

Morocco

12–23 February 2013

Participants

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Dupont's Lark

A personal report by Andrew Przeslak

Day 1, 12th February

Just after midday we all met up together at Marrakesh airport with Peter Lansdown, our leader, and our driver Mohammed. Everyone was very enthusiastic and keen to get out in the field. It took just over two hours to drive south, up into the mountains of the High Atlas. En route we saw the birds we were to find most days – White Storks, Spotless Starlings, Barn Swallows flying through and Common Bulbuls. We stopped briefly at a view point to watch European Serins, Eurasian Crag-martins and a Southern Grey Shrike.

Our first destination was Oukaimeden, which consisted of a village and ski resort in a hanging valley. There was no snow in the car park or the surrounding slopes. The meadows had a large flock of Red-billed and Yellow-billed Choughs. We explored the road leading to the top car-park and the area of the ski-lift. Here we found a small mixed flock of Horned Larks and Crimson-winged Finches. Both were very tame, providing good photographic opportunities. They were feeding close by and would soon return when disturbed. On the surrounding rocky slopes we saw Rock Petronias, Black Redstart and we watched our first raptor – a Long-legged Buzzard in the middle distance.

In order to connect with another of the characteristic birds of the mountains we now drove up to the area of the radio masts, over-looking the village. The view was magnificent, and we also found three Alpine Accentors. They showed very well on the rocks in the vicinity of the huts.

We finished the day back at the village where we watched the Crimson-winged Finches at close quarters, together with African Blue Tit and the African sub-species of Common Chaffinch.



Day 2, 13th February

As most days during this trip, the day started early, packing in preparation for the move to a new hotel and for a long drive. The early start allowed us to slowly investigate the village of Ourika. This paid dividends as we soon found a Levillant's Woodpecker on a concrete post along the road. Although it soon flew off, we investigated the area and soon everyone had got good views of the woodpeckers, of which there were at least two or three in the vicinity.

We continued up to Oukaimeden and this time concentrated more on the area of the village itself. Here we eventually found several Rock Buntings and two Bramblings. We then walked down the road to the small reservoir and the stream leading from it. Here we watched a Green Sandpiper and Black Wheatear with a White-throated Dipper lower down along the stream.

We left the area and started the long drive north to the coast. However, we stopped lower down in the mountains at a layby giving good all-round views. Here we connected with our first Moussier's Redstart, a gaudy male which showed really well. Simultaneously, the call went up for two Bonelli's Eagles in the distance over one of the ridges.

Our next stop was in Marrakesh to buy food. Here we were able to watch Little Swifts over the roof-tops with the Pallid Swifts and House Buntings on the buildings.

An interesting stop later, on the way to the coast, was among cultivated fields and here we watched Corn Buntings and displaying Calandra larks.

Further on, the journey was enlivened by a Black-shouldered Kite, and many Cattle and Little Egrets in the fields. We arrived at our hotel in Temara Plage at around sunset.

Day 3, 14th February

We left the hotel for the Zaers and arrived in position just after 8am. This was our attempt to find one of the key birds of the trip – Double-spurred Francolin. The habitat was gently sloping forested hills with dense undergrowth, either side of the road. This made seeing our shy quarry very difficult. Over the following three hours we heard about four individuals calling, occasionally not far from us. We checked out all the available tracks, starting at the southern end (near the gate at position 5 in Dave Gosney's booklet) and walking northwards. On the way, we got good views of Wood Lark and Sardinian Warbler. There was a Ferruginous Duck on the pool near the Royal Hunting Lodge. We spent some time along the stretch of the road overlooking the valley north of the Lodge, as this gave more extensive views and at least three of the calling individuals were heard here. Also one or two tracks could be seen from the vantage point of the roadside. It was here that we finally saw a Double-spurred Francolin. Unfortunately, it was brief and only three or four of us actually saw it. The bird was in the middle of a distant track almost on the sky-line. It stood in the middle of the track looking around. After a few seconds, it slowly ambled across the track and into the undergrowth.

We drove on to Lac de Sidi Bourhaba which we found to be a marvellous place for a wide range of water birds. Ducks were well represented with all the commoner species together with Marbled Teal, Ferruginous Duck and White-headed Duck. Red-knobbed Coot showed well, particularly from the causeway. We found a Great Egret, a Squacco Heron and watched a Booted Eagle mobbed by two Common Ravens. There were also brief views of a Purple Swamphen in the reeds. This was a beautiful and remarkable habitat. All too soon, we had to move on for our next location.

