



## Birdwatching Holidays in Spain, Morocco & more...

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# MOROCCO

From Atlas Mountains to the Sahara Desert  
March 13th to 23th 2008

**Leader:** Josele J Saiz - **BOLETAS** Birdwatching Centre

### The Group:

Dave Ramsden  
David Wadding  
Jan Turner  
Jayne Barnard

Hugh Davidson  
Mark Easterbrook  
Gerry Turner  
Harry Barnard

Lance Cawthorn  
Richard Birchman  
Dave Barnard

**Sites:** Agadir , Souss Valley, Souss Massa , Tamri , Paradise Valley , Souss River Banck, Aulouz, Ouarzazate Reservoir, Tagdlit Track, Foum El Kous , Todra Gorge, Merzouga Palm Groves, Erg Chebi, Merzouga Lake, Risanni, Ait Ben Hadou , Amerzgane , Arbaglou, Boletas Raptors Watchpoint, Oukaimeden.



Crimson Winged Finch ( *Rhodopechys sanguinea* )



Long Legged Buzzard ( *Buteo rufinus* )



Birding by the coast



Superb lunch by the desert

1. A brief introducción.
2. A table of common species seen during the tour.
3. A day-by-day account of the sites visited with birding highlights.
4. A selective species trip list
5. Summary.

### Introduction

It started with five House Buntings at Marrakech Airport and ended with two more in the airport departures lounge, in between many sought after species were seen. The group saw 163 species collectively with a few more heard, as is the norm, not everyone saw everything; however nobody missed any of the specialities of Southern Morocco. The tour became known as the "mating tour" on account of the numerous species witnessed displaying and copulating. It was also known by some as the "must go to the loo" tour for reasons that must be obvious to seasoned travellers.

### Common Species

The following table contains a list of common species that can be easily seen in good numbers in suitable habitat throughout Southern Morocco.

<b>Little Grebe</b>	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b>	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
<b>Great Cormorant</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus</i>
<b>Grey Heron</b>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
<b>Little Egret</b>	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
<b>Cattle Egret</b>	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
<b>White Stork</b>	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
<b>Glossy Ibis</b>	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
<b>Eurasian Spoonbill</b>	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>
<b>Greater Flamingo</b>	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
<b>Long-legged Buzzard</b>	<i>Buteo rufinus cirtensis</i>
<b>Eurasian Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
<b>Common Moorhen</b>	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
<b>Eurasian Coot</b>	<i>Fulica atra</i>
<b>Black-winged Stilt</b>	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
<b>Eurasian Curlew</b>	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
<b>Common Redshank</b>	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>
<b>Common Greenshank</b>	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
<b>Green Sandpiper</b>	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
<b>Audouin's Gull</b>	<i>Larus audouinii</i>
<b>W Yellow-legged Gull</b>	<i>Larus cachinnans michahellis</i>
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>	<i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>
<b>Black-headed Gull</b>	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
<b>Sandwich Tern</b>	<i>Sterna sandvicencis</i>
<b>Eurasian Collared Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
<b>Laughing Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
<b>Pallid Swift</b>	<i>Apus pallidus</i>
<b>Little Swift</b>	<i>Apus affinis</i>
<b>Eurasian Hoopoe</b>	<i>Upupa epops</i>
<b>Bar-tailed Desert Lark</b>	<i>Ammomanes cincturus arenicolor</i>
<b>Desert Lark</b>	<i>Ammomanes deserti payni monody</i>
<b>Hoopoe Lark</b>	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>
<b>Lesser Short-toed Lark</b>	<i>Calandrella fufescens minor</i>
<b>Crested Lark</b>	<i>Galerida cristata randonii</i>
<b>Thekla Lark</b>	<i>Galerida theklae aguirrei</i>
<b>Temminck's Lark</b>	<i>Eremophila alpestris bilopha</i>
<b>Eurasian Crag Martin</b>	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>
<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
<b>White Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
<b>Common Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
<b>Blue Rock Thrush</b>	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
<b>Eurasian Blackbird</b>	<i>Turdus merula mauretanica</i>

