



Field Guides Tour Report

Morocco 2017

Sep 11, 2017 to Sep 27, 2017

Jesse Fagan

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.



Our group photo by participant Sherry Collins. We are standing between the High (left) and Anti Atlas mountains. Boumalne Dades is behind us.

Not much more to say except, FANTASTIC TRIP. Thanks to such a great group. We had lots of smiles and laughter, which far outweighed the tears and agony (just kidding!). The birding couldn't have been much better. We encountered 213 bird taxa (one of my highest totals ever) and met with most of our NW African targets and many other interesting subspecies and migrants. Your highlights included both Lanner and Barbary falcons, Marsh Owl, Moussier's Redstart (Bart's favorite), Atlas Flycatcher, Levaillant's Woodpecker, Cream-colored Courser, Spotted Sandgrouse, Barbary Partridge (Sherry liked this one), and Spanish Sparrow. However, Steve, Elena, Joe, Tom, and just about everyone else agreed, the Northern Bald Ibis was tops! Oh yeah, and that Fat Sand Rat!

Thanks to the group and our hard working driver, Oussama. He did an excellent job once again. I hope to see you all again on the birding trail.

All the best,

Jesse aka Motmot (from Bogota, Colombia)

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

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – Small numbers in the Lakes Region (where there was little water), but larger numbers near Midelt and again Oued Souss.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – A small group was on Dayet Aoua.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Good numbers at a few spots in the north.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Also, good numbers in the north at several sites.

MARbled TEAL (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) – We had two flocks (sizes 17 and 10) at Loukus River and at Dayet Aoua, respectively. This rare Mediterranean Duck is threatened from hunting and habitat destruction.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD (*Netta rufina*) – Small numbers at Sidi Bourhaba and in the Lakes Region.

COMMON POCHARD (*Aythya ferina*) – Just one at Sidi Bourhaba.

WHITE-HEADED DUCK (*Oxyura leucocephala*) – This rare and local in Europe (more common in Middle East and Asia) stiff-tail was seen well (we counted 48) at Sidi Bourhaba.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

BARBARY PARTRIDGE (*Alectoris barbara*) – We saw them well in the Zaer, but encountered them at a few other spots around Agadir and Marrakesh.

DOUBLE-SPURRED FRANCOLIN (*Pternistis bicalcaratus ayesha*) – Heard in the Zaer and seen running across the road a few times. Always difficult. This is a rare and local population, the only one north of the Sahara.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Small numbers at various wetland sites.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Several were studied close at Sidi Bourhaba.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

GREATER FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) – Good numbers at the Loukus River and in the Lakes Region. Also, again around Agadir. The most I have seen on this tour. Shallow lakes and drought conditions in the region may be providing more habitat for this species.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

CORY'S SHEARWATER (*Calonectris diomedea*) – A few hundred were seen during our pelagic trip. Many were not identified to subspecies.

CORY'S SHEARWATER (SCOPOLI'S) (*Calonectris diomedea diomedea*) – A couple (or three?) looked good for this subspecies that breeds in the Mediterranean. Some taxonomists treat it as a separate species.

CORY'S SHEARWATER (BOREALIS) (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*) – Most of the Cory's-type seen were of this subspecies which breeds in the eastern Atlantic. It differs subtly from the previous form with respect to the underwing and bill structure, as well as, different breeding islands.

GREAT SHEARWATER (*Ardenna gravis*) – Good numbers (10) were seen on the pelagic trip out of Agadir.

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Ardenna grisea*) – Several shot by the boat quick, but didn't linger for long looks.

MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus puffinus*) – Nice to see this species in good numbers. We counted around 20 during our pelagic trip.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER (*Puffinus mauretanicus*) – Awesome views of both light and dark morphs. The dark morphs are quite similar to Sooty Shearwater. Hard to believe this taxon was once considered a subspecies of Manx! It breeds on the Balearic Islands.