The journey northwards took us to a dirt-track which leads round Merdja Zerga. This was very pot holed and very slow going. We eventually reached the canal and followed a track along the canal which by-passed the local villages. Unfortunately we were soon stopped by a large tree trunk across the track. We walked the rest of the way to a position just beyond the second village, seeing Eurasian Marsh-harriers, Common House-martins and a Common Kingfisher on the way. A single Marsh Owl showed from about 6:15pm. It was seen several times in flight and perched on a post in the marsh. We could see the distinctive face pattern and the generally plain brown plumage. The local children were rather a nuisance here and caused a significant amount of disturbance to the bird.

The walk back to the minibus gave us a Tawny Owl and Little Owl. We arrived at our hotel in Moulay Bouselham after dark, but very pleased with an incredible day's birding.

Day 4, 15th February

Today was another day with lots of travel. This time south and across the Middle Atlas to Midelt. But it would still give us good opportunities for stops and interesting birds. We were disappointed when we left the hotel to see that we had dense fog. This meant that looking out over Medja Zerga was a waste of time. As a result, we carried on hoping that we would soon leave the fog behind.

It was still quite early when we reached the roadside pools at Souk el Arba el Gharb and it was still misty. But the site was still very productive for waders. Black-winged Stilts, Ruffs, sandpipers (Common, Green and Wood) and plovers – Little Ringed and Kentish were seen, with the highlight being a Glossy Ibis. Barn Swallows and Bank Swallows (Sand Martins) were flying through. Yellow Wagtails of the Spanish sub-species joined White Wagtails and Common Snipe round the edges.

As we continued further south, we soon left the mist behind leaving a fine sunny day with a clear sky, as we were becoming used to each day. A brief stop in El Hajeb to stock up with food for lunch gave us good views of Lesser Kestrels. We soon continued to Dayet Aoua.

We drove along the south shore of Dayet Aaoua and stopped beyond the King's residence. From here we watched many Black-necked Grebes, some in full summer plumage. There were also a number of waders (Black-winged Stilts, Green and Common Sandpipers) and a Water Pipit. Further out, we noticed a pair of Ruddy Shelducks.

We had lunch along the track above the lake and investigated the trees for woodland birds. We succeeded in finding a Hawfinch, Red Crossbills, Great Spotted Woodpecker, a Short-toed Treecreeper, Firecrest and Cirl Buntings.

We drove on through the cedar forests of the Middle Atlas. As we passed the lake of Aguelmane Sidi Ali we were amazed to find more than 180 grazing Ruddy Shelducks spread out in pairs over the high wet meadows. We continued to our very comfortable, traditional hotel at Midelt.

Day 5, 16th February



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Dupont's Lark Habitat

This was another day when an early start was necessary to find a key bird. We set out before sunrise for the Zeida Plain. We drove off the main road and onto the track eastwards for about half a mile. From here we started searching. We found singing Lesser Short-toed Larks and a pair of Red-rumped Wheatears. A pair of Black-bellied Sandgrouse flew over giving us good views. After over two hours, we were giving up hope. And then, there it was! As we were walking back to the minibus, Kay had found a Dupont's Lark only 30 yards away. As we all watched, the lark ran quickly between the low bushes, pausing occasionally and giving us amazing views to remember. It showed a long down-curved bill and was a streaky sandy-brown colour. It had a pale supercilium and a very slim build. It was certainly one of the major highlights of the whole trip. Daniel and David Ryves managed to get fantastic photographs that we all drooled over.

We returned in high spirits back to the hotel for a late breakfast. The onward drive continued down the rocky Ziz Gorge. We stopped at the Tunnel du Legionnaire to check out the crags and cliffs. Here we were rewarded with Eurasian Crag-martins, House Bunting, Black Wheatear and Desert Lark. Further down the gorge we saw White-tailed (White-crowned Black) Wheatear and Blue Rock-thrush. Nearer Erfoud we finally found a 'Maghreb Wheatear', the Moroccan race of Mourning Wheatear. We also had Desert Wheatear.

From Erfoud to our hotel at Derkaoua, we travelled in three 4x4s, giving us sufficient time to do some birding in the vicinity of the hotel. In the late afternoon sun, we watched a Moussier's Redstart, Bar-tailed and Crested Larks and another White-tailed Wheatear. On the way back, we noticed two Striped Hawk-moths hovering round the flowers of the parasitic yellow broomrape.

Day 6, 17th February



This was our day in the desert, travelling in the 4-wheel drive vehicles. We started by investigating two near-by wadis. The first, near Kasbah Said, came up trumps with an obliging singing African Desert Warbler. There were also Bar-tailed Larks. The second with a palm tree plantation nearer Derkaoua gave Moussier's Redstart, Eurasian Hoopoe and Southern Grey Shrike. As we were leaving we made a quick stop as Kevin had seen a cuckoo fly past. It turned out to be a Great Spotted Cuckoo, which sat up in a palm tree crown for us all to admire.

