

# Kuwait

## bird trip report

March 19<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007



Figure 1. In an *Acacia* at Al-Abraq Al-Khabari, March 29, 2007, an **Eastern Orphee Warbler** (*Sylvia crassirostris*) and a **White-throated Robin** (*Irania gutturalis*) were sitting beside each other. Photo: Christer Brostam

Seppo Haavisto & Sven Karlsson

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## INTRODUCTION

The first Swedish bird watching group visited Kuwait in March 2007. The visit was preceded by a number of emails to George Gregory, an Englishman living in Kuwait since 15 years. George, working at the Voluntary Work Centre with bird monitoring and bird protection was our guide for most of the 11 days we spent in the country. He is also the author of “The Birds of the State of Kuwait” (2005), a most useful guide and checklist with descriptions of birding sites and highest counts of each more or less regular species in each month. Site names and site numbers in the text below refer to this book (*cf.* **Fig. 3**). Beside this book, little is written about birds and birding in Kuwait. Only two proper trip reports were found on internet, made by a Danish group (Hagerman 2006) and a Finnish group (Lindroos *et al.* 2006). We also found an annual bird report for 2005 (Foster (ed.) 2006).

Birding in Kuwait makes it interesting due to its location at the southeast corner of Western Palearctic, especially for bird watchers counting WP-species. A problem with bird watching in Kuwait is that to most of the sites, access is by permit only, why a local guide is most important.

The trip was made a little bit earlier than the possibly best spring migration time, with the aim to also find some winter visitors. The trip turned out to be very successful. In total, the group found 195 species.

The participants in the group were: Jan-Michael Breider, Christer Brostam, Bosse Carlsson, Per Forsberg, Seppo Haavisto, Sven Karlsson, Staffan Rodebrand and Johan Sandström



Figure 2. Waders, mainly *Calidris* at Doha Peninsula (site 7), March 24, 2007. Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

## VISITED SITES

Site numbers refer to Gregory G., 2005: The birds of the State of Kuwait. Cupit Print, Horncastle, England. 219 pp. *Cf.* also Fig 3.

- March 19: Arrived Kuwait City  
 March 20: 32 Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve, 27 Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve (SAANR), 15 Jahra Farms, 7 Doha Peninsula  
 March 21: 26 Rawdatain, 1 Abdali Farms (including Mohammed Al-Ajmi and Yacoub Boodai), 4 Bahra, 14 Jahra East Outfall  
 March 22: 11 Green Island, 37 Zour Port, 29 Sewer Plants Reed, 28 Sabah Al-Salem  
 March 23: 8 East Doha, 27 Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve (SAANR), 7 Doha Peninsula, 14 Jahra East Outfall  
 March 24: 14 Jahra East Outfall, 19 Kabd (Sulaibiya Agricultural Research Station, 7 Doha Peninsula, 8 East Doha  
 March 25: 2 Al-Abraq Al-Khabari  
 March 26: 32 Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve, 16 Jahra Pool Reserve  
 March 27: 29 Sewer Plants Reed, 18 Jebel Al-Benayah, 35 Wafra Farms, 28 Sabah Al-Salem  
 March 28: 1 Abdali Farms (including Mohammed Al-Ajmi and Yacoub Boodai), 12 Hujaijah, 14 Jahra East Outfall  
 March 29: 2 Al-Abraq Al-Khabari, 14 Jahra East Outfall  
 March 30: 14 Jahra East Outfall, 27 Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve (SAANR), 15 Jahra Farms. Left Kuwait City in the evening

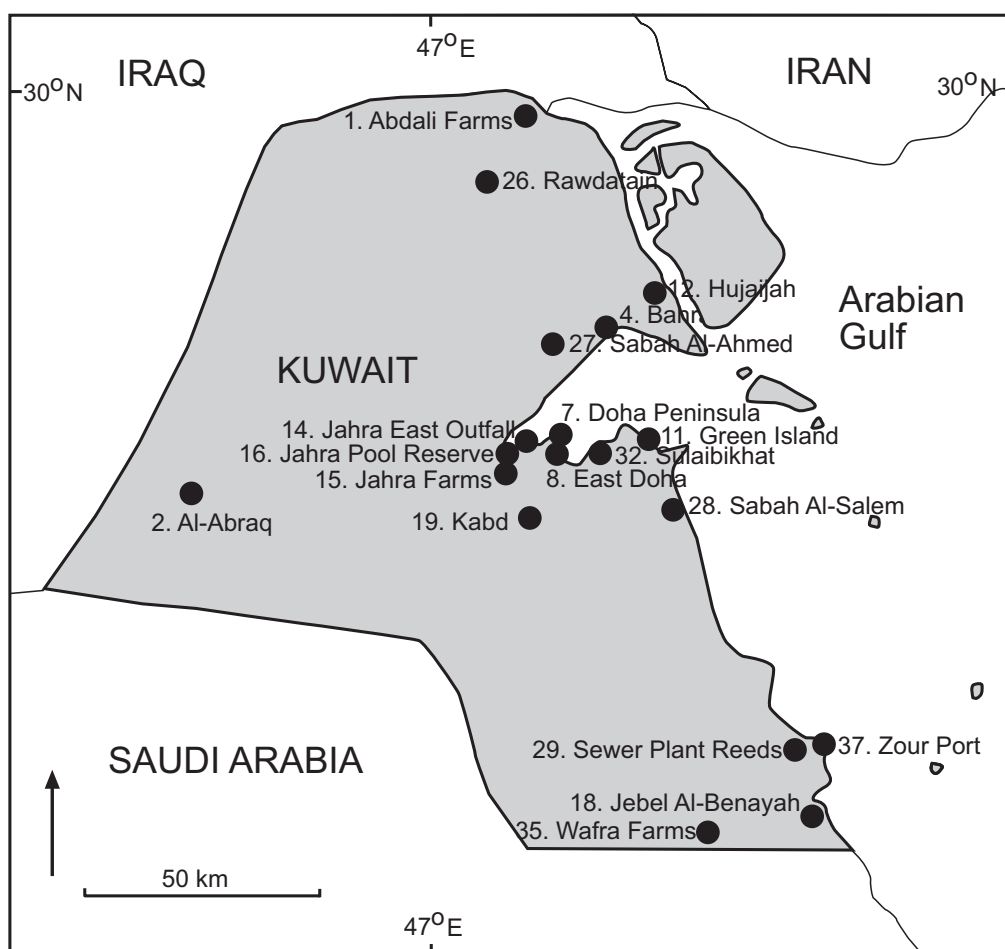


Figure 3. Map of Kuwait showing location for visited sites.