Hydrobatidae (Storm-Petrels)

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL (*Hydrobates pelagicus*) – Steve spotted one from our shoreline perch at our hotel in Skhirat.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

WHITE STORK (*Ciconia ciconia*) – Lots of nests and birds around to see.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

NORTHERN GANNET (*Morus bassanus*) – Seen on most sea watches from shore or on the pelagic trip. The immatures slightly outnumbered the adults.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

GREAT CORMORANT (NORTH ATLANTIC) (*Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*) – Most of the individuals we saw in the north (around Rabat) were migratory carbo, but further south (Oued Massa) we began to see mostly maroccanus.

GREAT CORMORANT (MOROCCAN) (*Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

LITTLE BITTERN (*Ixobrychus minutus*) – New for the tour (but sort of expected eventually) was this species near our hotel in Skhirat.

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*) – Small numbers on most days.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – Besides Cattle Egret, this was the next most common long-legged wader on the tour.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Good numbers around the Loukus River and on the Oued Massa (where they can be confused with the next species!).

NORTHERN BALD IBIS (*Geronticus eremita*) – Awesome! One of the rarest birds (possibly the rarest) in NW Africa and Europe. We had a memorable experience with them early one morning near the Oued Massa.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*) – Good numbers around Rabat and again at Agadir.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One was carrying a fish at Sidi Bourhaba, and seen again in the coastal wetlands around Agadir.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*) – A rare raptor in NW Africa and southern Europe. Singles were seen on two days while birding around Rabat. The Zaer seems to be a good place for them.

EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*) – Just one soaring bird near Boumalne Dades this year. Some years you get larger migrating flocks.

BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – These were somewhat common in the Ifrane region.

TAWNY EAGLE (*Aquila rapax*) – Wow. What a cool bird to find and see so well. A juvenile was hunting on the king's grounds at Oued Souss. It perched for several minutes allowing us long views.

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – One soaring above the ridge top at Oukaimaden.

BONELLI'S EAGLE (*Aquila fasciata*) – We lucked out and had several encounters with this species including a pair in the Dades Gorge, one near Ait-Benhaddou, and again at Oukaimaden.

EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) – These were common over Sidi Bourhaba.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER (*Circus pygargus*) – One was flying up the valley at Oukaimaden. A migrant no doubt.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) – Small numbers were seen in the north around Rabat.

LONG-LEGGED BUZZARD (*Buteo rufinus*) – Our first were in the Erg Chebbi region, but they become more common in the high deserts and at Oukaimaden.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*) – One made a brief (but diagnostic) appearance along the edge of Sidi Bourhaba.

EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Good numbers in the wetlands around Rabat.

RED-KNOBBED COOT (*Fulica cristata*) – Good studies and comparisons were made at Sidi Bourhaba between this species and the next.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*)

Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

EURASIAN THICK-KNEE (*Burhinus oedicnemus*) – One in the spotlight at Oued Souss was pretty incredible. Seemed appropriate considering this is a nocturnal feeder.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-WINGED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*) – Good numbers at most wetland sites.

PIED AVOCET (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) – We had a group of 10 or so birds at Sidi Bourhaba. Always a treat to see.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus ostralegus*) – Seen well at several coastal sites. Daily from our Shkirat hotel.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Common on the coast.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis apricaria*) – One at Oued Massa was a good bird. Not annual on this tour and only in small numbers.

KENTISH PLOVER (KENTISH) (*Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*) – The Old World equivalent of our Snowy Plover was seen in small numbers at most coastal sites.

COMMON RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – This species was common at many wetland sites, but often in coastal areas. The next species is very similar, but prefers more inland (freshwater) locations. Sometimes we had them side-by-side for nice comparisons.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (EUROPEAN) (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*) – The Old World variety shows the white stripe on the back in flight. It was fairly common at coastal sites.