From here, we drove deeper into the desert towards the towering sand dunes of Erg Chebbi. We stopped regularly to watch Greater Hoopoe-larks and Cream-coloured Coursers. By mid-morning, we were close to Kasbah Yasmina, so we stopped for refreshments and to check-out their grounds. All the sparrows here were House Sparrows. The nest-box usually used by a pair of Desert Sparrows had been damaged. We were alerted to a group of over-flying birds by their calls and they landed at the nearby pools. Hurrying closer, we saw that they were nine Spotted Sandgrouse. After a few minutes, they flew off. We returned to our examination of the tamarisks trees. We were rewarded by a lovely male Tristram's Warbler that showed well. After this we felt that we deserved some refreshment. Drinking on the terrace, we watched a very distant raptor (probably a Lanner Falcon) sitting on a sand-dune being mobbed by two Brown-necked Ravens. The ravens eventually gave up and we saw a group of at least eight later on a lot closer.

From Yasmina, we drove south and east. We searched for likely habitat for other desert birds and eventually stopped at a single tree, ruined hut and small encampment. The water in a shallow trough drew in a range of birds. We were fortunate to find a pair of Desert Sparrows, the male a handsome pale grey with black markings and bill; the female a more subdued sandy buff, but with the same black bill.

Returning towards Yasmina we saw the same range of species, so we continued towards Risani. On the outskirts we stopped to investigate a palm tree plantation and found Fulvous Chatterers. A lookout was constantly on watch, so gave good views although we did not approach too close.

Late afternoon found us at the pharaoh eagle owl site near Risani. We waited hopefully till dark and watched a Lanner Falcon on the cliffs. However, the owl failed to show so we made do with the close views of the falcon instead.

Day 7, 18th February



Today we left the sandy desert and started the drive back west that would eventually take us to Agadir. But there would be lots of birding before then. From Erfoud we drove through Jorf, stopping about 16km further along. Here there was a roadside well on the left. The water here attracted a range of birds and we got very close views of Trumpeter Finches, Desert Larks and Thekla Larks. Also, close by, a Spectacled Warbler was found. The photographers had a field day, not knowing where to point. There was a wadi running parallel to the road which we followed on foot and this gave us small flocks of Lesser Short-toed Larks, a Desert Wheatear and three Scrub Warblers of the African sub-species. Two of the Scrub Warblers were quite distant, but another was found much closer.

Driving onwards, we had lunch and spent most of the afternoon in the area of the Tagdilt Track. Unfortunately the roadside drinking pools (location 5 in Dave Gosney's booklet) were dry. But as we approached the pools we saw a Long-legged Buzzard perched on a hummock by the road giving very close views. We found that the most productive area was part of the main wadi used as the local rubbish dump, so care was required in negotiating the mess. Although there were many dogs scavenging, they kept their distance and didn't bother us. We found Temminck's, Lesser short-toed, Thekla, Desert and Thick-billed larks as well as Red-rumped Wheatear.

As the light started to fade, we went off to our hotel in nearby Boumalne de Dades. This turned out to be the Hotel Xaluca which gave us a taste of Moroccan luxury in the desert, surrounded by the mountains.

Day 8, 19th February

Today dawned wet and drizzly – not what we had come to expect! Our breakfast and packing was a bit more leisurely as we hoped that the rain would stop. We drove out to the Tagdilt Track and soon the clouds lifted, giving us an opportunity to watch any species we had missed the previous day. We concentrated on the open plain. We saw Black-bellied Sandgrouse fly over, several Greater Hoopoe-larks at close quarters and many of the species seen yesterday. A distant pair of Barbary Falcons were on the wing.

We drove on to Ouarzazate and the Barrage el Mansour, where we had lunch. Peter reported that the level of the lake was much lower than last year, so it had reduced significantly in extent. This meant that the bank where we had approached the lake was still well away from the lake proper. However, there was a pool and stream close by, with some reedy banks. This enabled us to watch the local Moroccan sub-species of White Wagtail, Water Pipits and a skulking winter-plumage Bluethroat. Nearby, a large flock of Black Kites were going to roost. By the main lake, we were

amazed to see a White-fronted Goose as well as about 300 Ruddy Shelducks. An Osprey sat on a bare branch by the lake and a Eurasian Marsh-harrier soared in the distance. There were numerous waders including Black-winged Stilts, Greenshank, Little and Temminck's stints.

