tahlremt and Errachidia 19.2.
- 106. Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*
4 at Oued Loukkos 17.2.
- 107. Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*
1 north of Errachidia 19.2, 1 south of Rissani 19.2, 1 Dayet Srji 20.2, 2 Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 1 along the road west of Errachidia 21.2, 2 Tagdilt Tracks 22.2, 4 along the road between Ouarzazate and the Sous Valley 22.2, 7 birds together east of the bridge over Oued Sous in Taroudant 22.2 and 1 east of Safi 24.2.
- 108. Levaillant's Green Woodpecker** *Picus vaillantii*
Easy to find in Fôret de Cedres. At least 8 birds were seen and heard there on the morning 18.2. Drive south from Azrou into the forest and turn right at the sign for the forest reserve. We had birds on every stop we made for a few km along this track.
- 109. Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major mauritanus*
3 in Fôret de Cedres 18.2.
- 110. Bar-tailed Lark** *Ammomanes cincturua arenicolor*
1 west of the wadi north of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 1 west of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 1 south of Errachidia 21.2, 2 at the "Guelmima 55" stone west of Errachidia 21.2, 1 pair south of the road in the wadi 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2. None were seen on our day in Erg Chebbi 20.2 due to rainy and windy conditions.



Levaillant's Green Woodpecker.

111. **Desert Lark** *Ammomanes deserti payni*
4 along the road between Tizi-n-Tahlremt and Errachidia 19.2, 10 on different locations west of Errachidia 21.2 and 1 east of Taznakht 22.2.
112. **Greater Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes alaudipes*
1 singing Dayet Srji 20.2, 1 north of Merzouga 20.2, 1 in the wadi south of Auberge Kasbah Said 20.2 and 6 in the wadi 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2.
113. **Dupont's Lark** *Chersophilus duponti*
2-3 singing birds heard east of the main road (we never listened west of the road) at the classic location 3 km south of Zeïda at dusk 18.2. The birds started singing at late dusk and were still singing when we left 20 minutes later. The subspecies in Morocco is supposed to be *duponti* but some observers who have seen the birds in Zeïda claim that they are more rufous coloured than a normal *duponti*.
114. **Thick-billed Lark** *Ramphocoris clotbey*
2 on the immediate west side of the wadi, north of the road, 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2 and 4 on the plain 21 km east of Tazenakht 22.2.
115. **Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra*
60 on the fields along the road to Safi 24.2.
116. **Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens minor*
160 south of Zeïda 18.2, 15 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 30 in wadi 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2.
117. **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*
Noted all days except 18.2 when we mostly were birding in stony terrain on higher altitude. The “crested” larks we identified this day were all thekla larks. At least 5 different subspecies of Crested Lark occur in Morocco, of which the pale and long-billed *riggenbachi* in the southeast was the most spectacular.
118. **Thekla Lark** *Galerida theklae*
Positively identified birds were noted on all days except the two first when we didn't take any time to look at the crested larks due to all the other new birds and impressions that we had around us all the time. We found the species rather common in rocky terrain on higher altitude on 18.2 and 19.2. At least four different subspecies occur in Morocco.
119. **Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea pallida*
1 singing Fôret de Cedres 18.2.
120. **Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis harterti*
1 pair in wadi 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2.
121. **Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris atlas*
4 Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2 and 3 Col du Zad 18.2.
122. **Temminck's Lark** *Eremophila bilopha*
2 Tagdilt Tracks 22.2. Due to lack of time we had to leave the tracks and continue westwards after enjoying these beautiful creatures. Additional time on the Boulmane plains would for sure have produced a lot higher numbers of this species.



Temminck's and Greater Hoopoe Larks at Tagdilt Tracks and Errachidia, respectively.

