



Field Guides Tour Report

**Morocco 2013**

Sep 9, 2013 to Sep 26, 2013  
Jesse Fagan

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*

This was our first run in Morocco in several years. It's surprising to me since Morocco offers the best of both worlds: excellent birding in amazing habitats with the added benefit of having an extremely interesting culture. This newly revised Field Guides tour gave us a good feel for the country. Indeed, we observed 186 bird taxa along an itinerary that included among other things a pelagic trip out of Agadir, a 4X4 trek through the western Sahara, and walks through an ancient cedar forest and above treeline in the High Atlas (to me, the high desert between the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas is one of the most beautiful places on Earth). In addition, we visited the second-largest mosque in the world (Hassan II) in Casablanca, had lunch in the medina at Fez, ate way too much tagine, and visited the (in)famous Yamaa el Fna Plaza in Marrakesh.

But back to the birds. We saw 11 species of Alaudidae (larks) and 8 taxa of wheatears; the alaudids included Dupont's Lark, one of the most difficult lark species to observe. It was also an excellent trip for migrating shorebirds, 23 species in total. If you don't know your Old World shorebirds, then this is a great trip on which to learn more. Other highlights included Levaillant's Woodpecker (endemic to North Africa), Crowned Sandgrouse (at least 12 birds at a wadi near Boumalne Dades), Bonelli's Eagle at an eyrie, the lovely Moussier's Redstart (also a North African endemic), Double-spurred Francolin (what a great experience that was!), and a cooperative Lanner Falcon near the Tagdilt Track.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank Ossauma, our fantastic driver, who never let us down and always knew the way! It was a pleasure working with him again.

I hope to see all of you again soon. What a fun group! Thanks again for such an enjoyable trip.

Jesse a.k.a. Motmot (from Lima, Peru)



*A North African endemic, the Moussier's Redstart was definitely one of the visual highlights of the tour. Guide Jesse Fagan captured this image while scouting in 2012.*

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**KEYS FOR THIS LIST**

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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**BIRDS**

*Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)*

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – A single bird north of Rabat, but they were fairly numerous in the Lakes Region near Ifrane.

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – At least four were spotted in the Lakes Region.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Numerous north of Rabat and again in the Lakes Region.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) – The most common duck at Lac du Sidi Bourhaba.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN)** (*Anas crecca crecca*) – Just a pair at Lac Sidi.

**MARbled TEAL** (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) – We saw at least 10 at Lac Sidi on our first full day of birding. A sharp looking duck.

**COMMON POCHARD** (*Aythya ferina*) – Not numerous, but a few at Lac Sidi and again in the Lakes Region where they seemed more common.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** (*Aythya nyroca*) – One at Lac Sidi, but more common north of Ifrane.

**WHITE-HEADED DUCK** (*Oxyura leucocephala*) – Just a pair of females at Lac Sidi. A very rare duck in Europe, but especially in Morocco.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**BARBARY PARTRIDGE** (*Alectoris barbara*) – Good looks at several small coveys in the Zaer hunting grounds. This species is only found in northern Africa.

**DOUBLE-SPURRED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus bicalcaratus*) – Wow. What a bird and experience! We had almost given up, but our perseverance paid off. We saw at least two individuals very well. :-)

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Numerous at several sites on the tour.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Our best studies of this handsome large grebe were at Lac Sidi near Rabat.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Several hundred (I estimated 500) in the Lakes Region north of Ifrane.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

**GREATER FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) – Three at Lac Sidi, but more common around Agadir.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

**CORY'S SHEARWATER** (*Calonectris diomedea*) – I estimated roughly 600 on our pelagic trip out of Agadir.

**CORY'S SHEARWATER (SCOPOLI'S)** (*Calonectris diomedea diomedea*) – Some of these (to my eye) appeared to be the Mediterranean breeding birds, also called Scopoli's Shearwater (*C. d. diomedea*). There are subtle plumage differences from the other subspecies (*borealis*), which is the subspecies seen off the East Coast of the US. I can't say for sure, but I feel some of the several hundred we saw could have been this taxon.

**GREAT SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus gravis*) – We saw two during our pelagic trip. Nice comparisons were made with the other shearwaters.

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus griseus*) – At least 6 on the pelagic trip.