Day 9, 20th February

The following morning was spent in the same place. Red-rumped and Barn Swallows were flying through in some numbers. The Black Kites and White Storks were still in their separate roosts. We also found Short-toed Larks and Northern Wheatears.

The rest of the day was our last long drive of the trip. Our continuing westward journey took us along the Souss valley. Here the landscape changed yet again. The hillsides were dotted with argan trees. Occasionally we would see goats climbing up the trees to eat the leaves. A stop for lunch gave us the opportunity for a closer look. Scouting around after lunch was successful in finding Woodchat Shrike and then a Western Orphean Warbler already on territory.

Various roadside stops during the afternoon gave us further views of numerous species including Eurasian Hoopoe, Moussier's Redstart, Southern-grey Shrike, a ring-tailed Hen Harrier, Sardinian Warbler and most notably, a Black-shouldered Kite sitting on a post and then devouring a lizard it had just caught. We arrived at our final hotel in Agadir which was to be our base for the remaining three days. Even though the light was fading fast, we were able to admire the Yellow-legged Gulls in the hotel grounds and swimming pool!

Day 10, 21st February

This morning we started by driving north out of Agadir towards Tamri. Our first stop was at Taghazoute Bay, just beyond the surfing centre. Here, we were able to watch the gulls on the beach, do a bit of sea watching and check-out the rocky slopes above us. The beach gave close views of about 20 Audouin's Gulls. The sea-watching was very productive with both Arctic and Pomarine Skuas visible. Around distant fishing boats we were able to pick out at least two European Storm-petrels. Then a Whimbrel put in an appearance on the beach. Cynthia then found two Barbary Partridges crossing a track on the hillside above us, but unfortunately not everyone managed to see them.

We continued to Cap Rhir where we stopped by the lighthouse and walked down to a view-point. On the way down Black Wheatears, House Buntings and a Southern Grey Shrike were in evidence. Sea watching over a calm sea, we saw at least three Great Skuas and Common Scoters flying past. But we were all delighted to see a pod of cetaceans. They appeared to be quite large, all black, bullet-nosed with pointed scimitar dorsal fins. At first they swam fast northwards and then started logging and splashing about. There were about 10 in the pod. The shape of the dorsal fin seemed to rule out pilot whales, but we could not decide on the precise species.

We stopped again further on when we saw eight Waldrapps (Northern Bald Ibis) fly past and then settle in the rocky scrub between the road and the sea. Despite the slightly ugly appearance of their bare heads with scruffy crest, their black plumage showed green and brown iridescence in the bright sunshine. We explored the scrubby hillside further and found a sub-alpine warbler close by. There were flight views of two more Barbary Partridges, calling as they flew off. The area seemed very rich in lizards and various butterflies. We noted Painted Lady butterflies (*Vanessa cardui*), Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*), Allard's Silver-line (*Cigaritis allardii*) and Moroccan Hairstreak (*Tomares mauretanicus*). There were many others which just flew too fast and disappeared in the scrub once at rest. At the lunch stop we watched more Waldrapps as well as Spanish Sparrow and Osprey.

Having enjoyed the Tamri area, we then drove off to the Souss estuary, just south of Agadir. As it was only mid-afternoon we had time to walk right down the river to the beach. The river was a magnet for a wide range of waders and gulls, as well as Eurasian Spoonbills, Greater Flamingos and Sandwich Terns. All the Mediterranean Gulls seemed to have coloured rings. There were also a number of Slender-billed Gulls. We were able to watch the *mauritanica* sub-species of Eurasian Magpie in close detail with its bright blue patch behind the eye. We saw at least four Little Owls. As the light faded we made our way towards the palace walls hoping to see Red-necked Nightjars in the flood lights. Unfortunately, the guards were adamant that we should not go anywhere close, even preventing our approach to the pools in the marshes. We had to be content with only hearing the nightjars, as well as Eurasian Thick-knee and Black-crowned Night-herons.



Day 11, 22nd February

Our second day in Agadir was mostly spent in the vicinity of the Oued Massa Reserve. We spent the morning around the bridge at Arhbalou. We watched from the bridge itself, as well as the tracks through the cultivated fields on either side. We got good views of Plain Martin on the river from the bridge. A delightful white-spotted Bluethroat was feeding in a nearby field. Laughing Doves were calling in the trees and Common Bulbuls, Zitting Cisticolas and Cetti's Warblers added to the soundscape. After hearing several singing in the undergrowth, we got amazing views of a Black-crowned Tchagra patrolling the edge of a field like a miniature colourful magpie.

We also walked leisurely along the access road to the Oued Massa reserve finding a number of Woodchat Shrikes, Blue Rock-thrush and Moussier's Redstart. A pair of Barbary Ground-squirrels chased each other around and over a wall.

We returned to Oued Souss to look for Red-necked Nightjar again but with the same results.

Day 12, 23rd February

This was our last day in Morocco. We spent it at Oued Souss again. There had been over-night rain and it was much more breezy. This time the tide was coming in and we hoped that it would bring in one or two other species. We briefly visited the pools in the marsh before being chased off by the insistent guards. However, we did see a Little Gull, a Eurasian Thick-knee, Black-tailed Godwit and a Pied Avocet, which we hadn't seen previously.

The last birding before the short drive to the airport was to check out the gulls and waders on the Souss by the car-park. It was Robert who found the last cracking bird of the trip. On the sand-bank with the other gulls he alerted us all to a Ring-billed Gull. It was the closest gull and had been missed by everyone else. It added the sparkle to the last day of an immensely successful trip. The

total bird species count came to 208 for the whole group. But more importantly, we had connected with virtually all our target birds.

Bird Species List

1. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: Many seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua. A group of ~9 at Oued Souss.
2. Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*: A few seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua. Also at Barrage el Mansour.
3. Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*: Many at Dayet Aaoua.
4. European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*: 2 seen distantly flying around fishing boats from Taghazout.
5. Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*: Many seen going north at Cap Rhir.
6. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus*: Mainly seen on the coast, especially at Oued Souss and Oued Massa.
7. Black-crowned Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Heard and seen at dusk at Oued Souss.
8. Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba.
9. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Many seen at lakes and on the coast.
10. Great Egret *Ardea alba*: Singles seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Oued Souss.
11. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Many seen in suitable habitat.
12. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: Common throughout north and west of the mountains.
13. Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*: About 25 seen at Oued Souss.
14. Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: Single seen on the roadside pools at Souk el Arba el Gharb.
15. Waldrapp *Geronticus eremite*: Several small flocks seen north of Cap Rhir, totalling about 24.
16. White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: Seen most days. Pairs on nests in main villages. Large flock on Barrage el Mansour.
17. Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*: About twenty at Oued Souss.
18. White-fronted Goose *Anser alibifrons*: An adult seen on the mud flats at Barrage el Mansour. Peter tells us that this is a very unusual species for Morocco (six records up to the end of 1999).
19. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*: One pair at Dayet Aaoua. But this was eclipsed by about 180+ grazing in the mountains at Aguelmame de Sidi Ali and about 300 at Barrage el Mansour.
20. Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, Dayet Aaoua and Barrage el Mansour.
21. Gadwall *Anas strepera* : Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua.
22. Common Teal *Anas crecca*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua and Barrage el Mansour.
23. Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*: A few seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and a pair at Barrage el Mansour and Oued Souss.
24. Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*: Many seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, Dayet Aaoua and Barrage el Mansour.
25. Marbled Teal *Marmoretta angustirostris*: Several seen very well at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and four at Barrage el Mansour.
26. Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*: Only seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba.
27. Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Oued Massa.
28. Common Pochard *Aythya ferrina*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua.
29. Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua.
30. Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*: Four flew past Cap Rhir.
31. White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*: Only seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba. But we got good views of several males and females feeding.
32. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: Single seen at Barrage el Mansour and at least two at Oued Souss.

33. Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: Brief or distant views several times. But perched individual watched close by the road in the cultivated fields of the Souss valley on the way to Agadir.
34. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: Small numbers seen near the coast. But a large flock present at Barrage el Mansour.
35. Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fusciatus*: A pair seen in the mountains south of Marrakesh. Also seen on the Tagdilt Plain.
36. Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*: An adult flew over the causeway at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, being mobbed by two ravens.
37. Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*: Seen most days with one perched bird very close by the Tagdilt Track.
38. Western Marsh-harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: Seen at several locations including Barrage el Mansour.
39. Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*: Single seen flying in the Souss valley on the way to Agadir.
40. Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*: Seen at several locations.
41. Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*: Watched at the Pharaoh Eagle Owl site near Risani.
42. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrines*: Seen in flight at Oued Souss, also possibly on the beach at the same location.
43. Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*: Seen at the Tagdilt Plain, in the Souss valley and in Agadir.
44. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*: Only seen at El Hajeb, where we stopped to buy food, and in some numbers on the same day closer to Ifrane.
45. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: Seen every day.
46. Barbary Partridge *Alectoris Barbara*: A pair seen in the scrub near Taghazout and five seen in flight on the hillside.
47. Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*: One heard along the access road to Oued Massa.
48. Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus*: One seen distantly in the Zaers along a track across the valley by some of the group; several heard by all at the same site.
49. Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*: One heard at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba.
50. Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, Dayet Aaoua and Barrage el Mansour.
51. Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*: One seen by some of the group at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, in the reeds by the causeway.
52. Common Coot *Fulica atra*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, Dayet Aaoua and Barrage el Mansour.
53. Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba and Dayet Aaoua.
54. Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*: Seen at Oued Souss.
55. Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: At several wet-land sites.
56. Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*: A single at Oued Souss.
57. Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oediconemus*: Heard and two seen at Oued Souss.
58. Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*: Several seen in the desert south of Erfoud.
59. Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: Not as commonly seen as the little ringed plovers.
60. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: Mixed flock with Kentish plovers at several sites including Oued Souss.
61. Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrines*: Mixed flock with little ringed plovers at several sites including Oued Souss.
62. Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: Several on the tidal mud at Oued Souss.
63. Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*: Seen at the south end of Merdja Zerga.
64. Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: Only seen at Oued Souss.
65. Red Knot *Calidris canutus*: One seen at Oued Souss.
66. Sanderling *Calidris alba*: Only seen at Oued Souss.
67. Dunlin *Calidris alpina*: Seen at Barrage el Mansour and Oued Souss.

68. Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: Seen at Barrage el Mansour and Oued Souss.
69. Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*: Three seen in groups of little stints at Barrage el Mansour.
70. Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus*: Seen at most of the wet-lands visited.
71. Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*: Singles seen at Souk el Arba el Gharb and Barrage el Mansour.
72. Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: Several seen at Barrage el Mansour and Oued Souss.
73. Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Seen at most of the wet-lands visited.
74. Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: Seen at the roadside pools at Souk el Arba el Gharb as well as Barrage el Mansour.
75. Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*: Seen at most of the wet-lands visited.
76. Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: Several seen at various sites.
77. Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: A single on the beach at Taghazout.
78. Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*: Seen mainly at Oued Souss.
79. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*: One found on the pools in the marsh at the Souss estuary.
80. Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: Several seen at Oued Souss.
81. Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*: Seen at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba, Merdja Zerga, the roadside pools at Souk el Arba el Gharb and also at Barrage el Mansour.
82. Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*: One seen from Taghazout and four from Cap Rhir.
83. Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*: Seen sea-watching from Taghazout.
84. Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*: One seen sea-watching from Taghazout.
85. Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*: About 20 at close quarters at Taghazout and about 50 at the Souss estuary.
86. Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*: Only seen in small numbers at the Souss estuary.
87. Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*: Seen at many of the wet-lands.
88. Little Gull *Larus minutes*: Only a single seen at Oued Souss.
89. Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*: An unexpected rarity (a second calendar year bird) found at Oued Souss.
90. Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*: About 50 seen at Oued Souss. Most were ringed.
91. Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*: In and around Agadir.
92. Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*: The commonest large gull.
93. Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*: One second calendar year bird seen at Oued Souss.
94. Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: Several seen along the Souss and Massa rivers.
95. Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*: 9 flew to the pools by Kasbah Yasmina.
96. Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*: Seen in flight on the Zaida plain and the Tagdilt plain.
97. Rock Dove *Columba livia*: Very common. Seen every day.
98. Stock Dove *Columba oenas*: Only two seen: at Dayet Aaoua.
99. Common Wood-pigeon *Columba palumbus*: Widespread throughout except in the deserts.
100. Eurasian Collared-dove *Streptopelia decaocto*: Widespread throughout.
101. Eurasian Turtle-dove *Streptopelia turtur*: Only seen occasionally.
102. Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*: Several seen near both Erfoud and Oued Massa.
103. Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator grandarius*: Unexpectedly seen at a wadi near Derkaoua.
104. Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*: Only seen at Merja Zerga.
105. Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*: Watched at Merja Zerga.
106. Little Owl *Athene noctua*: At several sites. About 8 seen in all.
107. Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis*: Two only heard at Oued Souss.
108. Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*: Widespread throughout.
109. Little Swift *Apus affinis*: Seen in several towns and cities including Marrakesh.
110. Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: Singles seen at Merja Zerga and near Oued Massa.

111. Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: Seen quite commonly.
112. Levaillant's Woodpecker *Picus vaillantii*: One heard at Oukaimeden. At least three seen around Ourika from the road. Showed very well on trees and telegraph poles. Another seen from the vehicle high on the approach road to Oukaimeden.
113. Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*: Seen near Oukaimeden, in the Zaers and in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.
114. Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*: Watched at the top car-park at Oukaimeden.
115. Temminck's Lark *Eremophila bilopha*: Seen really well on the Tagdilt Track.
116. Greater Hoopoe-lark *Alaemon alaudipes*: Several watched in the desert south of Erfoud, near Oued Rheris and on the Tagdilt Track.
117. Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*: Seen once only: a flock of about 20 at Barrage el Mansour.
118. Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens*: Many seen in the desert areas.
119. Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti*: Seen in the rockier desert areas as well as by the well near Jorf.
120. Bar-tailed Lark *Ammomanes cinctus*: Many seen in the desert areas.
121. Dupont's Lark *Cherosophilus duponti*: Probably the bird of the trip. After hearing several birds singing at Zaida Plain, one seen very close by everyone as it ran between the small clumps of low vegetation.
122. Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*: Several seen displaying in flight on the cultivated plains north of Marrakesh.
123. Thick-billed Lark *Ramphocoris clotbey*: Four seen really well on the Tagdilt Track.
124. Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*: At least two seen in the Zaers.
125. Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: Seen throughout in cultivated areas.
126. Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*: Several seen in the stone deserts. Particularly good views near Jorf.
127. Eurasian Crag-martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*: Seen regularly in all mountainous and rocky areas.
128. Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: Seen flying through at Souk el Arba el Gharb, Barrage el Mansour and Oued Massa.
129. Plain Martin *Riparia poludicula*: Several seen along the river at the bridge near the Oued Massa reserve.
130. Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*: Many seen flying through particularly at Barrage el Mansour and Oued Souss. Also, a few at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba.
131. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Seen every day, flying through.
132. House Martin *Delichon urbica*: Scattered sightings but numbers at Barrage el Mansour.
133. Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*: Scattered sightings at most wet-lands.
134. Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*: A single individual seen in the fields near the Oued Massa reserve.
135. Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*: Several seen at Dayet Aaoua and Barrage el Mansour.
136. White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*: Seen every day.
White (Moroccan) Wagtail *Motacilla alba subpersonata*: A localised sub-species with a distinctive head pattern, which was encountered frequently at the Barrage el Mansour and at Oued Souss, together with the more widespread race.
137. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*: Scattered sightings at wet-lands.
138. Yellow (Spanish) Wagtail *Motacilla flava Iberia*: Scattered sightings at most wet-lands. About 150 at Barrage el Mansour.
- Yellow (Blue-headed) Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava*: Only seen at Barrage el Mansour.
139. Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*: Seen in the mountains and by the coast in the north.
140. White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*: Two seen along the stream below Oukaimeden.
141. Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*: Common everywhere and part of the sound-scape of the country.

142. Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*: A few seen in the area of the radio masts above Oukaimeden village.
143. European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*: Seen and heard occasionally.
144. Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*: One skulking winter plumage female found at Barrage el Mansour. But a really showy male “white-spot” watched in the cultivated fields near Oued Massa.
145. Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*: Seen regularly in a variety of places.
146. Moussier's Redstart *Phoenicurus moussieri*: A beautiful endemic seen well in all parts of the country: High Atlas, Middle Atlas, desert areas and on the coast.
147. Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: Only seen at Barrage el Mansour.
148. Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*: Several seen in desert areas around and south of Erfoud. A very showy male watched near Jorf.
149. Mourning (Maghreb) Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens halophila*: Not encountered very often. Only two seen. One male showed very well along the road about 7km north of Erfoud. Another male was encountered near Jorf.
150. Red-rumped Wheatear *Oenanthe moesta*: Seen several times. A pair showed very well together on the Zaida plain. Others seen at the Tagdilt Track.
151. White-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*: Otherwise known as white-crowned black wheatear. Common in most desert areas. In some places, black crowned 1st year individuals were seen.
152. Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura*: Only seen in the mountains – Oukaimeden, the Ziz Gorge and en route through mountainous areas.
153. Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*: Widespread throughout.
154. Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*: Three south of Marrakech and one in the Zaers.
155. Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*: Seen in the High Atlas mountains and at Dayet Aaoua.
156. Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*: Seen almost every day.
157. Blue Rock-thrush *Monticola solitaries*: Several seen very well. Along the Ziz Gorge, at Cap Rhir and at Oued Massa. Generally, perched on walls, buildings or trees.
158. Streaked Scrub-warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*: Two pairs found near Jorf. One pair was seen distantly, but another was closer and seen much better.
159. Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*: Heard from water-side vegetation at several sites and seen at Oued Massa.
160. Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*: Found at the river Souss at Aoulouz. Also at Oued Massa.
161. Eurasian Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* One heard and seen and another heard only near Oued Massa.
162. Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: Seen at several locations.
163. Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*: One heard and seen well in the upper Souss Valley.
164. African Desert Warbler *Sylvia deserti*: One in a wadi near Kasbah Said and another east of Kasbah Yasmina. Both showed very well.
165. Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*: Very common in bushes and scrub.
166. Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*: Seen in scrub north of Cap Rhir. Also several at Oued Massa.
167. Tristram's Warbler *Sylvia deserticola*: Delightful male showed well in the tamarisks at Kasbah Yasmina.
168. Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*: Two seen very well near Jorf. One near Tamri.
169. Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: Single found at Oued Massa.
170. Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: Very common.
171. Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*: Common in most wetland habitats.
172. Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*: Seen in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.
173. Coal Tit *Parus ater*: Only found at Dayet Aaoua.

