

***Hippolais pallida reiseri* in Morocco...**

Hippolais pallida reiseri has recently been recorded in three regions:

- The South-east Morocco,
- The Tafilalt, mainly at the well known Erg Chebbi / Merzouga area, and
- The Dades-Draa near Ourazazate

Hereunder is a summary of a few recent records in these regions.

South-east Morocco

I have seen *H. p. reiseri* in south-east Morocco in May 2004, especially in the oases of Figuig. I have not positively recorded *H. opaca* at that time, but this was only a short visit to the palmerie (see **Bergier, P. ; Franchimont, J. ; Thévenot, M. et CHM** 2006. Les oiseaux rares au Maroc. Rapport de la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine Numéro 11 (2005). *Go-South Bull.* 3 : 31-42.)

Tafilalt

H. p. reiseri has been recorded in a couple of spots near Erfoud / Merzouga:

- ‘Auberge Derkaoua’
 - Breeding has been reported there late April 2000 (3-4 pairs – **Dally, A.** 2003. Saharan Olivaceous Warbler in Morocco. *Birding World* 16 : 475);
 - other records have been made at that spot, e.g.
 - 1 on 26 March 2004 – **Binns, A.** 2004. *Morocco: Trip report and list 21 March-4 April 2004*. Jaeger Tours. Inéd
 - See also **Delapré, J.-P. ; Guilpain, J.-M. ; Isaac, B. ; Philippe, D. & Troffigué, A.** 2005. Observation d'une Hypolaïs du Sahara le 22 avril 2004 dans les jardins de l'auberge Derkaoua, près d'Erfoud dans l'Est marocain. *Go-South Bull.* 2 : 31-33.
 - oiseaux alarmant et se poursuivant, mais silencieux, dans les grands arbres de l'auberge Kasbah Derkaoua près d'Erfoud le 10 avril 2006 (H. Dufourny)
- ‘Auberge Camping L'Oasis - Hassi Labied’
 - 2-3 singers have been reported from the garden of the Auberge on 13 April 2006 (C.G. Knox *et al.*) : ‘... *The bird... shows a much sandier / paler overall plumage than Western Olivaceous (which look much warmer brown), it depicts the smaller, thinner bill than opacus, shorter wings and suggestion of a pale wing panel. In life, the bird ‘appeared’ much smaller than opacus noted earlier, it also had the habit of ‘dipping’ its tail, which we never noted on Western Olivaceous. Its song was quicker and less melodious than opacus, much more akin to Eastern Olivaceous.... The bird preferred to sing from tamarisk bushes despite their being much variety nearby...*’
- Un oiseau près de Rissani (début de la route d'Alnif, au pied de la falaise 5 kilomètres à l'ouest de la route P21) le 27 avril 2006. Cet oiseau houspillait une Hypolaïs obscure, permettant une comparaison directe des deux espèces : ‘*H. p. reiseiri est nettement plus petite, de couleur plus pâle et sableuse, aux sourcils marqués – rappelant l'Hypolaïs botté H. caligata, au bec plus fin et effectuant constamment des mouvements de la queue vers le bas*’ (H. Dufourny)
- Also at Rissani : ‘*Je me suis rendu au site de Rissani, où Brian Small m'a dit avoir observé, avec Arnoud van den Berg, l'Hypolaïs pâle 'reiseri'. Brian m'a dit qu'il était facile à trouver comme il chantait près du pont sur l'oued. De fait, en arrivant j'ai entendu une hypolaïs qui chantait. Il m'a semblé être une 'opaca' normale, mais je n'ai plus bien en tête le chant de l'autre (dernière obs au Cameroun en 2002), j'ai alors sorti le MP3 pour écouter les deux et étudier les réactions de l'oiseau à la repasse du chant. Il n'a réagit qu'à 'opaca' et s'est bien montré. C'était bien une 'opaca' normale. L'oiseau de van den Berg peut être un "migrateur en halte" mais dans le cas contraire, si van den Berg*

ne s'est pas trompé, les deux taxons cohabitent, ce qui serait quelque chose de vraiment intéressant' (V. Schollaert)

- Early May 2007 : *'we were quite successful in finding H. pallida reiseri especially in Erfoud, around Merzouga and in Rissani'* (V. Salewski)
- 11 April 2008 : *'Photographs of foraging individual, one of three or four present in the garden of Derkaoua ('Chez Michel') north of Merzouga. These birds seemed to be resident and were foraging as if they might have had young, but that is perhaps somewhat speculative; they were not singing'* (A.B. van den Berg – dossier CHM 08-18)



- March and April 2008, Rissani (A.B. van den Berg – dossier CHM 08-15)
 - ‘On 26 and 27 March two Saharan Olivaceous Warblers were singing in exactly the same tree at Rissani, Tafilalt, as two years ago (4 April 2006)’.
 - ‘In the morning of 12 April, I visited the palm orchards south of Rissani for the second time this spring, now with some friends from England and Scotland. Again, I found a pair of Saharan Eastern Olivaceous Warblers in an old tamarisk, not far from the site where I sound-recorded and photographed a pair in March’.



Saharan Olivaceous Warbler – Rissani
27 March 2008 (A.B. van den Berg)



Saharan Olivaceous Warbler –
Rissani 12 April 2008 (A.B. van den
Berg)

Dadès-Draa

H. p. reiseri has been recently recorded at an Oued near Ghassate Demnat, 6 km to the East of Ouarzazate (at least 5 singers on 11 April - C.G. Knox *et al.*): ‘... On the 11th April 2006, we observed at least 5 singing birds circa 6km east of Ouarzazate, in a wadi by the turn off to the village of Ghassate Demnat (the wadi is crossed by an obvious bridge with red and white railings). Here we noted the same features as above [i.e. at Auberge Camping L'Oasis - Hassi Labied’], however although tail dipping was noted on all birds observed, the wing panel was not that clear on at least two birds and may not be a diagnostic feature of the ssp / sp.’