- 123. Plain Martin** *Riparia paludicola mauretania*
 4 west of Massa 23.2 and 1 very worn individual (2nd c.y. bird?) on the east side of the central parts of the wetlands north of Oualidia 24.2. The birds at Massa were flying around together in a flock close to a hole in an old sand bank most of the time. On one occasion one of the birds flew in to the hole shortly so they were probably breeding there. The place was about 1 km west of the central parts of the village Massa. Unfortunately we can't provide any detailed road directions to the site since we got lost both on our way to and from the place! The other Swedish crew had about 20 individuals around the ponds east of the bridge over Oued Massa south of Massa 21.2 (Gosney Southern, page 11, site 9). We never tried this site but apparently it is still the most reliable one.
- 124. Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*
 30 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 30 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 20 Oued Massa 23.2.
- 125. Eurasian Crag Martin** *Hirundo rupestris*
 5 south of Tizi-n-Tahlremt 19.2 and about 10 in and around Tazenakht 22.2.
- 126. Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
 Common all days except 18.2 and 19.2 when no birds were seen.
- 127. Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*
 1 Oued Loukkos 17.2.
- 128. Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*
 20 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 Col du Zad 18.2, 3 north of Errachidia 19.2, 10 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 1 Oued Massa 23.2.
- 129. Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*
 1 Dayet Srji 20.2 and 1 Oued Massa 23.2.

130. **Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*
25 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 5 Dayet Srji 20.2.

131. **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*
At least 2 Dayet Srji 20.2.

132. **(Spanish) Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava iberiae*
30 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 25 Dayet Srji 20.2, 1 at the
Bridge over Oued Sous at Taroudant 22.2, 1 Oued
Massa 23.2 and 15 Oualidia 24.2.

133. **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*
Singles seen every day in all possible habitats.
Common most days.



Moroccan White Wagtail, Oued Loukkos.

Moroccan White Wagtail *Motacilla alba subpersonata*
1 pair Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 male north of Errachidia 19.2 and 1 male north of Rissani 21.2.

134. **Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*
Common in plantations and near larger settlements. Seen all days except our mountain day 18.2 and
desert day 20.2.

135. **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*
1 Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 10 on different locations 17.2, 5 Fôret de Cedres 18.2 and 1 Errachidia 19.2.

136. **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica cyanecula*
2 males of this beautiful subspecies were seen at Oued Loukkos 17.2.

137. **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros atterimus*
1 male Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 male and
1 female Moulay Bouselham 17.2, 1
male north of Azrou 18.2, 1 female in
wadi 5 km west of Rissani 19.2, 5 on
different locations between Rissani and
Boulmane de Dades 21.2, 5 on different
locations between Boulmane de Dades
and the Sous Valley 22.2 and 1 female
Massa 23.2.



138. **Moussier's Redstart** *Phoenicurus moussieri*
1 female in wadi 10 km east of Rissani
19.2, 1 pair Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua
21.2, 1 pair and 3 females on different
locations along the road west of
Errachidia 21.2, 10 on different
locations along the road between
Boulmane de Dades and the Sous
Valley 22.2 and about 10 at Oued
Massa 23.2. We didn't see any in the north.

Moussier's Redstart, Souss Valley.

- 139. Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus rubicola*
10 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 4 Forêt de Sidi-Bettache 17.2, 1 pair south of Errachidia 19.2, 1 pair along the road west of Errachidia 21.2 and 2 pairs at Oued Massa 23.2.
- 140. Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*
1 female Dayet Srji 20.2 and 2 males Tagdilt Tracks 22.2. This species is supposed to be a rarity in Morocco outside Western Sahara...
- 141. Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*
1 male Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 1 male west of Errachidia 21.2 and 1 east of Safi 24.2.
- 142. Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti homochroa*
1 male south of Erfoud 19.2, 1 male and 1 female Dayet Srji 20.2, 1 male in wadi south of Auberge Kasbah Said 20.2, 1 pair, 4 males and 1 female along the road from Errachidia and 70 km westwards 21.2 and 10 along the road between Tagdilt Tracks and the Sous Valley 22.2.
- 143. Red-rumped Wheatear** *Oenanthe moesta*
2 pairs and 1 male 3 km south of Zeïda 19.2 and 1 pair Tagdilt Tracks 22.2. More time at Tagdilt Tracks would for sure have produced more of this beautiful species.
- 144. (Western) Mourning Wheatear** *Oenanthe lugens halophila*
1 male along the road north of Errachidia, found from the car! Due to lack of time we never stopped to search for this species between Boulmane de Dades and Tazenakht which is supposed to be the best place for them, especially the area east of Ouarzazate.
- 145. White-crowned Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucopyga aegra*
Very common in the southeast. 60 along the road between Errachidia and Rissani 19.2, 15 around Erg Chebbi 20.2, 20 from Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua to Boulmane de Dades 21.2 and 15 from Boulmane de Dades to the Sous Valley 22.2.
- 146. Black Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucura syenitica*
10 between Tizi-n-Tahlremt and Errachidia 19.2 and 5 around Tazenakht 22.2.
- 147. Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*
3 males and 1 female along the road between Tizi-n-Tahlremt and Errachidia 19.2, 1 male Errachidia 19.2, 1 male Erfoud 19.2, 1 male Rissani 19.2 and 1 male Ouarzazate 22.2.
- 148. Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus torquatus*
4 just north of Tizi-n-Tahlremt 19.2. The subspecies *alpestris* is sometimes reported from Morocco in the winter.
- 149. Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula mauretanicus*
Common, about 10 birds seen or heard daily.
- 150. Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*
2 north of Errachidia 19.2, 1 Oued Massa 23.2 and 1 Oualidia 24.2.
- 151. Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus deichleri*
2 pairs Fôret de Cedres 18.2.



Previous page: Western Mourning, Desert, Red-rumped, Black and White-crowned Black Wheatears.

152. **Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*
5 Oued Loukkos 17.2 and 3 Oued
Massa 23.2.

153. **Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*
cisticola
5 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 Temara 17.2,
about 30 Oued Massa 23.2 and about 30
along the road from Safi to Casablanca
24.2.

154. **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus*
schoenobaenus
10 Oued Loukkos 17.2, but no
moustached warblers.

155. **European Reed Warbler**
Acrocephalus scirpaceus
2 singing in small reed bed west of
Massa village 23.2.



Tristram's Warbler east of Rissani.

156. **Tristram's Warbler** *Sylvia deserticola*
1 in wadi 10 km east of Rissani 19.2, 2 in wadi 5 km west of Rissani 19.2, 1 in wadi south of Auberge
Kasbah Said 20.2 and 1 in wadi north of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2.

157. **Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia*
conspicillata
1 pair in wadi 10 km east of Rissani
19.2, 15 Dayet Srji 20.2, 1 north of
Merzouga 20.2, 5 in wadi south of
Auberge Kasbah Said 20.2, 2 in wadi
north of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua
21.2, 8 along the road west of
Errachidia 21.2, 1 pair and 1 female in
the Sous Valley 22.2, 1 at the bridge
over Oued Sous at Taroudant 22.2 and 2
at Oued Massa 23.2.



158. **Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*
cantillans
1 male Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 male in
wadi 10 km east of Rissani 19.2 and 2
males Oued Massa 23.2. All with pale
reddish throat and breast but no calls.

Subalpine Warbler, Oued Loukkos.

- 159. Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala melanocephala*
 1 male Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 female north of Errachidia 19.2, 1 pair and 1 male in wadi 10 km east of Rissani 19.2, 1 male in wadi west of Rissani 19.2, 1 male in wadi north of Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 1 pair Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 1 male west of Errachidia 21.2, 5 in the Sous Valley 22.2, a total of 20 birds between Oued Massa and Tamri 23.2 and 5 along the coast between Safi and Casablanca 24.2.
- 160. African Desert Warbler** *Sylvia deserti*
 3 in wadi south of Auberge Kasbah Said 20.2. Afterwards we found out that a group of Dutch birders saw 5-6 African Desert Warblers in the same wadi a few days before us. The wadi is apparently the best place to see this species for the moment, even though it is still reported regularly from Dayet Srji. We also searched for the species at Dayet Srji by walking around the whole lake and criss-crossing through grass, scrub and bushes, but without any luck. To find the wadi south of Auberge Kasbah Said you should drive to 3 km north from Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua until you reach Auberge Kasbah Said. From here, take a track just east of the Auberge and drive back south for about 450 m until you cross a wadi with pretty much sandy area in it. We walked westwards in the wadi and it didn't take us many minutes before we had twitched both African Desert Warbler and Egyptian Nightjar!



African Desert Warbler south of Auberge Kasbah Said and Fulvous Babbler west of Errachidia.

- 161. Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*
 10 Forêt de Cedres 18.2, 4 north of Errachidia 19.2, 1 female in the Sous Valley 22.2 and 5 from Oued Massa to Tamri 23.2.
- 162. Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*
 Common. 10 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 2 Moulay Bousselham 17.2, 15 from Midelt to Rissani 19.2, 10 in Erg Chebbi 20.2, 10 from Derkaoua to Boulmane de Dades 21.2, 5 from Boulmane de Dades to the Sous Valley 22.2, 30, mainly in Oued Massa, 23.2 and 10 around Safi and Oualidia 24.2.
- 163. Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla balearicus*
 5 Forêt de Cedres 18.2.

164. Fulvous Babbler *Turdoides fulva maroccanus*

11 in an area with high, scrubby bushes a few km west of Errachidia, just north of the “Guelmima 55” stone 21.2, 10 just south of the road in a wadi 15 km further west 21.2 and 3 north of the road in the wadi 43 km west of Errachidia 21.2. We made four stops along the road west of Errachidia of which tree produced fulvous babblers so the area is obviously very good for this species! If you make a stop in this area in suitable habitat they shouldn't be very hard to find. We also made a full search at the former good location for this species, Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua and in its surroundings, without finding any babblers.

165. Coal Tit *Parus ater atlas*

About 20 birds were seen and heard in Fôret de Cedres 18.2.

166. African Blue Tit *Parus teneriffae ultramarinus*

1 Moulay Bousselham 17.2, 1 north of Temara 17.2, 1 Sidi-Yahya 17.2, 1 south of Azrou 18.2, 1 Fôret de Cedres 18.2, 1 north of Azrou 18.2, 1 south of Tizi-n-Tahlremt 19.2, 1 north of Errachidia 19.2 and 1 in the wadi 5 km west of Rissani 19.2.

167. Great Tit *Parus major excelsus*

2 Fôret de Cedres 18.2, 1 Aoulouz 22.2, 2 Oued Massa 23.2 and 1 Safi 24.2.

168. Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea atlas*

7 Fôret de Cedres 18.2.



Eurasian Nuthatch, Forêt de Cedres.

169. Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla mauretunica*

1 singing Larache 17.2 and 10 in Fôret de Cedres 18.2.

170. Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus cucullata*

4 singing (only 2 seen) along the path in the reserve area at Oued Massa 23.2 and 2 singing birds heard west of the village Massa 23.2. The area is doubtlessly one of the best to find this species in!

171. Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*

Lanius meridionalis algeriensis

3 along the road between Temara and Fôret de Sidi-Bettache 17.2, about 40 on different locations between Boulmane de Dades and the Sous valley (mainly in the Sous Valley) 20.2, 3 Oued Massa 23.2 and 5 along the road between Agadir and Casablanca 24.2. We can't exclude that a few of the birds seen in the east 20.2 might have been intermediate birds between the subspecies *algeriensis* and *elegans*.

Lanius meridionalis elegans

1 south of Erfoud 19.2 and 10 along the road west of Errachidia 21.2. Due to the location a few of the birds 21.2 might have been intermediate birds between the subspecies *algeriensis* and *elegans*.

Lanius meridionalis algeriensis × *elegans*

1 bird showing intermediate characters in pair with an *elegans* in wadi south of Erfoud 19.2.



Southern Grey Shrike.

172. Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator senator*

1 male and 1 female were seen east of the bridge over Oued Sous at Taroudant 22.2.

173. Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius whitakeri*

5 Fôret de Cedres 18.2. Some claim that the birds in the area are showing intermediate characters between the subspecies *whitakeri* and *minor*. We only got brief views of the birds from underneath so we never got any opportunity to determine their head pattern.

174. (Moroccan) Common Magpie *Pica pica mauretunica*

20 along the road between Casablanca and Moulay Bouselham 16.2, 15 on different locations in the north 17.2, 12 in the Sous Valley 22.2 and about 20 from Oued Massa to Tamri 23.2.

175. Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax barbarus*

2 south of Tizi-n-Tahlremt 19.2.

176. Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula spormolagus*

1 Larache 17.2 and 40 Azrou 18.2.



“Moroccan” Common Magpie.

- 177. Common Raven** *Corvus corax tingitanus*
Common in the north 16.2-18.2, 2 Tamri 23.2 and 5 around Safi 24.2. 1 pair was seen briefly over the ridge in the wadi 5 km west of Rissani 19.2. Due to the location they most certainly were brown-necked ravens but the birds sounded like common ones. Que?
- 178. Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
A few small flocks, maybe 100 birds altogether, were seen at Oued Loukkos 17.2. Some of the flocks included a few spotless starlings.
- 179. Spotless Starling** *Sturnus unicolor*
40 on different locations in the north 17.2, 10 around Azrou 18.2, 50 in the Sous Valley 22.2, 20 from Oued Massa to Tamri 23.2 and about 200 around Safi 24.2.
- 180. House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus tingitanus*
Very common. Seen all days in most habitats.
- 181. Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*
15 Oued Loukkos 17.2, 1 pair Sous Valley 22.2, 1 pair Oued Massa 23.2 and totally 10 along the road from Agadir to Casablanca 24.2.
- 182. Desert Sparrow** *Passer simplex saharae*
1 pair nesting at Café Caravan, Erg Chebbi 20.2. The café is the first one south of Café Yasmina, situated about 2 km south of it. The birds preferred the small goat shed just west of the Auberge. On one occasion the female was seen flying into a small pipe on the east side of the shed. Many thanks to the other Swedish crew who had been searching at Café Yasmina a few days earlier without finding any there. In pure frustration David Andersson had pointed his scope towards Café Caravan and actually found a male sitting on a building from a distance of about 2 km – impressive! A good strategy to find this species is to start at Café Yasmina and work your way southwards among the cafés until you find them, they are there somewhere! Pay special attention around all camels you see in the area since they often attract the sparrows.



Desert Sparrow, Café Caravan, Erg Chebbi.

183. Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia barbara*

30 south of Fôret de Cedres 18.2, 3 just west of Lac Aguelmame Sidi Ali 18.2 and 1 Oualidia 24.2. The birds south of Fôret de Cedres were sitting in small trees in the garden of the first building on your left when you drive southwards from Fôret de Cedres towards Col du Zad, some 3 km after you have left the forest.



184. (African) Common Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs africana

5 Larache 17.2, 30 Fôret de Cedres 18.2, 20 Col du Zad 18.2, 5 north of Errachidia 19.2, 3 Tagdilt Tracks 22.2, 20 Oued Massa 23.2 and about 40 along the road between Agadir and Casablanca 24.2. No birds of the nominate subspecies were seen.

“African” Common Chaffinch, Fôret de Cedres.

185. European Serin *Serinus serinus*

Common in the north 17.2, 1 male Fôret de Cedres 18.2, 10 north of Errachidia 19.2, 1 male Auberge Kasbah Derkaoua 21.2, 10 along the road between Erg Chebbi and Boulmane de Dades 21.2, 50 Oued Massa 23.2 and 20 along the road to Casablanca 24.2.

186. European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

5 on different locations in the north 17.2, 15 from Azrou to Midelt 18.2, 1 south of Erfoud 19.2, 5 Sous Valley 22.2, 5 Oued Massa 23.2 and 11 around Safi 24.2.

187. European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva*

2 between Casablanca and Moulay Bouselham 16.2, common in the north 17.2, 50 Col du Zad 18.2 and another 20 along the road 18.2, 10 from Midelt to Rissani 19.2, 30 from Boulmane de Dades to Agadir 22.2, 50 from Oued Massa to Tamri 23.2 and 20 from Agadir to Casablanca 24.2.

188. Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina mediterranea*

15 along the roads in the north 17.2, 10 from Azrou to Midelt 18.2, 2 Errachidia 19.2, 3 Tagdilt Tracks 22.2, 20 Oued Massa 23.2 and 40 from Agadir to Casablanca 24.2.

189. Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus zedlitzi*

Surprisingly common in the desert areas in the southeast, small flocks or single birds appeared almost everywhere. 100 from Erfoud to Rissani 19.2, 50 around the Erg Chebbi 20.2 and 100 from Erg Chebbi to Boulmane de Dades 21.2.

190. Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*
1 singing male Fôret de Cedres 18.2 and
1 female 7 km north of Tamri 23.2. The
male was sitting in the big open area
south of the road a few km along the
road into Fôret de Cedres, you can't
miss the spot.

191. House Bunting *Emberiza sahari*
12 from Tizi-n-Tahlremt 19.2, 7 from
Boulmane de Dades to the Sous Valley
22.2, 3 Massa 23.2 and 1 female
Oualidia 24.2.

192. Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza
schoeniclus*
1 Oued Loukkos 17.2. The endangered
subspecies *witherbyi* breeds in northern
Morocco and southern Spain.
Unfortunately we only saw the bird
briefly in flight so we never got a
chance to determine its subspecies.



Cirl Bunting, Fôret de Cedres.

193. Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*
40 on different locations in the north 17.2, 1 Azrou 18.2, 20 from Boulmane de Dades to the Sous
Valley 22.2 and 150 along the roads around Safi 24.2.

A selection of other Western Palearctic specialities possible to find in Morocco

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*

Very rare! The last sighting was as far as we know a bird seen between Oulad-Teima and Taroudant in the
Souys Valley on December 31st 2006.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax belisarius*

Still reported sometimes from the Sous Valley and the area around Tan-Tan south of Guelmim (which we did
not visit). Be aware that some Spanish Imperial Eagles spend their post-breeding time in northwestern Africa!
(New knowledge thanks to satellite tagging.) A juvenile Spanish Imperial Eagle, at first believed to be a Tawny
Eagle, was for example seen and photographed 11 km west of Tan-Tan in December 2006 and February 2007.

Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*

We were asked by guides at a few places along the Erg Chebbi if we wanted to go for a try with 4x4 jeeps, but
we never did. The winter 2007/2008 was a good time for seeing Houbara in the Erg Chebbi, probably due to the
new breeding program that aims to release five thousand(!) Houbaras every year!

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima albidorsalis*

Sometimes found among Sandwich Terns in the Agadir area. Dakhla in Western Sahara is a regular wintering
site and for example at least 91 birds were seen here on January 16th 2007.

(Magreb) Tawny Owl *Strix aluco mauretanic*

Probably widespread and relatively easy to hear in northern Morocco, but we never stopped to listen for this (sub-)species.

Plain Swift *Apus unicolor*

Some claim that this species winters in western Morocco and there are a few reports in the Agadir area.

Black-crowned Sparrow-lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

A visit in Western Sahara is needed to get this species.

Dunn's Lark *Eremalauda dunnii*

In recent years this species has been found to breed in the inner parts of Western Sahara.

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula obsoleta*

Rarely reported from the southernmost parts of Morocco.

Seebohm's (Northern) Wheatear *Oenanthe (oenanthe) seebohmi*

We visited too early for this species which spends the winter further south. Later in spring the (sub-)species can be found in higher altitudes at for example Oukaimeden and around Midelt.

Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta theresae*

The best area for the previous is probably the rather unexplored stony desert plains west of Errachidia, where a pair for example was breeding in the wadi 43 km west of Errachidia in 2004. However, we searched in this specific wadi for several hours without finding any. The species also occurs around Guelmim and further south along the western part of Morocco, an area we never visited.

“Saharan” Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais (pallida) reiseri*

This desert form, which at the moment belongs to the *pallida* group, is often reported from the Erg Chebbi later during spring.

Atlas Flycatcher *Ficedula speculigera*

We visited too early for this species, which can be found in the Ifrane area later in spring.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra poliogyna*

This subspecies is endemic to the Atlas Mountains. It is regularly reported from for example Fôret de Cedres and the pine forests near Oukaimeden.

Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus alienus*

We tried for this species at Col du Zad without success. They are really hard to find here. Oukaimeden is a stake-out during the winter months but we never visited this site. The subspecies occurs only in northern Africa. Recent studies show notable differences in both call and plumage between *alienus* and the nominate subspecies *sanguineus* and a future split into two separate species is possible.