EURASIAN CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*) – Seen around Skhirat and again at Oued Souss.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*) – Groups were seen at Loukus River and Oued Souss.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*) – The most common godwit on the tour. Seen at several locations.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – All along the coast.

RED KNOT (*Calidris canutus*) – Bart spotted a pair from our hotel in Skhirat. There were a few more around Agadir.

RUFF (*Calidris pugnax*) – Large groups at Loukus River and Oued Souss and Massa.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*) – Much smaller numbers this year than previous years. Just one in the Lakes Region and a few at Oued Massa.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – Along the coast in small to medium sized groups. We commented on the sharp looking juveniles, one of the prettiest shorebird plumages, imho.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – The small-billed subspecies here is *schinzii* (W Europe breeding). Many individuals we saw were juveniles.

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Small numbers at several sites. The Old World equivalent of our Spotted Sandpiper.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – Seen well at Loukus River and Sidi Bourhaba. Most rivers in the region probably have one (or more) along it!

COMMON GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*) – Good numbers along the Loukus River and at Oued Massa and Souss.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*) – Just a pair seen at Loukus River.

COMMON REDSHANK (*Tringa totanus*) – There were always several in the coastal rocks from our hotel in Skhirat. Seen also in Agadir.

Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

CREAM-COLORED COURSER (*Cursorius cursor*) – We finally caught up with this species...in the dump! Still a very cool bird.

COLLARED PRATINCOLE (*Glareola pratincola*) – There were distant pratincoles sitting along the Loukus River. They were also seen in flight, which is distinctive.

Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

GREAT SKUA (*Stercorarius skua*) – Just a couple on the pelagic out of Agadir. Unmistakeable.

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) – One was on the pelagic trip, but didn't hang around long.

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – A few were seen daily from shore in Skhirat (dark morphs), but also again one on the pelagic trip.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

SLENDER-BILLED GULL (*Chroicocephalus genei*) – A max of three birds were see at the mouth of Oued Souss.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – A common gull species on this tour.

AUDOUIN'S GULL (*Ichthyaeetus audouinii*) – One at our hotel in Skhirat, but more common around port in Agadir.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL (*Larus michahellis*) – The most common gull on this tour. Depending on light conditions, can be difficult to separate from the next species if not for side-by-side comparisons.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (INTERMEDIUS) (*Larus fuscus intermedius*) – This is the darkest backed of the LBBG seen on this tour. We had singles or pairs around Skhirat and again in Agadir.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (GRAELLSII) (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) – The most common subspecies of LBBG seen on this tour. Most individuals are of this variety, which is common along the coast.

LITTLE TERN (*Sternula albifrons*) – Our first were at Skhirat, but again in Agadir.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Small numbers on the Loukus River.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – A pair were sitting at the mouth of the Oued Souss.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*) – One was feeding over the small pond at Oued Souss.

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Just three that flew over high-up at Oued Souss seemed odd.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*) – A few on the beach at Skhirat and again in the Agadir area including on the pelagic trip.

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Several at different coastal sites.

LESSER CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bengalensis*) – Small numbers offshore at Skhirat.

Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

SPOTTED SANDGROUSE (*Pterocles senegallus*) – Wow. What an incredible experience with 45 or so individuals returning to roost in the rocks and dunes near Erg Chebbi one evening.

BLACK-BELLIED SANDGROUSE (*Pterocles orientalis*) – A single bird was flushed during our Dupont's stomp. That was our only one.

CROWNED SANDGROUSE (*Pterocles coronatus*) – Awesome to see this group flyby us one late morning during a walk in the desert.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Wild Rock Pigeons! Countable birds were in the Ziz Valley and the Dades Gorge.

COMMON WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba palumbus*) – Hundreds in the Zaer, and again on several other days in wooded areas.

EUROPEAN TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia turtur*) – Still several around at Erg Chebbi.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – This species was seen everyday, but not native to Morocco, having arrived in the early 70's. Not sure if this was a natural expansion or not.