**MANX SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus puffinus*) – Roughly 25 during our time on the water.

**BALEARIC SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus mauretanicus*) – It was nice picking three individuals out from the more numerous Manx.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

**WHITE STORK** (*Ciconia ciconia*) – Seen numerous times on this tour. We got a kick out of seeing their large nests on tops of town church steeples or on communication towers.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

**NORTHERN GANNET** (*Morus bassanus*) – Numerous off the coast of Skhirat and again offshore at Agadir. Mainly immatures were seen.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**GREAT CORMORANT (MOROCCAN)** (*Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus*) – Fairly common along the coast.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Seen on 50% of the days.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – At least three juveniles were roosting along the Lac Sidi shore. A good find.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Seen in most wetland areas. Good studies of their gray lores and two thin plumes on the head.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Seen on most days of the tour.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Jim wasn't positive, but he thought a Black-crowned flew over the hotel in Erg Chebbi at dusk. Quite possible so I include it on the list.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – In the Lakes Region, but more numerous at at Sous Massa south of Agadir.

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea leucorodia*) – Seen well at Lac Sidi and again at Sous Massa.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Singles on three different days.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) – This rare raptor was seen twice during our tour.

**SHORT-TOED EAGLE** (*Circaetus gallicus*) – One juvenile flew over our group while birding the Tagdilt Track. The sun made it look paler than it really is (was).

**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – Fairly common in the Zaer region.

**TAWNY EAGLE** (*Aquila rapax*) – One immature was studied well perched in a large bush in the Zaer hunting grounds. We studied it for a long time with the scope before confirming our ID as it took off.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – At least four individuals were seen soaring at Oukaimeden.

**BONELLI'S EAGLE** (*Aquila fasciata*) – Excellent studies of a pair at an eyrie in the Todra Gorge. Way to go, Ossauma!

**EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – Seen on several different days throughout the tour. One of the more common raptors for us.

**MONTAGU'S HARRIER** (*Circus pygargus*) – Two (but maybe the same bird?) juveniles seen along the lake shore at Mansour Eddahbi Reservoir.

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – Just a couple of migrants during the tour.

**BLACK KITE** (*Milvus migrans*) – Just one on second day at Zaer.

**LONG-LEGGED BUZZARD** (*Buteo rufinus*) – The most common raptor in the highland desert areas. Seen well including several different morphs.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**WATER RAIL** (*Rallus aquaticus*) – Glimpsed by a few at Lac Sidi.

**PURPLE SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) – Several along the edge of Lac Sidi.

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Not many, but a couple on Lac Sidi and a few more in the Lakes Region.

**RED-KNOBBED COOT** (*Fulica cristata*) – A very local species found in Morocco and southern Spain. We had excellent looks at Lac Sidi and in the Lakes Region (compared nicely with the next species).

**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra*) – Not real common by numbers, but seen at several sites. We had nice comparisons with Red-knobbed in the Lakes Region.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**EURASIAN THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus oedicnemus*) – One of our highlights was flushing a pair while birding the oak forest in the Zaer. Also known as Stone-curlew.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Seen along the coast at Skhirat. Good numbers. Also known as Gray Plover in the Old World.

**KENTISH PLOVER (KENTISH)** (*Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*) – This Old World "Snowy Plover" was seen well around Skhirat (at least five individuals) and one at Sous Massa.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – Common at various sites throughout the tour. Nice side-by-side comparisons were made with Little Ringed near our hotel in Skhirat.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – Less tolerant of salt water habitats, we saw this species at a variety of inland (or freshwater) sites.

*Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)*

**EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus ostralegus*) – Seen along the beach at Skhirat and again in Agadir.

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – At least one hundred individuals at Lac Sidi, but also at other sites on the tour. Fairly common.

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) – 50 birds at Lac Sidi were our only ones of the tour.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – A few on the tour at various places. This is the Old World "Spotted Sandpiper" but shows broader white wing-stripe in flight and in the breeding plumage doesn't have spots.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** (*Tringa ochropus*) – Good numbers at Lac Sidi (where we had one in the scope), but also in the Lakes Region and at Mansour Eddahbi Dam. Similar to our Solitary Sandpiper as some of you noted, but has a slightly different tail pattern (lacks the dark center).

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – A couple of different places on the tour.

**COMMON REDSHANK** (*Tringa totanus*) – This one we picked out along the beach in Skhirat and at Oued Sous. In flight it shows the obvious white trailing edge and wedge on back.

**WHIMBREL (EUROPEAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*) – Old World Whimbrels have a white wedge on the rump that is noticeable in flight. This subspecies was seen around Skhirat in good numbers.