## ITINERARY

### March 19.

The group arrived to Kuwait 23<sup>20</sup> local time (21<sup>20</sup> Swedish wintertime) via Schiphol, Amsterdam by KLM. Before getting the luggage we fixed our visas without problems (2 Kuwaiti dinars = c. 50 Swedish crowns or 6 euros). George Gregory met us and took the group to the hotel after we had rent two cars at the airport. We arrived to hotel Husa House in the Basmah district in central Kuwait City around 02.

### March 20

We started with a quick breakfast at 07<sup>00</sup> in hotel Continental next to Husa House. George met us at the hotel entrance at 07<sup>30</sup>. Before leaving the town, one of the target WP-species, **Common Mynah** (*Acridotheres tristis*), was encountered. This introduced species is now very common resident. Since the first record of breeding in Kuwait City 1981, it has spread and is now established breeding resident from Jahra Farms throughout Kuwait City down to Fahaheel and Ahmadi.

Our first stop was **Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve (site 32, cf. Fig 3.)**. This is a small fenced reserve, managed by the Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS), along the shore of Sulaibikhat Bay on the western side of Kuwait City. The trees, bushes, ground vegetation and freshwater pools attract many migrants and breeding birds in spring and summer. Our target species was **Long-tailed Shrike** (*Lanius schach*) (**Fig. 4**), a winter visitor from the east. The bird, second record for Kuwait and the fourth in Western Palearctic, was soon located in a shrub. Another target, **White-cheeked Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus leucogenys*), was common in the area, where also the first breeding of this species was noted in 1972 (**Fig. 5**).



Figure 4. **Long-tailed Shrike** (*Lanius schach*), second record for Kuwait, and the fourth in Western Palearctic  
Photo: Bosse Carlsson



Figure 5. **White-cheeked Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus leucogenys*), was common in Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve (site 32).  
Photo: Jan-Michael Breider.

Among passage migrants we found *e.g.* two Semi-collared Flycatchers (*Ficedula semitorquata*).

Next site was **Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve (SAANR) (site 27)**, a 320 km<sup>2</sup> fenced and guarded nature reserve north of Jahra City. For access needs permit. The reserve includes a large area of original semi-desert (main part of Kuwait is overgrazed by *e.g.* camels and goats), small wadis and an oasis at Tuhla. Larks and Wheatears, *e.g.* Lesser Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella rufescens*), Greater Hoopoe Lark (*Alaemon alaudipes*), Pied- and Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe pleschanka*, *O. hispanica*) was common. At Tuhla, common passage migrants such as Barn- and Red-rumped Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*, *H. daurica*) together with Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) was flying above the water. Other migrants like Chiff-Chaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) of two races *feldegg* and *beema*) was present. Close to the oasis we also saw a few Steppe Eagles and an Imperial Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*, *A. heliaca*). In a wadi a female Ménétries's Warbler (*Sylvia mystacea*) was hiding in a scrub. In the desert Spiny-tailed Lizard (*Uromastix aegyptia microlepis*), locally known as Dhubs, was common. These up to a metre long reptiles looked like tree trunks on distance when they were looked up from their holes in the ground (**Fig. 6**).



Figure 6. In the desert Spiny-tailed Lizard (*Uromastix aegyptia microlepis*), locally known as Dhubs, was common. Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

At about 15<sup>00</sup> we arrived to **Jahra Farms (site 15)**, a group of traditional farms with palm trees and small cultivations situated in the centre of Jahra City, where we stayed for about an hour. Regularly breeding birds is *e.g.* Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) and White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*). The main target, **Bank Mynah** (*Acridotheres ginginianus*) was soon located outside the farm area, breeding in a well (**Fig. 7**). We also saw a Richard's Pipit (*Anthus richardi*) and a Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*).



Figure 7. **Bank Mynah** (*Acridotheres ginginianus*) in Jahra City. Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

We ended up the day with **Doha Peninsula (site 7)**, west of Kuwait City, an area of harbours, mudflats and sabkha (Arabic name for salt-flat which is very saline areas of sand or silt lying just above the water table). The most interesting species here was the flock of 200 **Crab Plover** (*Dromas ardeola*) (**Fig. 8**).



Figure 8. **Crab Plover** (*Dromas ardeola*) at Doha Peninsula (site 7). Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

There were also flocks of waders, most numerous was Snowy (Kentish) Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) 50, Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) 50, Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) 100. A flock of 200 Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) was standing in the bay as well as two Great Black-headed (Palla's) Gull (*Larus ichthyaetus*). Among a larger flock of Common (Eurasian) Teals there were even some Northern Pintails and Mallards (*Anas crecca*, *A. acuta*, *A. platyrhynchos*), which became the only observations during the trip.

### March 21

We started 06<sup>00</sup> for a visit to **Abdali Farms (site 1)** in the northern part of Kuwait, close to the border of Iraq with the aim to find **Red-wattled Plover** (*Hoplopterus indicus*) and **Common Babbler** (*Turdoides caudatus*). We made a first stop at **Rawdatain (site 26)**, an oasis south of Abdali which use to attract migrant birds, but we saw just a few like Isabelline Shrike (*Lanius isabellinus*), Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), a European Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*) and a dead Indian Silverbill (*Euodice malabarica*). Along the road, we stopped for breakfast at a restaurant with local food. Outside the restaurant we meet two young Kuwaitis which proud showed a Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) (**Fig. 9**).



Figure 9. Two young Kuwaitis showing their Kestrel. (*Falco tinnunculus*). Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

We continued further north and close to Abdali Farms immediately at the Iraq border, where we saw two **Red-wattled Plover** (*Hoplopterus indicus*) along the road close to a watchtower (**Fig. 10**). This area is probably the best in the Western Palearctic to get this species.