LAUGHING DOVE (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – Small numbers (but increasing) in the Erg Chebbi region and high desert around Boumalne Dades.

Strigidae (Owls)

LITTLE OWL (*Athene noctua*) – Singles on a few different days.

MARSH OWL (*Asio capensis*) – This was a real treat seeing four birds in the Merja Zerga Reserve. The only spot really to see this species north of the Sahara.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

RED-NECKED NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*) – Good looks in the light of a pair at Oued Souss.

EURASIAN NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) – One in the Zaer our first early morning of birding. Unfortunately, it didn't stick around long.

EGYPTIAN NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus aegyptius*) – Thanks to Barrak's wife for putting us on a day roosting bird!

Apodidae (Swifts)

ALPINE SWIFT (*Apus melba*) – A migrant group of 15 birds was over the Lakes Region.

COMMON SWIFT (*Apus apus*) – Just one in Taroudant. Few swifts around this year.

LITTLE SWIFT (*Apus affinis*) – Three over Taroudant with the Common.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Singles on a few days including a couple from our van during the long drives.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – One from the hotel at Skhirat and again on the Loukus River and at Oued Massa.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER (*Merops persicus*) – These were seen in small to medium sized groups in the Erg Chebbi area. A true desert species.

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER (*Merops apiaster*) – Common in large migrant flocks throughout the trip.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

EURASIAN WRYNECK (*Jynx torquilla*) – A pair at Oued Massa was a treat. Missed some years.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (ATLAS) (*Dendrocopos major numidus*) – This particular subspecies was seen very well in the Zaer.

LEVAILLANT'S WOODPECKER (*Picus vaillantii*) – Finding two different individuals in the Lakes Region was incredible. Wonderful looks and studies.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

LESSER KESTREL (*Falco naumanni*) – Just a couple which is about normal; most have already headed south.

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Nearly everyday of the tour. One of the most common raptors to be seen.

EURASIAN HOBBY (*Falco subbuteo*) – Several were hunting over Sidi Bourhaba again this year.

LANNER FALCON (*Falco biarmicus*) – Lovely looks at a bird perched on a power pole near Goulmima.

PEREGRINE FALCON (BARBARY) (*Falco peregrinus pelegrinoides*) – It was exciting to catch up with an immature as we drove out to Ait-Benhaddou.

Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and Allies)

BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA (HOODED) (*Tchagra senegalus cucullatus*) – Heard a lot in the Zaer and Oued Massa, but seen a few times as well.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

SOUTHERN GRAY SHRIKE (SOUTHERN) (*Lanius meridionalis algeriensis*) – Seen in the coastal areas. Darker overall than the next subspecies.

SOUTHERN GRAY SHRIKE (SOUTHERN) (*Lanius meridionalis elegans*) – The paler, desert form. Fairly common away from the coastal zone.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

EURASIAN JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*) – Seen well at several spots near Rabat and again at Oukaimeden.

EURASIAN MAGPIE (AFRICAN) (*Pica pica mauritanica*) – This distinctive subspecies was common in the coastal region.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (*Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – Several hundred were around the Oukaimeden Valley.

EURASIAN JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*) – Seem to be expanding a bit in the coastal north. We had them as far south as Skhirat this year (a first for the guide).

BROWN-NECKED RAVEN (*Corvus ruficollis*) – Fairly common in the desert region around Erg Chebbi and a bit further out towards Risanni.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Mainly in the coastal north and Middle Atlas.

Alaudidae (Larks)

GREATER HOOPOE-LARK (*Alaemon alaudipes*) – This large lark was seen in the Erg Chebbi region. In flight, their black and white wing pattern is distinctive.

THICK-BILLED LARK (*Ramphocoris clotbey*) – Fantastic views scrounging around in the dump!

BAR-TAILED LARK (*Ammomanes cinctura*) – This small pale lark was seen in the flat desert around Erg Chebbi. Hostile conditions to live in.

DESERT LARK (*Ammomanes deserti*) – Prefers the more desert rocky slopes where we found a group of 4 or 5 birds.

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – We had our first at Aguelmame de Sidi Ali, but again Oukaimeden. This species prefers higher elevations than the next similar species.

TEMMINCK'S LARK (*Eremophila bilopha*) – Good studies at Boumalne Dades between the High and Anti Atlas.

GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) – Also, good numbers were foraging in the dump.

DUPONT'S LARK (*Chersophilus duponti*) – Our hard work paid off! Nice, close looks at a pair in the open desert near Midelt.

THEKLA LARK (*Galerida theklae*) – These we sorted out in the high desert beginning in Midelt, but also again around Boumalne Dades. In my experience, they prefer the more native, less disturbed habitat.

CRESTED LARK (*Galerida cristata*) – Seemingly everywhere and common, especially in the disturbed habitats e.g. agricultural areas.

MAGHREB LARK (*Galerida macrorhyncha randoni*) – The distinctive desert form (longer billed and paler) of Crested Lark, but now has been split. Seen well at Barak's house and in the Boumalne Dades area.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

PLAIN MARTIN (*Riparia paludicola*) – A couple were seen along the muddy banks of the Loukus River.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Several at the mouth of the Oued Souss.

EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) – Small numbers in the Dades Gorge and again at Oukaimeden.

BARN SWALLOW (WHITE-BELLIED) (*Hirundo rustica rustica*) – Common everywhere. Seen everyday of the tour.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Cecropis daurica*) – At least 50 were still around Oukaimeden on our drive up the valley.

COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon urbicum*) – A migrant flock of 30 birds were seen high up as we drove towards Oukaimeden.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

COAL TIT (*Parus ater*) – Our first were in the Jabaa forest, but we found them again below Oukaimeden.

AFRICAN BLUE TIT (*Cyanistes teneriffae*) – Folks were happy with this pleasant species, a recent split from European Blue Tit.

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*) – Just singles on a few days. Not super common like the blue tit.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

EURASIAN NUTHATCH (*Sitta europaea*) – Several in the Jabaa forest near Ifrane.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

SHORT-TOED TREECREEPER (*Certhia brachydactyla*) – Good numbers in the Jabaa forest and heard in the evergreen forest below Oukaimeden.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER (*Cinclus cinclus*) – We worked the busy river (full of tagine restaurants, chairs, people, etc.) until it paid off! Nearly as far as we could go up river and eventually a pair showed itself.

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

COMMON BULBUL (*Pycnonotus barbatus*) – These lived up to their names. Common in many green areas.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

FIRECREST (*Regulus ignicapilla*) – Seen in the Jabaa oak forest and again at Oukaimeden.

Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

SCRUB WARBLER (*Scotocerca inquieta*) – We had to work at this a bit. It took a little stomping around in the right habitat to find them, but we did, a pair. Very local and difficult bird to find.

CETTI'S WARBLER (*Cettia cetti*) – More vocal than anything else. We did see one at the Loukus River. Fairly common along vegetated waterways.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

WILLOW WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – Good numbers of migrants were in the desert oasis's. Very similar to the next species (at least some individuals).

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – A few identified at the Oued Massa and again near Oukaimeden.

IBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF (*Phylloscopus ibericus*) – Small numbers near Ifrane (where they presumably breed), near Agadir, and Oukaimeden. Very similar to Willow Warbler, but less yellow below, darker legs, and shows more habitat to bob/dip tail. This species breeds in Southern Europe and NW Africa.

WESTERN BONELLI'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus bonelli*) – A pair of migrants were foraging in the Phragmites bushes at a desert oasis in Erg Chebbi.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER (*Iduna pallida*) – Several in the Erg Chebbi region where they breed. They separate out from the next species by appearance and song.

WESTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER (*Iduna opaca*) – One at our gas station stop in the olive trees. Paler and longer billed than the previous species, this was certainly a migrant.