**EURASIAN CURLEW** (*Numenius arquata*) – Several in the Agadir area.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa limosa*) – Just a pair at the Oued Sous south of Agadir. Nice comparisons were made with the next species.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa lapponica*) – The common godwit seen along the coast.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – Fairly common on the beach at Skhirat.

**RED KNOT** (*Calidris canutus*) – Just a few along the coast at Skhirat.

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – Seen along the coast in low numbers at Skhirat and Agadir.

**LITTLE STINT** (*Calidris minuta*) – Just three juveniles studied well at Mansour Eddahbi Dam.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – Mainly juveniles were seen at Skhirat and Mansour Eddahbi Dam. Also along the Sous Massa where we were able to make a nice comparison with the next species.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ferruginea*) – A couple were mixed into the Dunlin flock at the mouth of the Sous Massa. It was fun work confirming this id. Their white rumps were obvious in flight.

**COMMON SNIPE** (*Gallinago gallinago*) – Three were along the edge of the Mansour Eddahbi Dam.

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – A number of juveniles (and adults?) were flying around the edge of the Mansour Eddahbi Dam. Several also landed on the ground for good scope views.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**SLENDER-BILLED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus genei*) – Just a single flyby at Lac Sidi.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – One of the more common gull species on this tour. Seen well at several sites. Most in basic plumage.

**AUDOUIN'S GULL** (*Ichthyæetus audouinii*) – Seen at several sites along the coast at Agadir. Our first looks were from the pelagic boat as we were leaving the dock.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** (*Larus michahellis*) – Common at both coastal sites.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus fuscus*) – Seems to me that there were at least two subspecies present during our trip. The dark grey mantled birds that were fairly common along the coast are *L. f. graellsii*, which breeds in W Europe and Iceland. There were also some darker backed birds (nearly black in appearance) around Agadir that were probably *L. f. intermedius*, which breeds in SW Scandinavia. A larger dark-backed gull that we saw in Agadir (on the boat as we returned to the dock) may have been Great Black-backed Gull (rare in NW Africa), but I would have liked a better look.

**LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*) – Numerous from the Skhirat beach and again in Agadir.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – One along the Sous Massa.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – At least ten in a small flock at Dayet Aoua in the Lakes Region.

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – One on the Agadir pelagic trip.

**SANDWICH TERN** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Fairly common at various sites along the tour. Some authorities split the Sandwich Terns; the New World species being called Cabot's Tern, which is marginally smaller.

*Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)*

**PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – One dark-morph adult from our beach hotel in Skhirat. It was chasing a Sandwich Tern in hopes of stealing a meal. Neat behavior.

*Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)*

**CROWNED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles coronatus*) – A fantastic sandgrouse experience. We watched 12 birds at a wadi near Boumalne Dades. We had almost given up hope...almost.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Native "wild" Rock Pigeons were seen in the Dades and Todra gorges. Yes, you can finally count them!

**COMMON WOOD-PIGEON** (*Columba palumbus*) – Fairly common in the Zaer and again at Sous Massa.

**EUROPEAN TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia turtur*) – Common on this tour away from the coast.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Seen everyday of the tour. Only first recorded in the country in 1971, but now common throughout.

**LAUGHING DOVE** (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – Just a couple during the tour. Our first was a skittish bird in the Daded Gorge.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**LITTLE OWL** (*Athene noctua*) – Singles on various days. A cute one.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus*) – One over the Zaer hunting grounds.

**PALLID SWIFT** (*Apus pallidus*) – Just four over Rabat during our city tour.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – Singles on two different days. Our best looks was one flying down river along the Sous Massa.

*Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER** (*Merops persicus*) – Great looks along the road (sitting on power lines ) near Jorf.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** (*Merops apiaster*) – More common than the former species. We saw hundreds migrating over the Dades Gorge.

*Upupidae (Hoopoes)*

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – Seen on our drive to Fez, but our best look was of two different birds at wadis outside of Ouarzazate. Such a strange looking creature.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**EURASIAN WRYNECK** (*Jynx torquilla*) – One all too briefly in the Zaer.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos major*) – Two showed well at the Dar es Salaam Royal Golf Course.

**LEVAILLANT'S WOODPECKER** (*Picus vaillantii*) – Whew! I thought we had missed this one, but we found one at a new site on our drive up to Oukaimeden on the final day! Awesome bird that is only found in N Africa. THIS WAS THE BIRD OF THE TRIP!!!

