

Trip Report – Morocco, November/December 2012

Crew:

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Route:



Day by day:

Friday, 23rd November. Flight from Berlin to Marrakech with Easy Jet. Hiring a car at the airport (Kia Soul), finding accommodation in a cheap and a little shabby, but having atmosphere small hotel in Marrakech.

Sturday, 24th November. Check before dawn to Oukaimeden. First birding in mountain valleys and after 3 hours reaching the goal. A few hours of observation in the Moroccan famous winter resort. Back to Marrakesh, replacement car for bigger (Fiat Doblo). Overnight at the same hotel, except that in the other rooms, even more climatic – on the roof of the building which allowed us to observe the nocturnal life of Marrakech.

Sunday, 25th November. Check before dawn towards Essaurii, on the way stop on the fields in the region Chichaoua, then come to Essaurii, observations in the port, penetration of Oued Ksob, then the journey to the north, along the way seawatching to sunset, night in Safi.

Monday, 26th November. Drive from Safi to Oulalidii, where breakfast at the city landfill combined with simultaneous viewing of numerous birds, mainly gulls. Then an intense exploration of the very rich in waterbirds lagoons north of this city, try searching Small Buttoquail. Continue to El Jadidy, there seawatching of the breakwater to dusk. Accommodation in the city.

Tuesday, 27th November. Check out as usual, well before dawn, to enter the highway, a quick trip, still to the north. Along the way, "visit" from the windows of the car Casablanca and Rabat. In the meantime, exit toward the interior of the Sidi Betache known woods, then back onto the highway and drive in the direction of the famous lake Sidi Bourghaba. Seawatching in Mehdia and staying there in a hotel right on the beach with a wonderful view of the full moon-lit ocean.

Wednesday, 28th November. Fatigue, the first time we sleep until well after sunrise, hour seawatching of the breakwater and then fast travel to the most famous Moroccan lagoon - Merja Zerga. There observations until become dark. Back to Mehdia and overnight staying at the same hotel on the beach.

Thursday, 29th November. Check before dawn in the south-east, the day our goal was to Dayet Aoua mountain lake and surrounding woods, accompanied us during the follow-strong snowfall and temperatures around zero degrees Celsius. Continue by snow-capped mountains and occasional birding. Then leaving the area of Zaida and there a few hours of daylight observations. Overnight in Midelt.

Friday, 30th November. As usual, the first two hours in the morning before dawn we spend in the car. Errachidia by going to the desert regions of Goulmina. Then observe the birds in different places on the road to Rissani and its surroundings. Late afternoon arrival to the legendary Merzouga with its amazing sand dunes, there overnight.

Saturday, 1st December. Dawn of the first day of December by the dried up this time of year Dayet Srji. There a few hours very successful observations in sub-Saharan landscapes, and the decision to search the desert sparrow - a few hours - this time, unfortunately, fruitless search took us the rest of the day. Frustration partly recompensed by wonderful views of Erg Cherbibi especially when on its north-western end of the lake we found the large lake full of wildlife. In the late afternoon trip to the west, the last stop on the outskirts of Erfoud and north of Ksar Maadid where the road to Errachidia crossed the Oued Ziz.

Sunday, 2nd December. After an overnight journey, and after traveling more than 750 km morning greeted the sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean again! From morning exploring the river valleys Massa and Sousse. Accommodation in Agadir at the same hotel where we were with Piotrek in March this year.

Monday, 3rd December. Journey to Tamri to see charismatic Bald Ibis, back to the highway and drive Agadir to Marrakech. Turning the rental car back and flight to Berlin. On Tuesday, in the morning, everyone was already in their homes.

Statistics:

The expedition took us 11 days including 9 full.

We drove 3500 km, the longest single journey consisted of more than 750 km.

We used almost 570 liters of diesel.

We saw 183 species of birds, of which 2 are subject to verification by the Moroccan

rarity commission.

The luckiest of us saw over 60 lifers, the one with less luck 17.

The highest we were at 2688 meters above sea level - the trail of Oukaimeden, lowest level - Atlantic Ocean.

The highest recorded daily temperature was about 26 Celcius degree in the area of Goulmima, the lowest minus 2 in the vicinity of the Atlas Mountains Immouzer.

We drunk more than 150 liters of Coca-Cola.

Cost of the trip was about 600 Euro/person.

List of species:

1. Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
5, Oualidia, 26.11
300, Merja Zerga, 28.11
2. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
7, Oualidia, 26.11
1, Merja Zerga, 28.11
60, Merzouga, 01.12
3. Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
Common
4. Gadwall *Anas strepeta*
100, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
5. Pintail *Anas acuta*
20, Oualidia, 26.11
1, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
6. Shoveler *Anas clypeata*
Common at the coast
7. Wigeon *Anas penelope*
15, Oualidia, 26.11
8. Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*
200, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
9. Teal *Anas crecca*
20, Oualidia, 26.11
40, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
10. Garganey *Anas querquedula*
1 female, Oualidia, 26.11
11. Pochard *Aythya ferina*
20, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
100, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
We've also seen a hybrid *A. ferina* x *A. fuligula* in Dayet Aoua, 29.11
12. Red-crested Pochard *Netta ruffina*
300, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
13. Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
15, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
80, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
14. Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*
1 male, Ksar Maadit, 01.12
15. Common Scooter *Melanitta nigra*
4, El Jaddida, 26.11
30, Mahdia, 27.11
50, Mehdiya, 28.11
16. Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*
Uncommon, but regularly seen
17. Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
2 males, Chichaoua, 25.11
3 males, Oued Massa, 02.12
18. Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
20, Oualidia, 26.11

19. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
30, Oualidia, 26.11
5, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
40, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
20. Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
20, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
21. Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*
4, seawatching between Essauria and Safia, 25.11
6, El Jaddida, 26.11
5, Mehdia, 28.11
22. Gannet *Morus bassanus*
Common, the biggest flock ca. 600 ind.
23. Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Common, also subspecies *maroccanus* along the ocean`s coast
24. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Abundant



25. Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*
2, Merja Zerga, 28.11
26. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Uncommon, but widespread, maximum ca. 150 ind., Merja Zerga, 28.11
27. Great Egret *Egretta alba*
2, Tamri, 03.12
28. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Uncommon, but widespread
29. White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*
Seen almost every day, except SE part, the biggest flock ca. 200 ind., Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
30. Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
36, Oued Massa, 02.12
31. Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*
25, Tamri, 03.12



- 32. Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
43, Oualidia, 26.11
- 33. Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*
Regularly seen in suitable biotopes along the coast
- 34. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
4, Merja Zerga, 28.11
3, Oued Massa, 02.12



- 35. Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*
1 juvenilis, Marrakech, 24.11
- 36. Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
Regularly seen, nothing less than 40 ind. gathering for roosting, Sidi Bourghaba,
27.11
- 37. Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*
Few observation, mostly in SE
- 38. Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Seen daily 1-2 birds
- 39. Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
Seen almost daily
- 40. Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Very common
- 41. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*
Several observations
- 42. Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*
1 adult female, Tamri, 03.12

- 43. Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*
1 adult, Zeida, 29.11
1 adult, Rissani, 30.11
- 44. Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*
1, Oualidia, 26.11
- 45. Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
Uncommon, but widespread
- 46. Coot *Fulica atra*
Common
- 47. Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*
10, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
300, Dayet Aoua, 29.11



- 48. Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*
2, Sidi Bourghaba, 27.11
- 49. Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
Regularly seen on the Atlantic coast
- 50. Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta*
Fairly common, maximum ca. 500, Merja Zerga, 28.11
- 51. Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Very common, seen even in the mountains in the winter scenery, eg. in Dayet Aoua,
29.11



52. Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus*
 4, Marrakesh, 24.11
 1, Oued Sousse, 02.12



53. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
 Regularly seen mostly on the Atlantic coast
54. Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
 Regularly seen on the Atlantic coast
55. Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*
 Fairly common in few localities eg. 100, Merja Zerga, 28.11
56. Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
 80, Oualidia, 26.11
 50, Merja Zerga, 28.11
57. Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
 15, Oualidia, 26.11
58. Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
 10, Sidi Betache, 27.11
 5, Merja Zerga, 28.11
59. Knot *Calidris canutus*
 1, Oued Ksob, 25.11
60. Sanderling *Calidris alba*
 Regularly seen on the coast
61. Turnstone *Arenaria Interpres*
 Regularly seen on the coast
62. Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
 Very common
63. Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
 10, Oualidia, 26.11
 3, Merja Zerga, 28.11
64. Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
 Fairly numerous in some localities eg. in Oukalidia and Merja Zerga
65. Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
 1, Oualidia, 26.11
66. Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
 Not common but widespread
67. Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
 Uncommon in rivers valleys
68. Redshank *Tringa totanus*
 Common
69. Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
 Uncommon
70. Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
 3, Oualidia, 26.11

- 71. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
15, Oualidia, 26.11
- 72. Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
10, Oualidia, 26.11
- 73. Curlew *Numenius arquata*
5, Oualidia, 26.11
15, Merja Zerga, 28.11
- 74. Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Uncommon but widespread on the coast



- 75. Snipe *Gallinago Gallinago*
10, Oualidia, 26.11
5, Merja Zerga, 28.11
- 76. Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
15, Oualidia, 26.11
- 77. Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*
Seen almost daily on seawatching
- 78. Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*
1 adult, Safia, 25.11
1 adult, Mahdia, 27.11
- 79. Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*
Fairly common, a dozens of unidentified Skuas sp. most likely belong to this species
- 80. Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Common
- 81. Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*
30, Oualidia, 26.11
20, Merja Zerga, 28.11
- 82. Common Gull *Larus canus*
1 immature, Oued Massa
- 83. Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*
Fairly common on the coast
- 84. Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*
Very common
- 85. Audouin`s Gull *Larus audouinii*
Common



- 86. Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*
1 first winter, Oued Ksob, 25.11
- 87. Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
Abundant
- 88. Sandwich Tern *Sterna sanvicensis*
Regularly seen on the coast
- 89. Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*
1 juvenile, Oued Massa, 02.12
- 90. White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
1 adult in winter plumage, Oualidia, 26.11
- 91. Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*
5, Merzouga, 01.12



- 92. Rock Dove *Columba Livia*
Common
- 93. Stock Dove *Columba oenas*
2, Sidi Betache, 27.11
- 94. Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*
Regularly seen
- 95. Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Common
- 96. Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*
Fairly common
- 97. Short-eared Owl Owl *Asio flammeus*
1, Oualidia, 26.11



98. Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*
2, Merja Zerga, 28.11
99. Barn Owl *Tyto alba*
2 birds of subspecies *alba*, Marrakesz, 24.11
100. Little Owl *Athene noctua*
Common



101. Swift *Apus apus*
1, Goulmin, 31.11
102. Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*
6, Oued Massa, 02.12
103. Kingfisher *Alcedo attis*
Regularly seen
104. Levillant`s Woodpecker *Picus vaillantii*
1, Oukameiden, 24.11



- 105. Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
1, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
- 106. Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
6, Chichaoua, 25.11
2, Goulmin, 31.11
- 107. Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*
Very common
- 108. Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*
Common in the suitable habitats
- 109. Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens*
4, Chichaoua, 25.11
200, Goulmin 43km, 30.11
- 110. Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*
Regularly seen in the Goulmin-Merzouga region
- 111. Bar-tailed Lark *Ammomanes cinctura*
Regularly seen in the Goulmin-Merzouga region



- 112. Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*
40, Chichaoua, 25.11
- 113. Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*
15, Oukameiden, 24.11
- 114. Temminck's Lark *Eremophila bilopha*

- 3, Zeida, 29.11
 4, Goulmin 43km, 30.11
 115. Dupont's Lark *Chersophilus duponti*
 2, Zeida, 29.11



116. Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*
 7, Merzouga, 01.12



117. Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*
 20, Oued Ksob, 25.11
 2, Oued Massa, 02.12
 118. Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
 40, Goulmin-Rissani, 30.11
 119. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
 Regularly seen
 120. Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*
 1, Oukaimeden, 24.11
 1, Oulalidia, 26.11
 121. Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
 Very common
 122. Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*
 1, Oued Ksob, 25.11

123. White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Common *alba* form, 2 birds of the subspecies *subpersonata* seen in the Oued Ksob, 25.11
124. Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Regularly seen in the Oualidia i Merja Zerga including birds, males, showing characters subspecies *iberiae*, *cinereocapilla* and *thunbergi*
125. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Regularly seen in the mountains
126. Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*
2, Oukaimeden, 24.11
127. Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Uncommon
128. Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*
1, Oualidia, 26.11
1, Merja Zerga, 28.11
129. Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Common
130. Moussier`s Redstart *Phoenicurus moussieri*
Fairly common



131. Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
1, Oukaimeden, 24.11
132. White-crowned Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*
Common species in the Goulmin-Morzouga region



- 133. Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura*
Regularly seen in the mountains
- 134. Red-rumped Wheatear *Oenanthe moesta*
Few observations in the Goulmin-Morzouga region
- 135. Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*
Few observations in the Merzouga region, only males
- 136. Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*
Common
- 137. Song Trush *Turdus philomelos*
15, Sidi Betache, 27.11
- 138. Mistle Trush *Turdus viscivorus*
Regularly seen in the mountains
- 139. Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Common
- 140. Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
8, Oukameiden, 24.11
- 141. Blue Rock Trush *Monticola solitarius*
3, Goulmin-Rissani, 29.11



- 142. Srub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*
6, Goulmin 43 km, 29.11



- 143. Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Several observations only
- 144. Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*
Common



145. Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*
 4, Chichaoua, 25.11
 2, Goulmin, 29.11
 146. Tristram's Warbler *Sylvia deserticola*
 5, Merzouga, 01.12



147. Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
 Common in suitable habitats
 148. Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*
 Common in suitable habitats
 149. Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
 1, Oued Massa, 02.12
 150. Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
 Abundant
 151. Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*
 1, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
 152. Great Tit *Parus major*
 Common
 153. Coal Tit *Parus ater*
 2, Oukameiden, 24.11
 2, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
 154. African Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae*
 Regularly seen
 155. Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*
 1, Dayet Aoua, 29.11
 156. Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*
 Abundant, both *algeriensis* and *elegans* subspecies

157. Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*
1, Sidi Betache 27.11
1, Oued Massa, 02.12



158. Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*
Very common and numerous



159. Megpie *Pica pica mauritanica*
Common
160. Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Common, particularly in the mountains
161. Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
50, Merja Zerga, 28.11
162. Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
30, Oukameiden, 24.11



- 163. Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*
50, Oukameiden, 24.11
- 164. Raven *Corvus corax*
Quite common
- 165. Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*
40, Rissani, 30.11
10, Merzouga, 01.12



- 166. Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Numerous
- 167. Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*
Abundant
- 168. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Very common
- 169. Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*
Regularly seen
- 170. Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*
15, Oukameiden, 24.11
12, Infrane, 29.12
- 171. Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Common, including subspecies *africana*
- 172. Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
10, Oukameiden, 24.11

- 173. Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*
Numerous
- 174. Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
Fairly common
- 175. Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*
Common
- 176. Siskin *Carduelis spinus*
Several observations in the mountains
- 177. Serin *Serinus serinus*
Abundant
- 178. Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
1, Marrakesz, 25.11
- 179. Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*
Fairly common in the Goulmin-Merzouga region
- 180. Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus*
5, Oukameiden, 24.11



- 181. Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*
Common
- 182. Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*
3, Oukameiden, 24.11
- 183. House Bunting *Emberiza sahari*
Common