174. Great Tit *Parus major*: Occasionally heard and seen.
175. African Blue Tit *Parus teneriffae ultramarinus*: Seen at several locations including Oukaimeden and Dayet Aaoua.
176. Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*: Seen near Ifrane and in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.
177. Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*: Seen in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.
178. Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*: Widespread throughout. Most seemed to be of the subspecies *algeriensis* (darker cap and mantle with no / minimal white above the black face mask).
179. Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*: Seen among the argan trees in the upper Souss valley. Several at the Oued Massa reserve.
180. Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*: Heard in the Zaers. Only seen near Oued Massa, but showed very well, with several others heard there.
181. Fulvous Chatterer *Turdoides fulvus*: A group of at least 4 seen in a palm plantation on the outskirts of Risani, approaching from Merzouga.
182. Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica mauritanica*: Commonly seen at many locations. All appeared to be of the Moroccan subspecies, which is very distinctive, with the bright blue bare patch behind the eye.
183. Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*: Only noted on two days in the most northerly locations.
184. Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*: About 40 in the yellow-billed chough flock at Oukaimeden.
185. Yellow-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*: A flock of about 300 around Oukaimeden.
186. Common Raven *Corvus corax*: Small numbers seen in the mountains, the High and Middle Atlas.
187. Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*: In double figures in the desert south of Erfoud.
188. Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*: Only seen near Casablanca.
189. Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*: Seen quite frequently throughout, except in the deserts.
190. Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*: A lovely male watched along the coastal road north of Tamri and others seen at Oues Souss and Oued Massa.
191. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Common near habitation throughout.
192. Desert Sparrow *Passer simplex*: A delightful bird of subtle colouring and specialised habitat. Searched for in the desert south of Erfoud. The nestbox at Kasbah Yasmina was damaged and none could be found in the grounds (there was a large flock of house sparrows here). The proprietor of Yasmina was helpful in suggesting other sites. Two males and a female were found at an isolated location east of Yasmina. Fantastic birds.
193. Rock Petronia *Petronia petronia*: Seen very well on the rocky hillsides along the road towards the Oukaimeden ski-lift car park.
194. Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs coelebs*: Commonly seen at various sites from Oukaimeden northwards.
- (African) Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs africana*: This distinctive subspecies often seen together with the more usual one in the north but also seen in the Souss Valley and the Agadir area .
195. Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*: Seen in Oukaimeden village and in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.
196. European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: Small numbers seen at various locations.
197. European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*: Small numbers seen at various locations.
198. Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: One seen in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.
199. Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus*: Several seen very well at the well near Jorf. Also at Barrage el Mansour.
200. Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguinea alienus*: Flock of about 30 in and around Oukaimeden.
201. Eurasian Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*: Occasionally heard flying past, but also seen at the Barrage el Mansour, Oued Souss and Oued Massa.
202. European Serin *Serinus serinus*: Widespread and common throughout, except in the deserts.
203. Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*: Seen in the woods above Dayet Aaoua.

204. Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*: A lone female spotted at the causeway at Lac de Sidi Bourhaba. Considered at the southern edge of its range in Morocco.
205. Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*: Three seen in the woods above Dayet Aaoua. Also seen in the Souss Valley and at Oued Massa.
206. Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*: Seen on the cultivated plains north of Marrakesh and those south of Moulay Bousselham as well as in the Agadir area.
207. Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*: Two seen very well in Oukaimeden village.
208. House Bunting *Emberiza striolata sahari*: A species mainly associated with habitation. Seen in most villages and towns, on and even in the buildings.

Butterfly / Insect Species List:

- Plain Tiger
- Lang's Short-tailed Blue
- Moroccan Orange-tip
- Moroccan Hairstreak
- Allard's Silver-line
- Bath White
- Greenish Black-tip
- Green-striped White
- Small Copper
- Brimstone
- Red Admiral
- Clouded Yellow
- Painted Lady
- Large White
- Small White.
- Striped Hawk-moth
- Vagrant Emperor (dragonfly)

Mammal / Reptile Species List:

- Barbary Ground Squirrel
- Fat Sand-Rat
- Greek Tortoise
- Spanish Terrapin
- Fringe-fingered Lizard sp.
- Unknown Cetacean sp.