<b>Zitting Cisticola</b>	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
<b>Common Chiffchaff</b>	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
<b>Blackcap</b>	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
<b>Subalpine Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>
<b>Sardinian Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>
<b>Black Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros gibralteriensis</i>
<b>Moussier's Redstart</b>	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>
<b>Common Stonechat</b>	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
<b>White-crowned Black Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga augra</i>
<b>Black Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>
<b>Desert Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe deserti homochroa</i>
<b>Southern Grey Shrike</b>	<i>Lanius meridionalis algeriensis</i>
<b>Southern Grey Shrike</b>	<i>Lanius meridionalis elegans</i>
<b>Spotless Starling</b>	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>
<b>House Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer domesticus tingitanus</i>
<b>European Greenfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>
<b>European Goldfinch</b>	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
<b>Eurasian Linnet</b>	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
<b>European Serin</b>	<i>Serinus serinus</i>
<b>Trumpeter Finch</b>	<i>Rhodopechys githaginea zedlitzi</i>
<b>House Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza striolata sahari</i>

## Day by Day Itineraries with highlights

### Day 1 - 13 Feb 08

Departing Heathrow and Gatwick at about 0900 the group fused at Marrakech Airport at about 1430 where the first House Buntings were noted. The journey to Agadir was punctuated with several stops which produced Black Kites, Common Bulbuls, Sardinian Warblers and a perched Short-toed Eagle at the side of the road. A brief stop at the Oued Souss produced an Osprey, many Greater Flamingos and a Red-necked Nightjar (heard). Arrival at the hotel in Agadir was at about 1830 and everyone enjoyed a shower before dining at 2000. Refreshed, fed and watered everyone eagerly awaited the first dawn chorus.

### Day 2 – 14 Feb 08

We awoke to the sound of Common Bulbuls and Blackcaps. Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls loitered around the swimming pool with Pallid and Little Swift performing overhead. We drove to the Souss Massa National Park stopping at Commune Sidi Wassay, which produced several Moussier's Redstart a Little Owl and the ubiquitous House Bunting. Further along the road a Moroccan race White Wagtail (*subpersonata*) was noted, which proved to be rarer than expected and was only witnessed by a few of the group.

At the Souss Massa two Black-crowned Tchagras performed well for the group, with one in display flight, whilst at least six were heard calling. Marbled Ducks were present along with Ferruginous and a group of forty-one Common Crane lifted off over the Greater Flamingos. Several Plain Martins eventually gave themselves up and provided good flyby views. On the way to a café by the seaside at least three early Cream-coloured Coursers were seen on the plateaux and at the coast a brief sea-watching produced Gannets, Shag, Balearic and Sooty Shearwaters.

Stopping at the Oued Souss before retiring for the night added Stone Curlews, Grey Plover and at least another Red-necked Nightjar heard which would not play the game and come closer.

### Day 3 – 15 Feb 08

The group journeyed to the famous Tamri area in search of Bald Ibis, stopping at the beach to view Audouin's, Lesser Black-backed and Yellow-legged Gulls. The only Sanderling and Little Ringed Plover were also seen here whilst we were also treated to the site of 13 Bald Ibis's drifting over us from the direction of the communications

masts on the hill. We travelled to the cliffs where we encountered 43 birds some of which were noted copulating and displaying.

On route to Tadourante the group stopped in the mountains at a place known as Paradise Valley, which was known to the leader. After a slow start the area provided good views of a pair of displaying and mating Golden Eagles and shortly after a pair of Bonelli's Eagles displayed also.

A pair of White Stork greeted us on our arrival at Tadourante, before we headed for the hotel and a cool beer.

#### **Day 4 – 16 Feb 08**

We departed Tadourante to the site of what had become common birds and headed towards Ouzarzate. Stopping on the way for Black Kites and a Long-legged Buzzard. A stop at a river valley near Aoulouz ensured we encountered another Tchagra, Peregrine, two Red-rumped Swallow and our first male Blue Rock Thrush. At a café a little further along the road a pair of Black Wheatears were seen.

Southern Grey Shrikes (*algeriensis*), lined the road and a further two opportunistic stops produced a first year Golden Eagle, Spectacled Warbler and a Desert Wheatear. By the time we arrived at Ouarzazate Reservoir, White-crowned Black Wheatear had become the most common bird at the roadside.

Ouarzazate Reservoir was an interesting place but didn't produce that many birds. Another Osprey was seen, a flock of Shoveler, two Great Crested Grebe and the highlight for many at least three Moroccan White Wagtails. It would appear from previous trip reports that this is a good place to see this, at times difficult to see species.

We finally arrived at our hotel where we took dinner and awaited the early morning start for the Tadglit Track.

#### **Day 5 – 17 Feb 08**

For many a visit to the Tadglit Track is one of the highlights of a birdwatching trip to Southern Morocco and this proved to be no exception.

Upon our arrival a pair of Red-rumped Wheatears were seen, later at least three pairs were seen in the steppe area, however were not seen anywhere else during the tour. After this initial good fortune, the group settled down to getting to grips with the content of the many flocks of Larks that were in the area. Soon enough a female Thick-billed Lark was spotted accompanied shortly after by the male. During the course of the day at least 25 of these fantastic Larks were seen, with one flock of 18 being a particular highlight.

#### **Day 6 – 18 Feb 08**

The journey to the Todra Gorge and the desert was interrupted with several stops. At a site known to the leader the group found itself peering at a Pharaoh Eagle Owl roosting in the open. Several Temminck's Lark, a group of Trumpeters, Short-toed Eagle and a pair of Red-rumped Wheatears kept morale high.

Another stop at an unlikely looking scree slope produced the target bird; a pair of Mourning Wheatears with a singing male. The nearby area also held our first "grillable" Desert Larks, with Trumpeters, a male Black Wheatear and a fly by Crag Martin putting in an appearance.

A lunch break at Todra Gorge ensured the group was well fed and watered before successfully teasing out a male Tristram's Warbler, Rock Bunting, Rock Sparrow as well as the commoner Crag Martins, including a House Martin and Grey Wagtails.

We arrived at the hotel in the dark and had failed to realise what a fantastic setting it was.

#### **Day 7 – 19 Feb 08**

In the morning we awoke to the site of the extensive sand dunes of Erg Chebbi and travelled towards the Café Jasmine. The lake behind the café was fairly extensive following heavy rains and unusually held Greater Flamingos, Ruddy Shelducks and a single Ruff. Unfortunately due to the rains the target Desert Sparrows were not feeding in their usual tamarisks.

A Brown-necked Raven passed overhead before our quarry was located on some nearby out buildings; a cracking male and female Desert Sparrow performed well for their admirers. Nearby a pair of Greater Short-toed Larks with their distinctive rusty caps and a pair of Hoopoe Lark was admired.

We headed off into the extensive Merzouga desert in search of Houbara and Sandgrouse. Stopping for a pair of displaying African Desert Warblers was a good find. The obviously different Southern Grey Shrike (*Ssp elegans*) and Cream-coloured Coursers were seen in small numbers as we traversed the area but no Houbara.

With the Houbara and local wardens being uncooperative we headed to a secluded area adjacent to the sand dunes for a rustic lunch prepared by our local Berber drivers. A singing *Sylvia* Warbler distracted the group and eventually a stunning male Tristram's showed fantastically well in perfect light conditions. A small group of 5 more Desert Sparrows was a real bonus whilst we ate lunch. Nearby the group paused after lunch to view a small flock of Bar-tailed Desert Larks and a pair of displaying Hoopoe Larks.

Having failed with the Houbara and Sandrouse our last stop was at Merzouga Lake that held a large flock of Greater Flamingos, circa 60 Ruddy Shelduck, a pair of Marsh Harrier and an unlikely group of 12 Kentish Plovers. TOO MUCH RAIN! Had beaten the group once more. With the lake being expanded and there being a lack of muddy fringes the expected waders were absent.

### **Day 8 – 20 Feb 08**

Before departing the desert a pair of Subalpine Warblers and a recently arrived Woodchat Shrike bade us farewell whilst a Brown-necked Raven looked on. The long journey to Ouarzazate was made enjoyable by several birding opportunities. The first stop was made at Alfif that to our surprise produced the species we thought we were going to dip on. Near to the village a family group of Fulvous Babblers performed and another Hoopoe was noted.

After consulting with a local Houbara warden we headed off into the plains in search of one. Unfortunately again we had no luck, however better views of more groups of Babblers displaying and a Tristram's Warbler provided slight compensation.

The second stop was in the Draa Valley where a Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, several Song Thrush, Snipe and female Sparrowhawk were recorded.

We arrived at Ouarzazate tired after a hot day in the sun and ready of a shower, beer and bed.

### **Day 9 – 21 Feb 08**

The penultimate day had the group heading towards Marrakech via the Tiz-n-Tichka pass, punctuated with several birding stops. Many birds we had already seen were noted until we reached a café at Amergane, in the mountains. Here, new birds were Mistle Thrushes, Great Tits and a Corn Bunting. Two Red-billed Choughs passed above us while a handsome male North African race Chaffinch showed well.

Later at Toofiat a Pine and mixed woodland area looked birdless. However the sun came out briefly and a good hours birding ensued. A pair of Hawfiches fed low down and showed well, a Short-toed Treecreeper, several Coal Tits, 2 Crossbills and a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers were very obliging. However the undoubted highlight was a pair of Goshawks with the male performing display flight that captured the group's attention.

Further along the pass, at a site known to Josele, we stopped and scanned. Soon a female Barbary Falcon was noted and shortly after the male, with yet more copulating being witnessed. A Long-legged Buzzard put in an appearance and Serins could be heard everywhere.

### **Day 10 – 22 Feb 08**

There were two species to find on the final day. On the journey to Oukaineden Ski Resort, as suggested by many guidebooks we stopped and listened. Almost immediately a Levillant's Woodpecker was heard. On a bare dead tree directly in front of us a cracking male called and fed, and was soon joined by the female – a great result!

Having had good luck with the Woodpecker it appeared our look had run out with the Crimson-winged Finch. Despite hours of searching in the snow, which was extensive for this time of year, the birds could not be found in their usual places of residence. Probably as a result of the more than usual amount of snow and a lack of suitable feeding areas.

Despite this several good species were seen including Alpine and Red-billed Choughs in good numbers, Shore Lark, Rock Sparrows, Rock Buntings and a pair of unexpected Brambling. On the way down the mountain a male Atlas race Black Redstart was seen briefly.

### **Day 11 – 23 Feb 08**

We departed on an early morning flight but not before seeing our final two confiding House Buntings in the departure lounge. The flight was via Casablanca but uneventful and we arrived at Heathrow at about 1400.

#### Selective Species List

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Balearic Shearwater	<i>Puffinus yelkouan mauretanicus</i>	1 flying S at the mouth of the mouth of the Souss Massa
Sooty Shearwater		1 flying N at the mouth of the mouth of the Souss Massa
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Several from coastal locations
European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	1 flying N at the mouth of the Sous Massa
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	2 at Souss Massa
Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>	13 over the beach at Tamri and 30 at the cliffs
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	1 at Souss Massa and numerous at Merzouga Lake and behind Café Jasmine
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	1 or 2 at Souss Massa and 1 at Ouarzazate Reservoir
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	A large flock only at Souss Massa
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	A few at Souss Massa
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Small numbers at Ouarzazate Res and Merzouga Lake
Marbled Teal	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	C20 at Sousse Massa
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya farina</i>	2 only at Souss Massa
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	Several only at Souss Massa
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Several only at Souss Massa
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1 at Oued Sousse on both nights and 1 at Ouarzazate Res
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Good numbers of migrating birds SW of Marrakesh near Chichaoua on the first day with 1s and 2s elsewhere
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Singletons seen throughout near the Tadglit Track and along the roadside
W Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus harterti</i>	A couple of pairs at Souss Massa and Merzouga Lake
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus punicus</i>	A pair in the Draa River Valley
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentiles</i>	A pair with the male displaying at Atlas mountains
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos homeyeri</i>	A pair mating with the male displaying at "Paradise Valley" and one at Tichka pass.
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Hieraetus fasciatus</i>	A pair with the male displaying at "Paradise Valley"
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	3 or 4 birds at Souss Massa
Lanner	<i>Falco biarmicus erlangeri</i>	1 over the plains near the Tadglit Track
Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus pelegrinoides</i>	A mating pair beyond at a roadside stop and 1 flyby near the Tadglit Track
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus minor</i>	1 at Aoulouz and on chasing larks at Oukaineden
Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris Barbara spatzi</i>	2 at Souss Massa and 1 heard at a roadside stop
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	41 at Souss Massa
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus himantopus</i>	4 or 5 at Oued Souss
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	2 on the beach at Tamri
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus saharae</i>	4 or 5 at Oued Souss on consecutive nights and 1 calling

		near Commune Sidi Wassay
Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	3 on the plateaux above the Souss Massa, at least 40 on in the areas surrounding the Tadglit Track and other small numbers in desert areas
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Several at Oued Souss and Souss Massa
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Several at Oued Souss
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Several at Oued Souss
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	1 bird on the beach at Tamri
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	1 or 2 at Souss Massa and at least 12 at Merzouga Lake
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	1 at Souss Massa and 1 at the Draa River Valley
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	1 at Souss Massa and several at Oued Souss
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	At least five at Oued Souss
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos hypoleucos</i>	3 at the Oued Souss
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	1 bird on the beach at Tamri
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Several birds at Oued Souss
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	1 at the lake behind Café Jasmine and 1 Souss Massa
Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>	18 near the Tadglit Track with several heard in suitable habitat
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	3 genuine birds seen between Ouzarzate and Marrakech beyond the Draa River Valley
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Common in the mountains with small numbers seen elsewhere
Pharaoh Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>	1 seen very well at roost on a rockface at an undisclosed site in the Draa River valley
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua saharae (solitudinis)</i>	2 near Commune Sidi Wassay and 1 at Oukaineden
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1 at the Souss Massa and 1 at Aoulouz
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	2 and 1 heard at Toofiat
Levaillant's Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis vaillantii</i>	A pair on the way to Oukaineden
Thick-billed Lark	<i>Ramphocoris clotbey</i>	At least 25 present in the area of the Tadlit track
Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea rubiginosa</i>	Several at the Tadglit track and throughout & 2 seen well near Café Jasmin
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis harterti</i>	A small flock at the Tadglit track only
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris atlas</i>	At least 30 present at Oukaineden in the Atlas mountains
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	1 at Souss Massa
Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola mauretanicus</i>	Several at Souss Massa bridge
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica rufula</i>	2 near Souss Massa and 2 at Aoulouz
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	1 at Souss Massa and 1 in the Todra Gorge with Crag Martins
Moroccan Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba subpersonata</i>	1 near Souss Massa and 3 seen well at Ouzarzate Res
Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	1 flyby - not ID'd to race at Souss Massa
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Numerous in the Todra Gorge
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	1 at Aoulouz
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Several at Draa Valley and 2 at Ait

		<b>Ben Hadou</b>
<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus viscivorus bonapartei</i>	2 at Amergane café and one at Oukaineden
<b>Reed Warbler</b>	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	2 seen at Souss Massa
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Not as common as Chiffchaff but small numbers seen at Souss Massa
<b>African Desert Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia nana deserti</i>	A pair displaying in the Merzouga desert with at least 5 in total seen during the day
<b>Spectacled Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	Singletons seen throughout – never easy or numerous
<b>Tristram's Warbler</b>	<i>Sylvia deserticola moroccana</i>	4 birds seen, 1 in the Todra Gorge, 2 Merzouga Desert and 1 near Alfif plains
<b>Robin</b>	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Heard and seen singly in the Todra Gorge and the mountains
<b>Northern Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	1 near the Tadglit Track and one in the Merzouga desert
<b>Mourning Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe lugens halophila</i>	A pair seen on a scree slope between the Tadglit track and Ouzarzate
<b>Red-rumped Wheatear</b>	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>	At least 4 pairs seen in the vicinity of the Tadglit track only
<b>Fulvous Babbler</b>	<i>Turdoides fulvus moroccanus</i>	Groups of 8, 7 & 3 seen around Alfif and surrounding plains with acacias
<b>Coal Tit</b>	<i>Pariparus ater atlas</i>	Common in the Atlas mountains only
<b>Great Tit</b>	<i>Parus major excelsus</i>	Common in the Atlas mountains
<b>African Blue Tit</b>	<i>Cyanistess ultramarinus</i>	Numerous in the mountains and 1s seen and heard elsewhere
<b>Short-toed Treecreeper</b>	<i>Certhia brachydactyla mauretania</i>	1 at the mountain stop in Amergane
<b>Woodchat Shrike</b>	<i>Lanius senator</i>	1 seen outside the hotel at Erg Chebbi
<b>Black-crowned Tchagra</b>	<i>Tchagra senegala cucullata</i>	2 seen and 6 heard at the Souss Masa. 1 displaying and 1 heard at Aoulouz.
<b>Magpie</b>	<i>Pica pica mauretania</i>	Ones and two seen throughout easy and common at Souss Masa
<b>Red-billed Chough</b>	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax barbarus</i>	Only in the mountains and most common at Oukaimeden
<b>Alpine Chough</b>	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	Only in Oukaimeden where they were numerous
<b>Brown-necked Raven</b>	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>	7 or 8 seen only in the Merzouga Desert area
<b>Common Raven</b>	<i>Corvus corax tingitanus</i>	Pairs seen travelling and 6 at Oukaimeden
<b>Desert Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer simplex</i>	2 near Café Jasmine and 5 in the Merzouga desert
<b>Rock Sparrow</b>	<i>Petronia petronia Barbara</i>	1 in the Todra Gorge and numerous at Oukaimeden
<b>Crossbill</b>	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	2 at Toofiat in the mountains
<b>Brambling</b>		A male & female at Oukaimeden Ski Resort
<b>Siskin</b>	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	6 in the Todra Gorge
<b>Hawfinch</b>	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes burryi</i>	2 at Toofiat in the mountains
<b>Cirl Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	1 male seen at Aoulouz
<b>Rock Bunting</b>	<i>Emberiza cia Africana</i>	1 male at Todra Gorge, 1 in the Tiz-n-Tichka pass and 2 at Oukaimeden



<b>Corn Buntin</b>	<b><i>Emberiza calandra</i></b>	<b>1 along the road near Tizi ikc Nante and 1 singing at Amergane cafe</b>
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### **Summary**

An excellent tour; a fantastic location with a knowledgeable leader, knowing the sites and a keen group all contributed to an enjoyable ten days. The trip was made all the more enjoyable due to the friendships forged and the camaraderie that the group generated with everyone's opinions and comments being accepted and respected. Despite the fact that Houbara, Crowned Sandgrouse (both always going to be difficult) and Crimson-winged Finch were not seen, it was not for the want of searching especially in the case of Houbara and the Finch. The Sandgrouse was heard and perhaps could have been located with further searching, however the group decided to get to grips with grilling the various Larks. All the specialities were seen remarkably well and as a group we were all happy with the collective decisions that were made.

**By Mike Easterbrook**