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Common throughout the tour.

**EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – Several seen at Lac Sidi and singles on other days.

**LANNER FALCON** (*Falco biarmicus*) – Lovely studies of a bird sitting on the ground on the Tagdilt Track. The subspecies was *F. b. erlangeri*.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – A pair on the Hassan II tour was memorable. Hunting Rock Pigeons no doubt.

*Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and Allies)*

**BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA** (*Tchagra senegalus*) – Seen (and heard) by all, but only half the group had eye-popping looks at Sous Massa. The rest of us were away looking for a no-show ibis.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**SOUTHERN GRAY SHRIKE (SOUTHERN)** (*Lanius meridionalis algeriensis*) – This dark coastal subspecies was seen at Skhirat and again around Agadir.

**SOUTHERN GRAY SHRIKE (SOUTHERN)** (*Lanius meridionalis elegans*) – The paler interior subspecies seen several times.

**WOODCHAT SHRIKE** (*Lanius senator*) – Around in good numbers this year, but all were juveniles. This species migrates out of the region in Winter.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**EURASIAN JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*) – A pair in the Jabaa Forest were surprisingly our only ones.

**EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica mauretania*) – This lovely subspecies was seen well at several sites.

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – Thousands above tree line at Oukaimeden.

**EURASIAN JACKDAW** (*Corvus monedula*) – Common in large roosts and flocks around Rabat.

**BROWN-NECKED RAVEN** (*Corvus ruficollis*) – Has this species increased over the years? We had good looks (confirmed vocally) of several birds in the Erg Chebbi area and a single bird over the Giant Cedar Forest.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Along the coast (one at Lac Sidi) and common around Ifrane.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**GREATER HOOPOE-LARK** (*Alaemon alaudipes*) – Excellent encounters with several birds around Erg Chebbi. A favorite of at least two people in the group.

**DUPONT'S LARK** (*Chersophilus duponti*) – We heard at least five birds in the high desert near Zaed. Our foggy experience locating one was a bit surreal. However, we eventually found one that gave us all fantastic looks. An extremely difficult and local bird to see.

**BAR-TAILED LARK** (*Ammomanes cinctura*) – One on our drive around Erg Chebbi.

**DESERT LARK** (*Ammomanes deserti*) – Good studies around Erg Chebbi a few times, then again Boumalne Dades. Very similar to Bar-tailed Lark.

**THICK-BILLED LARK** (*Ramphocoris clotbey*) – A couple of birds digging around at the desert trash dump on the Tagdilt Track. Despite the circumstances it was still a sharp looking bird!

**GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) – Our first was outside Zaed, but better studies were had at the desert trash dump.

**LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella rufescens*) – A flock of 25 or so was at Zaed. These were studied well since they are quite similar to the previous species.

**CRESTED LARK** (*Galerida cristata*) – A very tough species in Morocco since it is quite similar to the Thekla Lark. The subspecies we saw was one of the paler N Africa races (appears to be either *kleinschmidti* or *riggenbachi*; there are at least 37 subspecies), and separated from Thekla by slightly longer bill, longer crest, and habitat (generally found at more disturbed sites and around human settlements).

**THEKLA LARK** (*Galerida theklae*) – Singles confirmed around Zaed and on the Tagdilt Track, but see comments on Crested Lark. Very difficult to separate from previous species. There may be some song differences that I will need to sort out. Again, we seemed to be looking at the subspecies *erlangi* or *ruficolor*, of which there are 12 overall subspecies of Thekla Lark.

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – Great looks at this species on our drive to Erg Chebbi (at a roadside stop) and again above tree line at Oukaimeden. Similar to the next species, but with some subtle plumage differences.

**TEMMINCK'S LARK** (*Eremophila bilopha*) – Seen well on the Tagdilt Track where generally pretty common.

#### Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Quite common on the high desert north of the Anti-Atlas.

**EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) – Always around the deep gorges.

**BARN SWALLOW (WHITE-BELLIED)** (*Hirundo rustica rustica*) – Seen most days of the tour.

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – Hundreds were seen on our drive up to Oukaimeden. This was most likely a large passing migrant group; they were not present on our return trip. A good pick-up for us.

**COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon urbicum*) – There were a few mixed in with the Red-rumped Swallow flock. Also seen at a couple of other sites.

#### Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

**COAL TIT** (*Pariparus ater*) – Seen well in the Jabaa Forest and again below Oukaimeden.

**GREAT TIT** (*Parus major*) – Fairly common at woodland sites throughout.

**AFRICAN BLUE TIT** (*Cyanistes teneriffae*) – This sharp tit was seen at most woodland sites away from the high desert. Our first ones were at Lac Sidi. Superficially similar to the larger Great Tit.

#### Sittidae (Nuthatches)

**EURASIAN NUTHATCH** (*Sitta europaea*) – One in the Jabaa Forest was a nice find. Lots of broken up populations of this species, the ones we saw fall into the "caesia group" which are buffer or rusty-buff below.

#### Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

**SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER** (*Certhia brachydactyla*) – Again, pretty good looks in the Jabaa Forest. The subspecies in N Africa is *mauritanica*.

#### Cinclidae (Dippers)

**WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** (*Cinclus cinclus*) – A pair were along the small stream just below Oukaimeden.

#### Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

**COMMON BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus barbatus*) – One of the most "common" birds seen and heard on the tour.

#### Regulidae (Kinglets)

**FIRECREST** (*Regulus ignicapilla*) – Nice studies at this smart looking bird at Jabaa Forest and again below Oukaimeden.

#### Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

**CETTI'S WARBLER** (*Cettia cetti*) – Fairly common (at least by voice) in a variety of stream edge habitats. We saw it well, however, at Lac Sidi.

#### Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

**WILLOW WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – Fairly common at various sites throughout the tour, but especially in good numbers at the orchard near the Tagdilt Track. All of these were migrants passing through the area.

**IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF** (*Phylloscopus ibericus*) – Not many, but singles on various days. This species winters in N Africa.

#### Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

**WESTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER** (*Iduna opaca*) – Our first were in the Tamarisk garden at Erg Chebbi. Good looks. We also had them around Ouarzazate and Sous Massa.

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** (*Hippolais polyglotta*) – Several were in the short scrub at the desert dump site. Also very good looks. These were definitely migrants.

#### Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

**ZITTING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola juncidis*) – One at Lac Sidi (seen well) and several at Oued Souss.

#### Sylviidae (Sylviids, Parrotbills and Allies)

**WESTERN ORPHEAN WARBLER** (*Sylvia hortensis*) – Singles by a few folks in the Zaer and Skhirat region. Not seen by all.  
**SPECTACLED WARBLER** (*Sylvia conspicillata*) – A couple of migrants were in the short scrub at the desert dump site.  
**SUBALPINE WARBLER** (*Sylvia cantillans*) – Fairly common around the desert oases at Erg Chebbi where they winter.  
**SARDINIAN WARBLER** (*Sylvia melanocephala*) – The most common *Sylvia* seen on the tour, but mainly in the coastal areas.

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa striata*) – Fairly common on this tour.

**RUFIOUS-TAILED SCRUB-ROBIN** (*Cercotrichas galactotes*) – One glimpsed in a desert wash outside of Erg Chebbi. Not seen by most, unfortunately.

**EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – Fairly common at a variety of woodland sites.

**MOUSSIER'S REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus moussieri*) – Excellent studies in the Lakes Region and again at Sous Massa. This is a N African endemic.

**COMMON REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) – Not many. A few around Zaer and again near Oukaimeden. All were migrants.

**BLACK REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – Finally found above tree line at Oukaimeden. They are resident at this site.

**RUFIOUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola saxatilis*) – One juvenile seen well in the scope at Oukaimeden.

**BLUE ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola solitarius*) – Seen well in most of the rocky cliff areas especially in the gorges.

**WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – Several of these migrants were around Skhirat and singles at other places.

**EUROPEAN STONECHAT** (*Saxicola rubicola rubicola*) – Our only ones were along our walk at Sous Massa.

**WHITE-TAILED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe leucopyga*) – Near common in the desert areas around Erg Chebbi. Formerly known as White-crowned Wheater.

**BLACK WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe leucura*) – Similar to the 1st-year of the previous species, but Black always shows an inverted "T" on the white tail. Also fairly common on the high desert between the High and Anti-Atlas.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – Common wintering species and seen most days of the tour.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR (BLACK-THROATED)** (*Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi*) – This distinctive subspecies was seen very well near Ifrane and again around the Tagdilt Track. Some authorities split it.

**RED-RUMPED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe moesta*) – Seen well at several sites, but especially on the Tagdilt Track.

**BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe hispanica*) – I was the only one to see this species at Zaed, but we caught up with another on a desert walk. It was way across the road, but surprisingly flew towards us and landed within scoping distance. A nice looking wheatear.

**DESERT WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe deserti*) – Fairly common in the high desert south of Ifrane. Seen most days around Erg Chebbi.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**EURASIAN BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus merula*) – Common in many wooded areas on the tour route.

**MISTLE THRUSH** (*Turdus viscivorus*) – Several in the Lakes Region around Ifrane and again at Oukaimeden.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**SPOTLESS STARLING** (*Sturnus unicolor*) – We studied them well on the hotel grounds at Skhirat, but they were common in other places as well. Seems European Starling doesn't arrive until much later in the season, but of course, would do so with many many spots!

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (ASHY-HEADED)** (*Motacilla flava iberiae*) – Seen on a number of days during the tour.

**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Always near water, and seen on several days.

**WHITE WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla alba*) – A northern migrant/wintering individual was seen Sous Massa near the mouth of the river. It lacked the dark face of the resident White Wagtail (next taxon), but I can't say for sure what subspecies it belonged to, but most likely *M. a. alba*.

**WHITE WAGTAIL (MOROCCAN)** (*Motacilla alba subpersonata*) – Seen over a few different days, but not common.

**TAWNY PIPIT** (*Anthus campestris*) – One was seen along the Tagdilt Track.

**TREE PIPIT** (*Anthus trivialis*) – I saw one at the Tagdilt orchard, but we got everyone else caught up when we spotted one in a tree (!!!) below Oukaimeden. Nice scope views.

*Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**CIRL BUNTING** (*Emberiza cirrus*) – Three individuals responded strongly to tape in the rocky slopes below Oukaimeden.

**ROCK BUNTING** (*Emberiza cia*) – Our last new bird of the trip. One popped up for us on a tree and stayed for a minute or so. It was hard giving directions, however, and some people missed it.

**STRIOLATED BUNTING** (*Emberiza striolata*) – The common *Emberiza* on the tour. Also known as House Bunting.

**CORN BUNTING** (*Emberiza calandra*) – Several were seen in a field outside of Taroudant on our long drive to Agadir.

*Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)*

**COMMON CHAFFINCH (AFRICAN)** (*Fringilla coelebs africana*) – This N Africa subspecies is fairly distinctive. We saw it in numerous spots.

**TRUMPETER FINCH** (*Bucanetes githagineus*) – Seen nicely at Erg Chebbi and again on the Tagdilt Track. All were in a winter plumage at this point.

**EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** (*Chloris chloris*) – Seen on most days.

**EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Slightly less common than the previous species, but seen on several days.

**EURASIAN LINNET** (*Carduelis cannabina*) – Good numbers at several different sites. There were hundreds it seemed in the Lakes Region.

**EUROPEAN SERIN** (*Serinus serinus*) – A bit more common than the previous species. Seen on about half the days of the tour.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Seen every day of the tour!

**DESERT SPARROW** (*Passer simplex*) – We saw this handsome species at one of the oases in the desert near Erg Chebbi. A very local and difficult bird to find. Endemic to N Africa.

**ROCK PETRONIA** (*Petronia petronia*) – I counted around 400 in the agricultural fields in the Lakes Region. This species used to be called Rock Sparrow.

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## **MAMMALS**

**BARBARY APE** (*Macaca sylvanus*) – We saw one in Ifrane, but had a number of them roaming around the Giant Cedar Forest. The only native primate to N Africa.

**OLD WORLD RABBIT** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

**BARBARY GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Atlantoxerus getulus*) – Fairly common in the rocky cliff areas, like at both gorges.

**FAT SAND RAT** (*Psammomys obesus*) – A number of them were rummaging around in the trash on the Tagdilt Track.

**ATLANTIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHIN** (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*) – We had several playful pods during our pelagic trip out of Agadir.

**WILD BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*) – One was seen well crossing the road in the Zaer.

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## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

We had a couple of other interesting critters including:

1) Spiny-tailed Lizard (*Uromastyx acanthinura*) -- This was the lovely lizard seen on the Tagdilt Track. We saw two of them, what we believed to be a male and a female. The male was the larger individual with the incredible dorsal color and pattern.

2) Spur-thighed Tortoise (*Testudo graeca soussensis*) -- Jim found this exceptional creature on our high-desert walk outside of Zaer (near Medelt). We joked that it was probably 200 years old!

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**Totals for the tour: 186 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa**