



Birdwatching Holidays in Spain, Morocco & more...

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BIRD HIGHLIGHTS

TOUR	DATES
Morocco	14th March to 24th April 2012

Party:

Tour Leader : Josele J. Saiz

Total Number of Species : 182

Weather & Sites:

Day 1 – 14.03.12	Nice and sunny Marrakesh airport – Atlas Mountains Okaimeden
Day 2 – 15.03.12	Nice and sunny Marrakesh - Oukaimeden
Day 3 – 16.03.12	Nice and sunny Marrakesh – BRWP – Amerzgane –Ouarzazate Reservoir - Boumalne
Day 4 – 17.04.12	Nice and cloudy Boumalne Dades- Tagdilt Track – Dades Gorge– Imitier
Day 5 – 18.04.12	Nice and cloudy Dades River – Goulmina – Rissanni - Merzouga
Day 6 – 19.04.12	Nice clouds and sunny Merzouga Oasis - Begaa
Day 7 – 20.03.12	Nice sunny and windy Erg Chebi Dune – Café Yasmine – Zaf-Zaf - Tafilal
Day 8 – 21.03.12	Cloudy and storms Risanni cliffs – Tinerhir palm grove – Ouarzazate Reservoir.
Day 9 – 22.03.12	Clouds and sunny Ouarzazate Reservoir – Ouarzazate Plains –Aoulouz – Sous valley - Agadir
Day 10 – 23.03.12	Cloudy windy dusty Souss Massa – Oued Souss - Agadir
Day 11 – 24.03.12	Cloudy but nice Tamri – Marrakesh airport

Money for conservation has gone to : **Desert Sparrow Project in Merzouga**

RECOMMENDED SIGNS:

Vista/Seen (X) Oida/Heard (H) Abundant (XXX) Common (XX) Rare (+) Juvenile (Juv) Immature (Inm)

74	Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>					7						6		
75	Rock Dove / Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
76	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		x	x									x	x
77	Eurasian Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>			x				x	x		x			
78	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
79	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>			x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
80	Pharaoh Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>					1								
81	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua saharae</i>												x	
82	Egyptian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus aegyptius</i>							1						
83	Red-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>												3	
84	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>					x	x			x		x	x	x
85	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	x	x	x								x	x	
86	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>											4		x
87	Common Kingfisher												h		
88	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>						20+							
89	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>											x	x	x
90	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
91	Whyrneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>							x						
92	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>						x							
93	Levaillant's Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis vaillantii</i>	1	2											
94	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cincturus arenicolor</i>							4	4					
95	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti payni</i>				10	10+	2		6	2	x			
96	Greater Hoopoe Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>					6	1	4	2	1				
97	Thick-billed Lark	<i>Ramphocoris clotbey</i>					1	3	2						
98	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea rubiginosa</i>				x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
99	Lesser-short Toead Lark	<i>Calandrella rufescens minor</i>					2								
100	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata randonii</i>						x	x		x	x	x	x	x
101	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae aguirrei</i>		h	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x
102	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>		3											
103	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila a bilopha</i>			6	6	1								
104	Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>						x		x	x			x	
105	Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola mauretanica</i>												5	
106	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	x	x	x	x								x	
107	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
108	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica rufula</i>						x	x	x			x	x	x
109	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>				x	x	x	x	x	x	xx	x	x	x
110	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Moroccan wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba subersonata</i>											x	x	
111	Blue headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>						x	x						
	Spanish Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flavalberiae</i>					x	x	x	x			x	x	
112	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	x	x											
113	Twany Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>							x						
114	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>						x	x				x	x	
115	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			x										
116	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x
117	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>			x										
118	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>			x										
119	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			h										
120	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>											2		
121	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula mauretanica</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
122	Song Thrush								h						
123	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus bonapartei</i>			x										
124	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>											x	x	x
125	Streaked Scrub Warbler	<i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>						6							
126	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		h	h			1				h	2		
127	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>								x				h	
128	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>								x					x
129	Isabeline Warbler	<i>Hippolais opaca</i>												2	
130	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>				x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x
131	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
132	Iberian Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita brehmii</i>								1?					
133	W Bonellis Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>							x	x					
134	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	x	x				x					x		
135	African Desert Warbler	<i>Sylvia nana deserti</i>							3						
136	Greater Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>								x					
137	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
138	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
139	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>													x
140	Tristram's Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserticola moroccana</i>						1							
141	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	x												
142	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>						x		x	x				
143	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>						x							
144	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>			x	x	x								
145	Comon Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>							x	x	x	x			
146	Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>			4	3	1	x						x	x

Bird of the tour

- John Packer – **Moussier's Redstart**
- Neil Frampton – **Cream Coloured Courser**
- Dave Anderson - **Black Shouldered Kite**
- Dennis Hall – **Thick Billed Lark**
- Maurice Dengate – **Bonelli's Eagle**
- Rita Dengate - **Cream Coloured Courser**
- Gerald Bailey – **Crimson Wing Finch**
- Pauline Bailey – **Lanner Falcon**
- Barbara Clay - **Cream Coloured Courser**
- Peter Deans - **Moussier's Redstart**
- Janet Deans – **Moussier's Redstart**
- Josele J Saiz – **Desert Sparrow**

Moroccan Specialities from 14th March 24th 2012

What we saw

Bald Ibis – More than 50 birds walking and feeding in Tamri area and nearby along the coast.

Marbled Duck – Despite this year the best site for the species - the Lake of Merzouga - being dry, we were lucky to find a group of 2 birds in the Ouarzazate Reservoir more than 20 at Souss Massa and at least 2 more at Oued Souss

Long-legged Buzzard – Common in the "hammada" plains and other parts of southern Morocco.

Lanner Falcon – Excellent views an adult early morning hunting at The Tagdilt Track. Two adults perched in the cliffs near Rissani.

Barbary Falcon – Two birds perched in the cliffs near Rissani.

Barbary Partridge – 10 birds were disturbed when walking near Tadourant , 2 more birds crossing the track when waiting for the late Red Necked Nightjag, we had 2 on the ground just before dusk.

Cream Coloured Courser – During the drive to Boumalne, 4 individuals were located not far from Ouarzazate. Several encounters of different groups from Boumalne and Merzouga. Remarkable two birds 3 metres from the coach at the Tagdilt Track

Spotted Sandgrouse - Near Rissani more than 50+ individuals walking no more than 20 metres from the group, .

Crowned Sandgrouse – At Mfis more than 50 birds early morning in the nearby allotments landing for drinking.

Laughing Dove – Common in the Sous-Massa area as well as in the Erg Chebi oases.

Pharoah Eagle Owl – Superb views in daylight of one bird perched near Tinerhir.

Egyptian Nightjar – Thanks to our nomad in Mfis (now used by all companies) we enjoyed superb early morning views of an individual flying over the stony desert

Little Swift - Common in Marrakesh and Agadir.

Blue-cheeked Bee Eater – The specie we failed in the previous tour arrived late than usual, We ahd a group of more than 20 birds near Jorf.

Levaillant's Woodpecker – One bird at Ourika Valley flew over our heads. Before Okaimeden we had a lovely male perch in a pylon for few minutes few kilometres later in the same road a male was perched in a leave less Walnut tree fro a long time.

Bar-tailed Lark – Common bird in the sandy areas of southern Morocco, with several close encounters to study them.

Desert Lark- Common in the rocky areas south of the Atlas and quite confident. Several pairs displaying.

Greater Hoopoe Lark – One of the stars of the Moroccan avifauna. We had superb views of several pairs displaying; the male sings and jumps up in the air, diving down in "Kamikaze" fashion, but always surviving to do it again. A real natural attraction.

Thick-Billed Lark – After a long search in the clean areas of the Tagdlit Track without success we went to the rubbish tip where we fond one single nibvird surrounded by trash (a shame). Luckily near Boulmane Dades we found 3 more on its rocky habitat feeding seeds. Near Mfis 2 birds where very confident on the ground while we were searching for Desert Warbler.

Horned Lark – I´ve seen and significant decrease of this species in the Atlas. Only three birds we could localize after a long search in the Okaimeden valley.

Temminck´s Lark - Common in the "hammada stoney desert". Elegant walker through the artemisa vegetation, the small stones and between the numerous plastic bags of the dirty "Plasdilt" track.

Plain Martin – We had good views of 5 birds of the last individuals breeding in the Sous Massa National Park.

Common Bulbul – The commonest Moroccan speciality spread through almost all habitats, except in the alpine meadows. Noisy singer early morning in Agadir.

Streaked-Scrub Warbler – A record for us 6 birds in not more than 500 metres near Goulmine.

Isabelline Warbler – Recently split from Western Olivaceous Warbler. We had few numbers of them singing and displaying in Sous Massa National Park.

African Desert Warbler - 3 different birds in 3 different stops in the right habitat near Merzouga desert.

Tristram's Warbler – At Dades Gorge we had 1 individual really close.

Moussier's Redstart – This jewel of Morocco is common from Oukaimeden at 2,600 metres above sea level right through to the Sous Massa, near Agadir, at just a few metres above sea level. Many enjoyable stops to study this beautiful creature.

White-crowned Wheatear – The commonest wheatear in the desert and stoney desert areas of Morocco associated with urbanisation. Many chances to return with good photographs of this species.

Magreb Wheatear- Formally part of the Mourning Wheatear species. An obliging bird came where we were preparing our lunch.

Red-rumped Wheatear – Very common along the Tagdilt Track and hammada desert from Ouarzazate to Tinerhir. We recorded countless individuals during our visits to the proper habitats.

Desert Wheatear - Beautiful wheatear, although not numerous, is well spread in the desert areas. Several pairs along the Tagdilt Track, Ouarzazate Plains and Oued Derkaoua.

African Blue Tit – Common in the Atlas and the river beds to the south of the High Atlas.

Black-crowned Tchagra – Scarce and localised along the Atlantic coast and the Sous Valley influence. One individual was singing at Sous Massa and performed for us his sweet song from a tree, we left the area and he was still singing.

Brown-necked Raven – Confined to the desert, we had excellent views early in the morning and late in the day, of several individuals. We were able to appreciate that the "chocolate brown" colour is spread throughout the body, apart from the wings and not confined only to the neck. A big flock of more than 70 individuals flying at Erg Chebi

Desert Sparrow - At Erg Cheby dunes we had amazing views of a pair perch on a bush with the first light of the morning. Other pair near the next box at Albergue Jazmina

Fulvous Babbler - 4 birds in the Begaa oasis jumping from palm to pam tree.

Trumpeter Finch – Nomadic bird well spread in southern Morocco. Good numbers of birds drinking in the oases and feeding in the oueds.

Crimson-winged Finch – A group of 30 birds were feeding near the Okaimeden sky resort. We saw few more, probably from the original bunch, when walking along the Okaimenden valley.

What we missed

Houbara Bustard – Since our first year visiting Morocco, in 2003, we have sought the opinions of the local nomads and drivers. We are now sure that the wild specimens had disappeared in the area by the beginning of the 1990's. The individuals you can see today in Merzouga in February/March are those realised from captivity in December to be

hunted with falcons by the Arabian Kingdom's falconers. These Houbara Bustards never survive until the summer, being predated by foxes and other predators. If any of them try to breed, the net of local wardens working for the Arabians are paid 20€ for each Houbara Bustard egg. Although we will devote some time to searching for the Houbaras, just in case, I recommend you do not 'tick' it as a proper species.