Figure 10. **Red-wattled Plover** (*Hoplopterus indicus*). The area of Abdali Farms close to the Iraq border is probably the best in the Western Palearctic to get this species. Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

We were not allowed to stop so we continued to Mohammed Al-Ajmi, one of the farms connected to Abdali Farms. We stayed there between 9<sup>30</sup> and 10<sup>30</sup>. We got nice views of a Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) and a Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*). We also spotted several Green Toads (*Bufo viridis*) in a well. Next stop was Yacoub Boodai which George called an annex to Abdali Farms, where we stayed until 13<sup>30</sup>. This is an open area with shrubs and rows of low palm trees. Immediately when arriving we saw a **Shikra** (*Accipiter badius*) above us. This species is a very scarce passage migrant and winter visitor from the east. After some search we localized three **Common Babblers** (*Turdoides caudatus*), in the palm trees. According to George's book "The Birds of the State of Kuwait" the bird is described as vagrant with three records in Kuwait. Since then the Common Babbler seems to have started breeding in the neighbourhood of Abdali Farms, probably the only place in the Western Palearctic. Here we saw further four Red-wattled Plover (*Hoplopterus indicus*) and a Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*).

On the way back towards Kuwait City we stopped at **Hujaijah (site 12)** near recent ruins north of Subiya. Here is an avenue of trees good for migrants during spring and autumn, but it is also a bird-shooting site. George told us that once 60 bee-eaters had been shot on one occasion. A dead Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*), a Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and a lot of cartridges in the sand illustrated his word.

We spent an hour between 14<sup>30</sup> and 15<sup>30</sup> at **Bahra (site 4)** along the Subiya Road. This is a small traditional farm with trees and bushes. As it was in the middle of the day, the activity was low but a few birds were noticed, e.g. two Common Nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), a Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) and an *Acrocephalus* we did not see enough, but was probably a European Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*). The last stop for the day was **Jahra East Outfall (site 14)**, between 16<sup>30</sup> and 17<sup>45</sup>. This is the most easterly sewage outfall from the Jahra area and holds both reed beds and marshy areas. From the reed beds we heard Great Reed Warbler, Reed Warbler and a Savi's Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, *A. scirpaceus*, *Locustella luscinioides*). On the salt-flat and the wet meadows we had e.g. a Collared Pratincole (*Glaerola pratincola*), flocks of Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) together with a few Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*). On distance we could see an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) sitting, a Great White Heron (*Egretta alba*) and 9 Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) flying over. We ended the day with a dinner at Pizza Hut on the way home.

### March 22

We met George 06<sup>00</sup> outside the hotel like yesterday. First site this day was **Green Island (site 11)**, an artificial island at eastern Kuwait City. We hoped to find **Red-vented Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus cafer*) which is breeding on the island. The Bulbul, with the first confirmed breeding in Kuwait 1986, was soon located in the broad-leaved trees, and all together with saw five birds (**Fig. 11**). Another target species was **Grey Hypocolius** (*Hypocolius ampelinus*) which sometimes is seen on the island. According to George's book, Grey Hypocolius "is recorded every year in Kuwait but is usually very unpredictable in its occurrence". We had not been on the island for more than half an hour when Seppo saw a flock of 5 birds coming toward us and settled in a tree 15 m in front of us (**Fig. 12**). After that we saw another flock of 18 birds and two single, all together 25 Grey Hypocolius within a few minutes.



Figure 11. **Red-vented Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus cafer*) at Green Island. The species was first confirmed breeding in Kuwait 1986. Photo: Jan-Michael Breider



Figure 12. **Grey Hypocolius** (*Hypocolius ampelinus*) at Green Island. A difficult species to get in the Western Palearctic, but is recorded annually in Kuwait. Photo: Jan-Michael Breider

We continued south along the coast to **Zour Port (site 37)**, a fenced oil terminal. George had fixed permit for us to get in at Zour, a village along the shore with residences for foreign families to oil workers. This site is the best for **Socotra Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*) which usually is present offshore between March and September. We found two on a skerrie, together with Great Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) Lesser Crested Terns (*Sterna bengalensis*) and two White-cheeked Terns (*Sterna repressa*). Additionally two juveniles Socotra Cormorant were fishing close to the shore which satisfied the photographers in the group (**Fig. 13**).



Figure 13. Juvenile **Socotra Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*) at Zour Port, Kuwait, March 22, 2007. Photo: Christer Brostam

This site was exceptional also for terns. Beside the mentioned, we noted four Greater Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*), a few Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) and Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*). We continued, and made a stop between 11<sup>45</sup> and 12<sup>15</sup> in the desert with shrubs, immediately south-west of Zour Port. We found an Asian Desert Warbler (*Sylvia nana*), a Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin (*Cercotrichas galactotes*), Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*), a Menétries's Warbler (*Sylvia mystacea*) and the always present Chiff-chaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) which is an abundant winter visitor as well as a common passage migrant. A desert rat, called Jird, disappeared in a hole. Next stop was a site called **Sewer Plant Reeds (site 29)**, a sewage-water outfall with surrounding reed bed and pool, located close to Zour road junction on the Nuwaisib Road. All reed beds we visited were with the main aim to find Basra Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus griseldis*), but a Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) and a Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) was found. The most interesting at the site became a parasitic yellow flower, called Bruum Rape or Yachnut flower grooving in the sand. The last stop for the day was **Sabah Al-Salem (site 28)**, opposite Messila, south of Kuwait City, with bushes and reed beds. We stayed there between 15<sup>30</sup> and 17<sup>00</sup>. Here we found *e.g.* Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) and Isabelline Shrike (*Lanius isabellinus*), both common passage migrants, but also Semi-collared Flycatcher (*Ficedula semitorquata*), recorded in small numbers in spring.