EURASIAN REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – One at our lunch stop at Tomrhakh.

GREAT REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – A pair were skulking around in the reeds at Loukus River.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

ZITTING CISTICOLA (*Cisticola juncidis*) – Common at Sidi Bourhaba and the Loukus River. Also, around the Oued Massa and Souss. For such a small bird, they have an impressive aerial display!

Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)

AFRICAN DESERT WARBLER (*Sylvia deserti*) – We stopped for one during our 4X4 desert drive. Incredible close views and experience watching one foraging nearly at our feet!

TRISTRAM'S WARBLER (*Sylvia deserticola*) – One male at the pass near Midelt was awesome! A NW African endemic.

SUBALPINE WARBLER (*Sylvia cantillans*) – Common as a migrant in the desert lowlands.

SARDINIAN WARBLER (*Sylvia melanocephala*) – The most common "warbler" on the tour, especially in the coastal regions.

GREATER WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia communis*) – Singles at Erg Chebbi and again in the Oued Massa.

SPECTACLED WARBLER (*Sylvia conspicillata*) – A pair were seen in the Lakes Region, where they breed.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

FULVOUS CHATTERER (*Turdoides fulva*) – Always a good one to find. We had a pair at Barak's house, but also while looking for Scrub Warbler we ran into another small group.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa striata*) – Good numbers throughout the tour. "Oh, just another Spotted Fly."

EUROPEAN ROBIN (*Erithacus rubecula*) – In and around the Jabaa Forest and Ifrane, but only here. Fairly local and uncommon in Morocco.

COMMON NIGHTINGALE (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) – Several were still around the Zaer hunting grounds. Not seen super well, however (mostly by voice).

EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – Small numbers of migrants and wintering birds had begun to trickle into Morocco.

ATLAS FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula speculigera*) – Wow! Fun experience with a migrant at an agricultural oasis near Boumalne Dades. A very good bird to find.

MOUSSIER'S REDSTART (*Phoenicurus moussieri*) – Always nice to see. It was uncommon in the Ifrane region, but our best views were in the Oued Massa where we saw several flashy males.

COMMON REDSTART (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) – Most common in the Zaer.

BLACK REDSTART (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – They were still around Oukaimeden in good numbers. Some years they are all but gone.

RUFOUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola saxatilis*) – A pair of immatures were seen during our long walk in the Oukaimeden Valley.

BLUE ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola solitarius*) – Small numbers in the rocky canyons during our travels.

WHINCHAT (*Saxicola rubetra*) – Just a pair along the Loukus River.

EUROPEAN STONECHAT (*Saxicola rubicola rubicola*) – Also seen along the Loukus River and in the Ifrane area.

WHITE-CROWNED WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe leucopyga*) – This is the wheatear most common in the desert flats around Erg Chebbi. Often seen on top of dwellings.

BLACK WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe leucura*) – This species is common in the rockier regions and in desert canyons.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – The northern species (mainland Europe) migrates and winters in N Africa. A few had already arrived to Morocco.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (BLACK-THROATED) (*Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi*) – Seebohm's Wheatear has been split by some authorities. Seen well near Ifrane and also at Oukaimeden.

MOURNING WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe lugens*) – What a treat finding the rarest of the Moroccan wheatears! We worked hard at it, but it paid off.

RED-RUMPED WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe moesta*) – Fairly common in the Boumalne Dades area, like around the Tagdilt Track and dump!

BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe hispanica*) – After Mourning, this is the next most difficult to find. However, this year we found three different individuals! Most are of the "black-eared" variety, but Steve saw one of the black-throated types.

DESERT WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe deserti*) – Good numbers in the high desert around Midelt and Boumalne Dades.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EURASIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*) – Most days.

MISTLE THRUSH (*Turdus viscivorus*) – Fairly common around Ifrane and in the higher country at Oukaimeden.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

SPOTLESS STARLING (*Sturnus unicolor*) – Common in the coastal regions. They were breeding at our hotel in Skhirat.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (LUTEA/FLAVISSIMA) (*Motacilla flava flavissima*) – One was seen at the Loukus River; a first for the tour!

WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (ASHY-HEADED) (*Motacilla flava iberiae*) – The Moroccan variety was fairly common in places. Seen on several days.

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Along the coast at Skhirat and in Ifrane at Dayet Aoua.

WHITE WAGTAIL (WHITE-FACED) (*Motacilla alba alba*) – A pair were at a gas station stop en route to the Loukus River. These are migrants from mainland Europe.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

CIRL BUNTING (*Emberiza cirrus*) – A lovely bird seen well at Oued Massa (where the guide had not seen them before) and at Oukaimeden.

ROCK BUNTING (*Emberiza cia*) – One below Oukaimeden was quite vocal and showed well for our group.

ORTOLAN BUNTING (*Emberiza hortulana*) – A new species for the tour, but somewhat expected. A migrant group was seen foraging on the ground along the Loukus River. Most appeared to be first year birds.

HOUSE BUNTING (*Emberiza sahari*) – Common in the high desert regions and around Agadir; absent from the Middle Atlas area.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

COMMON CHAFFINCH (AFRICAN) (*Fringilla coelebs africana*) – This distinctive subspecies was seen well around Ifrane and Oukaimeden. Sometimes they are found lower down along the coast.

TRUMPETER FINCH (*Bucanetes githagineus zedlitzi*) – A large feeding flock was in the Midelt desert (at least 50 birds), but smaller numbers were around the Boumalne Dades area. Most/all were in non-breeding plumage.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH (*Chloris chloris*) – Seen a few times on the tour. Their distinctive flight call notes were heard a lot in the Zaer.

RED CROSSBILL (NORTH AFRICAN) (*Loxia curvirostra poliogyna*) – Only my second time on tour! Really cool finding this species below Oukaimeden. Seriously massive crossed bills. We got to hear them calling, too!

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Not super common. Good numbers were in the oasis near Boumalne Dades.

EURASIAN LINNET (*Carduelis cannabina*) – These were very common around Ifrane foraging on the rocky ground.

EUROPEAN SERIN (*Serinus serinus*) – A bit more common than the previous species, but they seemed to always be together. Seen on a number of different days.

HAWFINCH (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) – Another great bird to see (like the crossbill)! Several (8 total) were drinking water on the ground in the cedar woods near Ifrane.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Everyday of the tour!

SPANISH SPARROW (*Passer hispaniolensis*) – We found three birds at the agricultural oasis near Boumalne Dades. You never can predict the movements of this species. Always good to find.

DESERT SPARROW (*Passer simplex*) – One of the most elegant and lovely looking birds seen on this tour. Always a treat. We saw around 10 birds thanks to our local guides in Erg Chebbi.

ROCK PETRONIA (*Petronia petronia*) – Hundreds around Ifrane and Boumalne Dades. Like female House Sparrows, but larger!

MAMMALS

BARBARY APE (*Macaca sylvanus*) – The "Barbary Macac" was seen in the cedar forests around Ifrane. Some have become quite accustomed to stealing tourist bananas. ;-)

BARBARY GROUND SQUIRREL (*Atlantoxerus getulus*) – One was seen in the Dades Gorge.

FAT SAND RAT (*Psammomys obesus*) – Yeah! A highlight for most. Such a cool name. Seen in the dump near Boumalne Dades.

COMMON JACKAL (*Canis aureus*) – One wandered out into the road early morning in the Zaer.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Other critter(s) encountered:

Spur-thighed Tortoise (*Testudo graeca*) = We saved one off the road during our long drive to Agadir. Based on our location, this was probably subspecies, *soussensis*. One of five Mediterranean tortoises and they can live up to 125 years!

Totals for the tour: 213 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa