

Dane Springmeyer

Searching for Raptors in Morocco - Autumn 2002

Overall we saw a diversity of raptors but very low abundance. We travelled from Sept. 18th - Oct. 2nd, 2002. We visited briefly, during our two week trip, Merdja Zegra (Moulay Bouselham), Lac de Sidi Bourhaba (Kenitra), the Central High Atlas (Mt. Mgoun region), the desert oasis's between Zagora and M'Hammid of the Oued Draa, Todra Gorge, and the cedar forests between Cole du Zad and Azrou.

Highlights were finding Osprey along the Oued Draa Valley, preparing for their crossing of the Sahara, and spotting Lammergeier and Golden's Up in the High Atlas.

Driving P28, Chefcaouen to Quezzane

Spotted several Booted Eagles and Marsh Harriers in the forests around Chaouen, and a Short-toed Eagle perched high on a transmission line tower outside of Quezzane.

Merdja Zegra

Two Black-Winged Kites, one perched on a powerpole and another on the crown of a dead eucalyptus along the road approaching Moulay Bouselham from the east, within twenty minutes of the town. African Marsh Owl pair flying at dusk over reed beds in the northern access point of the lagoon.

Lac de Sidi Bourhaba

Marsh Harrier patrolling over Eucalyptus grove on west side of lake. Three Hobbys making dashing maneuvers while hawking insects over the water. A group of Eleonora's Falcons (8) perched in the Eucalyptus trees at the southwest edge of the lake, making periodic flights out to soar and then return.

Central High Atlas

Booted Eagle and Montagu's Harrier seen soaring outside of town of Agouti. One Lammergeier with a pair of Golden Eagles making impressive and aggressive aerial maneuvers, spotted above the high valley of Mgoun, 3000 meters. One Lammergeier soaring at 3700 meters, spotted from the ridge approaching the summit of Mgoun. Long-Legged Buzzard soaring above Berber village down the valley from Agouti.

Zagora and M'Hammid

Black Kite spotted from road flying over oasis 10 miles north of Zagora. Two Short-Toed Eagles and two Ospreys seen at dusk perched on powerpoles adjacent to road south of Zagora. Short-toed Eagle perched on the dunes in the morning south of Zagora. Barbary Falcon perched atop cell tower in M'Hammid.

Lanner Falcon perched atop cell tower in the northern outskirts of Zagora. One Osprey landing along waterway of Oued Draa.

Quazzarate Reservoir (Headwaters of the Oued Draa)

Three Ospreys spotted flying north from reservoir against a headwind in late afternoon, one with fish in talons.

Todra Gorge

Falcon pair spotted pursuing pigeons and soaring high along the western bluffs of the valley. Either Barbary or Peregrines, and probably flying near previous breeding site, as they consistently landed in central spot high on the western ridge of the gorge (just above the last hotels). Pair of adult Bonelli's Eagles seen on two days in the same spot, soaring slowly in the lower valley above the last hotels and farmland.

Col du Zad to Fes

Hobby perched on top of snag of cedar tree in the morning at Col du Zad. Sparrowhawk spotted flying low through forest in the morning. Little Owl perched on telephone line outside Azrou. Long-Legged Buzzard perched on ground outside of Timahdite.