

Morocco
31.01-09.02.2007
Dave Bird, Martin Schulze & Bernd Freidrich

Here is a short report on a 10 day trip to many of the top birding sites in Morocco. Information on the sites themselves can be found in numerous other reports.

1st February

morning: Sidi Bettache - DSFrancolins were present.

midday: Lac de Sidi Bourhaba – BWKite, Marbled Duck 40, RCPochard 100+, Ferruginous Duck 30, Purple Gallinule 3, Crested Coot 20, Flamingo 19, Osprey 1

afternoon: Merdja Zerga/Nador channel: Marsh Owl ca. 6 seen extremely well. No birds were present at the campsite. BWKite 1, Little Owl 1

2nd February

morning: Dayet Aaoua – Levillant's Green Woodpecker 2-3, Ruddy Shelduck 2, Mistle Thrush, Coal Tit, Jay, STTrecreeper, A.Chaffinch, GSWoodpecker, Blue + Great Tit, Crested Coot 50

midday: near Jebel Hebri – Barbary Apes 5, Atlas Shorelark 20, Thekla Lark 2

3rd February

morning: Café Yasmine – no Desert Sparrows present, maybe because it was slightly too windy. Land Rover tour to other side of sand dunes produced 4 Desert Sparrows, 2 Moussier's Redstarts, 10-15 Tristram's Warblers, Fulvous Babbler 6. Unfortunately we couldn't find Desert Warbler anywhere.

afternoon: Rissani – The Pharaoh Eagle Owl was not present in its usual location. We waited until ca. 5 o'clock then started to walk back. Checking the cliffs paid off. We found the Eagle Owl sitting on the cliff face. It was about 10-15 minutes from the road. From the road, there is a 4-5 metre blackened palm tree stump followed by some rocks near the wadi. From here walk another 100 metres and scan the cliff. The bird was sitting near the top on a big flat stone. More Tristram's Warbler were seen here.

4th February

morning: Stone marker driving from Erfoud. Rissani 48 Ouarzazate 269 (as described by David Bryant) We walked south to the cultivated grass fields. Lots of LSTLarks and other larks species were present. Finally 3 showy Thick-billed Larks were located and watched at close range.

midday: Tagdilt track – 2 or 3 Red-rumped Wheatear showed well as did a number of Temminck's Lark. Conditions were difficult due to the wind.

afternoon: El-Kelaä M' Gouna - Moroccan Wagtail was located next to the river. **El-Kelaä M' Gouna to Ouarzazate** another 4-5 Red-rumped Wheatears were seen.

Ca. 20km before Ouarzazate 3 Fulvous Babblers were seen along with a variety of other commoner desert species.

5th February

morning: Tadoula – After a long search a single male Mourning Wheatear was found on the hillside opposite the red and white bridge about 1km before Tadoula.

midday: road marker Taliouine 69 Tazenakht 16 – 2 Lanner Falcons were observed sitting on the roadside pylons.

afternoon: Bridge over Oued Sous/Taroudant – on the other side of the wadi to the rubbish dump 2 Black-headed Bushshrikes were seen as well as 9 Moroccan Magpies, 2 Moussier's Redstarts and migrating Black Kites ca. 50.

6th February

morning: Oued Massa – In the village of Massa we found a roosting Barn Owl sitting on a palm tree. It was being mobbed by Bulbuls, BHBSrike among others. An Otter was also seen in the village of Massa and a single House Bunting. 2 Brown-throated Sand Martins were seen along the dried up river bed, as well as a Bushshrike, Bluethroats and many other commoner species. In the Oued Massa reserve itself a Spoonbill, 2 Flamingoes, 6 Barbary Partridges and many Audouin's Gulls were present.

afternoon : Tamri – a large flock of 75 Bald Ibises were seen in flight and we had fantastic views of 2 feeding between the road and the coast. A Barbary Falcon, 2 LLBuzzards, 2 Tawny Pipits, 2 Mossier's Redstarts and a lot of Spanish Sparrows.

7th February

morning: Oukaimeden – arrived about 10 o' clock. Many Atlas Shorelarks, Rock Sparrows, Chough and Alpine Chough were easily seen. 5 Crimson-winged Finches were found on the way up to the Radar Station. No Alpine Accentors could be found anywhere despite intensive searching. 2 Ring Ouzels, Dipper and Grey Wagtail were seen in the area too.

8th February

morning: Marrakech city centre – At least 10 House Buntings were seen and heard singing around the centre. They were present on the buildings, in the alleys just about everywhere,

midday: Skhour-Rehamna – Farmland habitat. 3 wonderful Mossier's Redstarts were present as well as 5+ Calandra Larks.

afternoon: Casablanca – City centre / market place. More House Buntings were seen. Local sellers had put down some seed and up to 25 birds were present.

Dave Bird
Hegelstr. 78
06114 Halle
Germany

email: dave.bird@able-halle.de