### March 23

This day we spent with Pekka Fågel, a Finnish birdwatcher working and living in Kuwait. We started the day at **East Doha (site 8)**, with a sewage pool and large reed beds east of the Doha Road, west of Kuwait City. Common birds in the reed beds were European and Great Reed Warbler, but no Basra Reed Warbler present (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*, *A. arundinaceus*, *A. griseldis*). One or two Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) was heard and we saw one Red-wattled Plover (*Hoplopterus indicus*). Next stop, was a return to **Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve (site 27)**, where we were on March 20. We started 9<sup>00</sup> in a small wadi where Staffan found the target species for the day, **Red-tailed Wheatear** (*Oenanthe chrysopygia*), recently split from Kurdish Wheatear (*Oenanthe xanthopygma*). The Red-tailed Wheatear is a scarce winter visitor which we hoped to find by visit Kuwait relatively early in the season. The wadi and the surrounding desert also held several Black-eared and Pied Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*, *O. pleschanka*), both passage migrants of whom Pied Wheatear was present almost everywhere. A female Finsch's Wheatear (*Oenanthe finschii*) was also observed, the only for the trip. Other migrants in the wadi were Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*), and a Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*). Nearby we also found a Bar-tailed Lark (*Ammomanes cincturus*) which is a quite rare breeder in Kuwait, but also a Wood Lark (*Lullula arborea*) a rare winter visitor and passage migrant. Next stop in the reserve was the pond at Tulha. A few waders were present like Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*), Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) and Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*). A standing Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) gave good photo opportunities. We went back towards Kuwait City 13<sup>15</sup> to next site, **Doha Peninsula (site 7)**, which we visited on March 20. This time we had checked the tide table so we knew that it was tide around 15<sup>00</sup>. We did not get disappointed. There were huge flocks with many thousands of waders of at least 25 species. Most interesting were groups of 150 Lesser- and 30 Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*, *C. leschenaultii*), 130 Crab Plover (*Dromas ardeola*) on close view and two Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*). As last site for the day, we went to **Jahra East Outfall (site 14)**, where we stayed between 16<sup>00</sup> and 17<sup>20</sup>, after Pekka Fågel got a phone message that a Kuwaiti birdwatcher thought he had seen a Buff-bellied Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*). This species is a vagrant with one record in Kuwait. The bird was documented on photos, but it showed to be a Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*). Before we got back to the hotel, a few of us went home to Mike Pope, a South-African birdwatcher living in Kuwait, and borrowed a song recording of Basra Reed Warbler, which we had not managed to find before leaving Sweden.

### March 24

We started the day with **Jahra East Outfall (site 14)** again, where we stayed between 6<sup>30</sup> and 8<sup>00</sup>. A large flock of c. 200 Yellow Wagtails of three races had arrived to the wet meadows (*Motacilla flava beema*, *M. f. feldegg*, *M. f. lutea*). The race *beema* from south-eastern Russia and the steppes in Central Asia was the most common, followed by the race *feldegg* with a breeding area from Balkans to Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. The beautiful race *lutea* with yellow head, breeding from the lower Volga River basin to Kazakhstan was just two. Together with the Yellow Wagtails there were a few Water Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*). In an opening in the reed beds we saw both Baillons's and Little Crake (*Porzana pusilla*, *P. parva*). Our main target species for the day was Dunn's Lark (*Eremalauda durni*), which we hoped to find at **Kabd (Sulaibiya Agricultural Research Station) (site 19)**, a large, fenced, ungrazed area c. 40 km SW of Kuwait City. We arrived at 9<sup>00</sup> when the research station opened. Before getting in we had to take on protective plastic on our shoes. The cars were flushed with insecticide because of the bird flue. Immediately after the entrance Seppo identified a Small Whitethroat (*Sylvia minula*) on a fence. This desert site were supposed to be the best place to

find Dunn's Lark (*Eremalauda dunnii*), but no one showed up. Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks (*Eremopterix nigriceps*) of the eastern race *melanauchen* were quite common and we saw c. 20 of this uncommon breeder (**Fig. 14**).



Figure 14. A male **Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** (*Eremopterix nigriceps*), of eastern race *melanauchen* at Kabd (Sulaibiya Agricultural Research Station). Photo: Christer Brostam

A surprise was a male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) far in the flat sand desert. We had also good observations of an Asian Desert Warbler (*Sylvia nana*), one Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), an adult Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) and an Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*). On our way out from the reserve, two Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) flew away from a row of trees close to the entrance. A Namaqua Dove (*Oena capensis*) sitting on a wire gave good pictures at close distance. We left Kabd at 13<sup>00</sup> and continued to **Doha Peninsula (site 7)** to meet the waders at high tide (**Fig. 2**). There were huge flocks like yesterday and we tried to estimate the numbers *e.g.* Lesser Sand Plover (*Charadius mongolus*) 450, Greater Sand Plover (*Charadius leschenaultii*) 50, Black-bellied (Grey) Plover (*Pluvialis squaterola*) 140, Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) 200 (yesterday 600), Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) 100, Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*) 20, Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) 200, Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) 50 (yesterday 200), Dunlin 1000 (*Calidris alpina*) (can have been lot more), Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*) 3 (yesterday 20). We also had five Great Black-headed (Palla's) Gulls (*Larus ichthyaetus*). We left the site at 15<sup>45</sup> and ended the day with a revisit to the reed beds at **East Doha (site 8)**, for Basra Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus griseldis*). Unfortunately we had no luck, even with a recording. A fox at distance draw attention.

### March 25

This day we went to **Al-Abraq Al-Khabari (site 2)** an isolated oasis not far from the western border to Iraq, where we arrived at 8<sup>00</sup>. Along the road to the oasis we found this dromedary mother with a child (**Fig. 15**).



Figure 15. A dromedary with a child close to the Al-Abraq Al-Khabari oasis (site 2). Photo: Jan-Michael Breider.

The isolated location in the desert is excellent for migrants, who have been attracted by the trees and scrubs in the oasis. We were told that the Iraq generals, used the oasis as headquarter during the Gulf war. The oasis is quite large, maybe 700-800 m in diameter with a farm and planted trees of *Acacia*, *Eucalyptus* and *Tamarisk*. It was relatively quiet in the oasis this day, but an Upcher's Warbler (*Hippolais languida*) together with a White-throated Robin (*Irania gutturalis*) was nice (**Fig. 1**). Staffan found an African Collared Dove (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*) which was secretive and just few saw the bird. The same can be saying about a male Shikra (*Accipiter badius*) which also just a few saw. Other interesting birds was a flock of 30 Bimaculated Larks (*Melanocorypha bimaculata*), a Bluethroat of the eastern race *magna* (*Luscinia svecica magna*), a male Masked Shrike (*Lanius nubicus*) which became the only for the trip as well as a male Cinereous Bunting (*Emberiza cineracea*). A European Scops-Owl (*Otus scops*) was hiding in a tree, and a male Chestnut-shouldered Petronia (*Petronia xanthocollis*) was found by Per. At the edge of the oasis we got nice views of a male Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) and a male Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*) passing by. A surprise was a Long-eared Hedgehog (*Hemiechinus auritus*), native to Central Asian countries and the Caucasus Mountains, which was walking in the grass among the planted trees. Hunters in a jeep tried to shoot five flying Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*) outside the oasis. We left the oasis at 15<sup>20</sup>. On our way back through the desert a large flock of Greater Short-toed Larks (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) attract our attention. We stopped and among them there were also the target species we searched for yesterday in Kabd, five **Dunn's Larks** (*Eremalauda dunni*). The wind increased and we were afraid of a sandstorm coming, but it ended in a weaker "dust" storm. In the evening we were invited to dinner at a Kuwaiti style restaurant by Ahmed Al-Mershed, a senior official of the Voluntary Work Centre. We spent a very nice evening with good food and fruitful discussions.

### March 26

Started the day late (10<sup>30</sup>) with **Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve (site 32)** where George had arranged a meeting with Kuwaiti television. George, Staffan and Per were interviewed by aims, bird protection, why visiting Kuwait for bird watching and so on. There were no new birds to see, maybe due to the weather. Several showers in the morning reduced the bird watching. Two Namaqua Dove was nice to see at close range feeding on the ground. The always present Graceful Prinia (*Prinia gracilis*) was common like everywhere in suitable habitat. At 14<sup>30</sup> we continued to **Jahra Pool Reserve (site 16)** a small fenced nature reserve consisting of a sewage outfall with reed beds and a pool surrounded by sabkha (salt-flat). We did not find anything special, except a Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*).

### March 27

In the morning we headed south, and the first site this day were **Sewer Plant Reeds (site 29)**, the sewage-water outfall with surrounding reed beds and pool, where we were on March 22 searching for Basra Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus griseldis*). No luck this time either. In the reed beds we got a fast view of a Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) and a Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*). In the bushes at the nearby sabkha, we found one or two Hume's Whitethroat (*Sylvia althaea*) beside the more common Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*). At close distance we could also identify our first Steppe Gray Shrike, a race (*pallidirostris*) of Southern Gray Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*). In the bushes on the sabkha we also found a Hypocolius (*Hypocolius ampelinus*), Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) and a White-throated Robin (*Irania gutturalis*) among others. At next stop, **Jebel Al-Benayah (site 18)**, George took us up on a low hill near Khiran Town. The hill is a popular picnic site with a good viewpoint over the sabkha. It happens that cars get stuck in the wet mud during the wet season in the winter. Unfortunately it started raining and we continued further south to **Wafra Farms (site 35)**. This is a large area of traditional farms on the southern border to Saudi Arabia. We stopped for an hour between 12<sup>30</sup> and 13<sup>30</sup> but it was not many birds around in the middle of the day in sunny weather. Two Steppe Eagles (*Aquila nipalensis*) and two Imperial Eagles (*Aquila heliaca*) were soaring above our heads. We headed north, towards Kuwait City and stopped at **Sabah Al-Salem (site 28)**, where we stayed the rest of the afternoon, until 17<sup>45</sup>. We were here also on March 22. The most interesting in the bushes was two White-throated Robin (*Irania gutturalis*), a Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) (**Fig. 16**), two Eurasian Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*), a Ménétries's Warbler (*Sylvia mystacea*) and a Barred Warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*).



Figure 16. **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** (*Monticola saxatilis*) at Sabah Al-Salem (site 28). Photo: Christer Brostam

In the reed beds we observed two males and one female of Streaked Weaver (*Ploceus manyar*) and a Village (Black-headed) weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*). The Streaked Weaver is known from the site but the Village Weaver is as far we know not mentioned from Kuwait. In any case both species can probably be regarded as escapes.

Three persons in the group (Per, Jan-Michael and Johan) left Kuwait late this evening, because of work at home.

### March 28

This day we did a revisit to **Abdali Farms (site 1)** in the northern part of Kuwait, where we were on March 21. We started at Mohammed Al-Ajmi, from 8<sup>00</sup> one of the farms connected to Abdali Farms. In the palm groves and cultivations we found mainly common passage migrants like Eastern Olivaceous Warbler (*Hippolais pallida*), European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) and Common Chiff-Chaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*). Beside these, the always present breeding birds, e.g. House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*) and Laughing Dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*). We went back to the “Babbler site”, Yacoub Boodai area and stayed there between 10<sup>00</sup> and 12<sup>00</sup>. This time we could hear the Common Babbler (*Turdoides caudatus*) singing a soft song falling at the end. All together it was a family group of seven or eight Common Babblers present. We also found at least four Hypocolius in the area, one of them singing, indicating possibly breeding. Grey Hypocolius ranges through the Middle East, breeding in Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, wintering mostly near the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf coasts. George told us if breeding here should be confirmed, it would be the first time at the Arabian Peninsula. Other birds present were e.g. Shrikes who liked this open bushy area. We saw Woodchat Shrike, Isabelline Shrike and Steppe Grey Shrike (*Lanius senator*, *L. isabellinus*, *L. meridionalis* race *pallidirostris*). Above our heads, a flock of 12 Collared Pratincole (*Glaerola pratincola*) on migrating passed. We continued to Yacoub Boodai Farm where a Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*), light phase, was soaring low above us and later even a Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*). We went back south towards Kuwait City, and along the road, we saw several Lesser- and Eurasian Kestrels (*Falco naumanni*, *F. tinnunculus*). We stopped at **Hujaijah (site 12)**, the hunting trees north of Subiya to see if any new birds had appeared since last time (March 21). Flocks of European and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*, *M. superciliosus*) passed by as well as a Black-winged Pratincole (*Glaerola nordmanni*). At long distance we saw a raptor sitting in an avenue of trees, which turn out to be a Long-legged Buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*). We left the site at 14<sup>45</sup> and took us back to the last site for the day, **Jahra East Outfall (site 14)** again. There were still a huge amount of waders. Interesting to note were two large flocks of waders standing on the sabkha far from the sea. The main part was Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), estimated to c. 3000 (possibly more), 200 Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), 250 Lesser Sand Plover (*Charadius mongolus*), 50 Greater Sand Plover (*Charadius leschenaultii*), among others. There were still a lot of Yellow Wagtails on the wet grassy area. We tried for the Basra Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus griseldis*) as we had done everywhere we found possible habitat, without result. We saw also a hunter shooting a Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*) at the shore which was depressing to see.

### March 29

We spent the whole warm day (+34° C) at **Al-Abraq Al-Khabari (site 2)** the isolated oasis close to the western border to Iraq where we were on March 25. Pekka Fågel accompanied us this day, which he probably do not regret. Christer found a bird we did not expect to find, a **Black-crowned Accentor** (*Prunella ocularis*), a new species for Kuwait. The bird was obliging and the photographers were satisfied (**Fig. 17**).



Figure 17. The find of a **Black-crowned Accentor** (*Prunella ocularis*) in the oasis at Al Abraaq Al-Khabari, was the first ever for Kuwait. Photo: Christer Brostam

This time all of us also got a good view at the African Collared Dove (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*) sitting in a high tree, where we clearly could see the white belly in contrast to darker breast. A secretive Shikra (*Accipiter badius*) gave us problem, because there was also five Eurasian Sparrowhawks hiding in the trees, so we had to check every flying Sparrowhawk carefully. At least three Eastern Orphean Warblers (*Sylvia crassirostris*), four Ménétries's Warblers (*Sylvia mystacea*), two Upcher's Warblers (*Hippolais languida*), one Pale Rockfinch (*Carpospiza brachydactyla*) and five White-throated Robin (*Irania gutturalis*) was found (**Fig. 1**). A Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*) passed the oasis. Five Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) roosted in a tree. A surprise was a flock of Western Reef Heron (*Egretta gularis*) in the oasis far from the sea. We also found *e.g.* a European Scops Owl (*Otus Scops*) hiding in a tree, a few Gray Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) and four Semi collared Flycatcher (*Ficedula semitorquata*). We ended the day with a visit to **Jahra East Outfall (site 14)**, which we thought was the best place to find Basra Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus griseldis*). We spent an hour between 17<sup>15</sup> and 18<sup>15</sup> at the site, but had no luck this time either.

### March 30

This was the last day in Kuwait. We started again with **Jahra East Outfall (site 14)**, where we stayed between 7<sup>00</sup> and 8<sup>30</sup> for a last attempt on **Basra Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus griseldis*). When we were standing in front of the reed beds, suddenly the bird appeared, attract by the tape recording and we all got a good view of the Basra Reed Warbler. Later on we saw eventually one another, but possibly the same bird. This warbler was one of the main targets and we had searched for it every day in suitable habitats, so it had probably arrived during the last night. At this site we also had two Red-wattled Plover (*Hoplopterus indicus*). From 9<sup>00</sup> we spent three hours at **Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve (site 27)**. Two European Scops Owl (*Otus scops*) were hiding in different trees near the pond at Tulha. A Chestnut-shouldered Petronia (*Petronia xanthocollis*) was found together with large flocks of House- and Spanish Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*, *P. hispaniolensis*). Among the sparrows

there were also one or two melanistic House Sparrows. A Short-toed Eagle and a Steppe Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*, *Aquila nipalensis*) passed by. We ended up the bird watching by visiting **Jahra Farms (site 15)** a last time between 13<sup>15</sup> and 13<sup>45</sup>. There were nothing new, all was common birds like Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*), and Laughing Dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*). This site is one of the best to see Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) of which we saw four. On our way back to Kuwait City we visited one of the main tourist attractions in Kuwait, Kuwait Towers, built in 1975 AD and inaugurated 1979 AD, where the main tower is 187 m above sea level. We continued to the hotel, took a shower, packed our things and went to the airport where we left the car and had a dinner. The flight left Kuwait 00<sup>30</sup>. It was five very satisfied birdwatchers who left Kuwait.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the first hand we would like to thank George Gregory for his sacrificing support. Without his help we had not managed to get access or even found our way to many of the sites, where the target species were. We will also thank Pekka Fågel who joined us when he was free from his ordinary work. Mike Pope helped us with a recording of Basra Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus griseldis*), which was most valuable to elicit the bird at last. Thanks to Ahmed Al-Mershed who invited us to a dinner at a restaurant in Kuwait City, where we spent a pleasant evening with marvellous food and Kuwaitian hospitality (**Fig. 18**).



Figure 18. The Swedish group outside the Kuwaiti restaurant together with the guide George Gregory (second left) and the Kuwaiti hosts. Photo with Johan Sandströms camera.

## List of bird observations, Kuwait, March 19<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

Compiled by Seppo Haavisto  
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### The bird-watching sites in following list:

- (1) Abdali Farms
- (2) Al-Abraq Al-Khabari
- (7) Doha Peninsula
- (8) East Doha
- (11) Green Island
- (12) Hujaijah
- (14) Jahra East Outfall
- (15) Jahra Farms
- (16) Jahra Pool Reserve
- (18) Jebel Al-Benayah
- (19) Kabd (Sulaibiya Agricultural Research Station)
- (26) Rawdatain
- (27) Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve
- (28) Sabah al-Salem
- (29) Sewer Plant Reeds
- (32) Sulaibikhat Nature Reserve
- (35) Wafra Farms
- (37) Zour Port

Descriptions of the sites in: Gregory, G., 2005: The Birds of the State of Kuwait (*cf.* also **Fig. 3**).

### **Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

1 (14) 28/3.

### **Common Teal** *Anas crecca*

150 (7) 20/3, 4 (7) 24/3.

### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

4 (7) 20/3.

### **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

10 (7) 20/3.

### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

2 (8) 24/3.

### **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*

A total of 6 singles heard.

### **Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Fairly common. Highest daily counts approximate 50 species

**Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis***

4 (37) 22/3. Good sightings of one of our most wished WP-ticks on the trip. The birds were stationary fishing just offshore and sitting on the sand reefs outside the cape. The permission for the first foreign birder group to visit Zour Port close the Saudi Arabian border was the key for success. The species is easier to “tick” along the Kuwait coast later on spring and summer.

**Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus***

A total of 6 seen and 2 heard birds.

**Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

1 (26) and 1 (1) 21/3.

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***

Recorded in small numbers (up to 8) on most days.

**Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides***

Singles (up to 5) observed on most days.

**Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis***

Almost daily observations up to 20 specimens on coastal locals. Surprisingly, a flock of 9 observed on (2) 25/3, far in the desert.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Observed on three days, 10, 9 and 7 specimens.

**Great White Heron *Egretta alba***

1 (14) 21/3.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Common along the coastline.

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

1 (29) 22/3, a flock of 5, resting shortly on ground before hunters discovered them .... (2) 25/3, 1 (32) 26/3.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

Observed almost daily. Highest count 9 spec.

**Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus***

Up to 200 daily at Doha peninsula and Jahra bay.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

Total 13, mostly seen from main roads.

**Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus***

1 (19) 24/3.

**Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus***

1 (1) 21/3 and 28/3 (different birds), 1 (27) 30/3.

**Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

A total of 5 singles.

**Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus***

Single birds seen almost daily. Totally 13 specimens.

**Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***

Observed on four days, totally 7 birds.

**Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

Sightings of 1-5 spec. almost daily. In all 17 birds.

**Shikra *Accipiter badius***

A longer flight observation, even soaring of an adult bird (1) 21/3, 1 adult male (2) 25/3 and even 29/3. The bird was perching, as some Eurasian Sparrowhawks, well hidden in the larger trees inside the oasis. When disturbed, it only flew shortly and low, never outside the oasis where cars with alert hunters waited...

**Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo***

Singles seen on five days, totally 7 birds.

**Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus***

Seven sightings of single birds.

**Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina***

1 migrating adult (19) 24/3. Status in Kuwait: Vagrant.

**Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga***

1 (1) 21/3, 1 (2) 29/3.

**Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis***

Seen on six days. At all 12 specimens.

**Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca***

Three observations; 1 adult (27) 20/3, 1 second-year bird (19) 24/3, 2 second-year birds together (35) 27/3.

**Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus***

A total of 9 birds on four days.

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

Four coastal sightings of single birds.

**Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni***

Several observations of smaller migrating flocks especially during our last three days of the trip. Totally 66 birds.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Widespread and fairly common. Highest daily count 15 specimens.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

1 adult female flew low over the houses at Hotel Husa House in Kuwait City 26/3.

**Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***

3-4 birds heard at (14, 16, 29).

**Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana***

Several heard and some seen in suitable habitat.

**Little Crake *Porzana parva***

A total of up to ten birds seen and heard in different reed beds.

**Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla***

1 subad seen short but well (14) 24/3.

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Several seen in suitable habitat.

**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra***

A few spec. observed on (29, 14, 16).

**Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio porphyrio***

1-2 birds heard (8) 23/3, 1 seen (29) 27/3.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus***

Highest daily count 75 (16) 26/3.

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Highest daily count 30 (16) 28/3.

**Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola***

Nice observations of 200 20/3 and 130 23/3 during high tide hours in good light in late afternoon (7).

**Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola***

Singles and small flocks on four days. Totally 24, greatest flock 12 migrating birds.

**Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni***

One migrating bird passed (12) 28/3.

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

A few identified at (7 and 14).

**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Fairly common on coastal sites, especially during high tide.

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

Varying numbers, up to 50 daily along the coast.

**Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus***

Large flocks seen on high tide visits at (7 and 14): 150 23/3, 450 24/3 and 250 28/3.

**Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii***

At most 50 spec. on visits at (7 and 14).

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Maximum daily count 140 (7).

**Red-wattled Plover *Vanellus indicus***

2+4 birds (1) 21/3, 1 (8) 23/3 and 2 (14) 30/3.

**Red Knot *Calidris canutus***

A few observations, highest daily count 30 (14).

**Sanderling *Calidris alba***

Highest count on one site app. 150 (14) 28/3.

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

The highest count at one site 50 (14) 28/3.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

Highest counts at (7) app. 200 23/3 and (14) app. 200 28/3.

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Maximum count app. 3000 (possibly more) (14) 28/3. On our way to East Jahra Outfall we found two large flocks of nervous waders on high tide concentration at the sabkha-area far from the shore.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus***

20 (7) 23/3, 50 (14) 28/3.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

At most, app. 30 specimens on one site (14).

**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

Low numbers except 21/3 app. 25 (14).

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

2 (14) 21/3.

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***

Fairly common at coastal sites. Highest count 50 (7) 20/3.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***

Highest daily count app. 600 (7) 23/3.

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus***

Singles. Highest daily count 6.

**Common Redshank *Tringa totanus***

Common. Highest daily count 400 (14) 28/3.

**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis***

Relatively high numbers almost daily. At most 50 (7+14) 23/3.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

Fairly common. Highest total/day 20.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

Singles daily. Highest total/day 10.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

A few observations of singles.

**Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus***

Up to 20 observed almost daily on coastal sites.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Singles daily. Highest total/day 10.

**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres***

Large numbers counted on high tide at (7); 150 23/3, 200 24/3.

**Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull *Larus ichthyaetus***

2 20/3 and 5 24/3 (7). All birds seen were in younger age.

**Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus***

Abundant.

**Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei***

Abundant.

**Common Gull *Larus canus***

A flock of 4 on a field between Kuwait City and Al Jahra 25/3.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus***

Seen in low numbers 20-23/3.

**Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini***

Daily on coastal sites. Highest total/day 25.

**Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans***

Daily on coastal sites. Highest total/day 20.

**Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica***

Singles. Highest total/day 6.

**Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia***

At high tide at most 110 24/3 (7).

**Greater Crested Tern *Sterna bergii***

Only observed at (37) where 4 birds were seen 22/3.

**Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis***

App. 40 (37) 22/3.

**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis***

Low numbers. Highest total/day 20.

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo***

15 (7) 20/3 and 10 at the same site 23/3 were the only observations.

**White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa***

2 (37) 22/3. The species is very common summer visitor, also breeding in Kuwait. The numbers along the coast increases prominently first in May.

**Little Tern *Sterna albifrons***

Observed at three sites: 4 (37) 22/3, 5 (7) 24/3 and 4 (14) 28/3.

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus***

2 (7) 23/3.

**Rock (Feral) Dove *Columba livia***

Abundant.

**Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Common.

**African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea***

1 (2) on both visits 25/3 and 29/3.

**Eurasian Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur***

Roadside observation; 1 between Jahra and Kuwait City 30/3.

**Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis***

Abundant.

**Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis***

Five observations, in total 6 birds e.g. a fearless and photo-friendly pair at (32) 26/3.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri***

1 to 5 seen almost daily. Most common at (15).

**Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***

Roadside sightings of total 3 spec. 29-30/3.

**European Scops Owl *Otus scops***

1 (2) 25/3 and 29/3, 2 (27) 30/3.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*  
2 just outside (19) 24/3. Rare winter visitor.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*  
Low numbers daily.

**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*  
Low numbers daily.

**White-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon smyrnensis*  
1 (15) 20/3 and 30/3, 1 (28) 22/3.

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus*  
Rather common. Highest daily count 40.

**Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*  
Low numbers 25-30/3. Highest total/day 20.

**European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*  
1 (2) 25/3.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*  
Varying numbers daily, as most 12 specimens.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*  
Six observations of single birds on different sites.

**Black-crowned Finch Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps*  
Only seen at (19) where 20 seen 24/3. Birds were in pairs.

**Dunn's Lark** *Eremalauda durni*  
5 in a large mixed flock of larks in the desert just east of (2) 25/3.

**Bar-tailed Desert Lark** *Ammomanes cinctura*  
1 (27) both on 23/3 and 30/3.

**Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes*  
Scarce in the desert. The highest daily count 10 (27).

**Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata*  
A flock of 30, 1 km. east of (2) 25/3.

**Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*  
Common especially at (2, 27). Often in larger flocks.

**Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens*  
Common (27), a few (2).

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*  
Common daily.

**Wood Lark** *Lullula arborea*

1 (27) 23/3. Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

Low numbers daily.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Abundant.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*

Common.

**Common House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

Singles.

**Rickard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*

1 (15) 20/3. Rare passage migrant.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

Seen daily in suitable habitat. The highest total/day 20.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

Rather low numbers, up to 20 daily.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*

Small flocks, up to 20 more or less daily at coastal sites.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

Up to 20 daily at coastal sites, especially (14).

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

Common. Largest evening flock at (14) app. 200 24/3. Mainly ssp. *beema* but also some *feldegg* and a few *lutea* included.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Small numbers daily. The highest total/day 15.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

Abundant.

**White-eared Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucogenys*

Very common.

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*

The only observation during the trip; 5 (11) 22/3.

**Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus*

5+18+1+1 (11) 22/3. In the early morning two flocks came in from the sea (migrating) and landed in berry trees on the artificial Green Island. 1 (29) 27/3 and at least 4 (1) 28/3, one of the birds was even singing.

**Radde's Accentor** *Prunella ocularis*

1 (2) 29/3. A new species for Kuwait (if accepted). The bird was foraging on ground under the northernmost tree- and bush curtain of the oasis. When disturbed it shortly flew up to low branches in surrounding trees. Photographers in our group shot the bird during an hour with hundreds of pictures.

**Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes*

A total of 15 seen. Noticeable increase of observations during the four last days of our trip. Highest total/day 6.

**Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

1 (26), 1 (1) 21/3 and 1 (29) 27/3.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

Singles almost daily. A total of 22 seen.

**White-throated Robin** *Irania gutturalis*

A total of 13 birds seen. All observations during the later half of the trip.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Scarce. Four observations of singles at different sites.

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

1 (32) 20/3, 1 (28) 22/3, 1 (8) 24/3.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Fairly common.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*

Fairly common in suitable habitat. Very common at (19).

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Widespread and fairly common.

**Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Fairly common. The highest total/day 15.

**Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica*

Fairly common but lower numbers than Pied.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*

Surprisingly uncommon. A total of 12 birds seen.

**Finsch's Wheatear** *Oenanthe finschii*

1 female (27) 23/3.

**Red-tailed (Persian) Wheatear** *Oenanthe chrysopygia*

1 (27) 23/3. At least three birds had been wintered in small wadis in the Reserve. To our great luck (at least for many of us who had not visited Armenia just for tick this species!) was one still present.

**Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*

Totally sex singles.

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

Totally five singles.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

A total of four singles.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

1 (15) 20/3. Unfortunately seen by only one observer. Rare winter visitor.

**Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis*

Fairly common.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

1 seen (1) 21/3 and 1 seen (2) 25/3.

**Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides*

1-3 daily in suitable habitat, mostly only heard.

**Moustached Warbler** *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

1 (14) 24/3.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Singles.

**European Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Fairly common in reed beds. A few observed even at farms and oasis.

**Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

2 (8) 23/3, 1 (14) 24/3.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Fairly common in larger reed beds. Singles even at farms and oasis.

**Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis*

1-2 (14) 30/3. The species is common passage migrant in Kuwait but much easier to find later in spring. To our luck we got a chance to borrow a song recording from Mike Pope. After several tries at all visited reed beds during our trip, we succeeded to see the species on our very last morning in Kuwait!

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida***

Totally 11 birds observed.

**Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida***

1 (2) 25/3 and 2 at the same site 29/3.

**Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina***

1 (1) 28/3.

**Menetries's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea***

Singles almost daily. A total of 16 specimens.

**Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana***

1 (29) 22/3 and probably the same bird 27/3, 1 (19) 24/3.

**Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris***

3 (2) 29/3.

**Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria***

1 (28) 27/3.

**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca***

Several daily.

**Small Whitethroat *Sylvia (curruca) minula***

1 (19) 24/3.

**Hume's Whitethroat *Sylvia (curruca) althaea***

1-2 (29) 27/3.

**Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

Singles up to 5 almost daily.

**Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

Abundant.

**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus***

Rather scarce.

**Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata***

Observed on several sites. Highest total/site 5. In all 23 birds seen.

**Common Babbler *Turdoides caudatus***

3 (1) 21/3 and a family group of 7-8 at the same place 28/3. Even song heard. This is the first time when the species is twitchable in WP!

**Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus***

1 just outside (19) 24/3.

**Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus***

Common. Highest total/day 15. Totally 86 spec. of races *isabellinus* and *phoenicuroides*.

**Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach***

1 20/3 and 26/3 (32). The bird had been seen regularly at the same site since 14/10-2006. Second record for Kuwait. The first was found at Jahra Pools Reserve 17/10 2004.

**Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis***

Widespread. Totally 47 specimens. 1-5 birds seen daily except 20/3 when a total of app. 20 were observed, often at roadsides. About 20 % were identified as Steppe Grey Shrike *L. m. pallidirostris*.

**Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator***

1-5 singles daily. In all 29 spec.

**Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus***

1 male (2) 25/3.

**Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis***

Common at most urban and sub-urban sites.

**Bank Mynah *Acridotheres ginginianus***

5 (15) 20/3. Even nest holes was seen in a well.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Abundant.

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis***

Fairly common, at some sites very common.

**Pale Rockfinch *Petronia brachydactyla***

1 (2) 29/3. Unfortunately seen only by one observer.

**Chestnut-shouldered Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis***

1 male (2) 25/3 and 1 female (27) 30/3.

**Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar***

2 males and 1 female (28) 27/3. The species is included in category B (the species of birds of captive origin) in "The Birds of the State of Kuwait".

**Willage Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus***

1 male (28) 27/3. The species is not mentioned in "The Birds of the State of Kuwait". The origin of the bird is of course doubtful.

**(Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*)**

1 dead bird found (26) 21/3.

**Common Rosefinch *Carpodachus erythrurus***

1 male (26) 21/3.

**Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea***

1 male (2) 25/3. Unfortunately seen by only one observer.

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

3 (27) 23/3, 20 (19) 24/3, 1 (27) 30/3.