

Morocco

9th to 18th February 2007



Northern Bald Ibis by David Hoddinott

Trip Report compiled by Erik Forsyth & David Hoddinott

Tour Leaders: Erik Forsyth & David Hoddinott

Tour Summary

Arriving in Morocco in the late afternoon we drove into the city of Agadir where we were greeted by a roosting Barbary Falcon on the roof of our hotel! What a cracking start to our Moroccan adventure. The next day had us visiting Oued Massa National Park, an estuary with reedbeds and surrounded by scrubland. Our first birds were the Moroccan race of European Magpie with the distinct blue-ear covert, a singing Cetti's Warbler and a pair of Barbary Partridge. Many more exciting birds were seen here and highlights included Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Common Kingfisher, Eurasian Wryneck, the beautiful Moussier's Redstart (a North African endemic) and a confiding Black-crowned Tchagra. *En route* to lunch we had our only Little Swift of the tour. After an enjoyable sit down lunch we headed to Tamri to look for the mythical Waldrapp or Northern Bald Ibis, one of the world's rarest and most sought-after species. At our stake-out, we soon found a flock of these critically endangered birds feeding in a field. We set up scopes and enjoyed excellent views. Here we were also treated to scope views of a pair of Barbary Falcon and further views of a confiding ibis flock which allowed for good photos. We returned to Agadir a very happy and satisfied bunch of birders!

Next followed a long day of driving as we traveled from Agadir to Boumalne Du Dades. The journey was enlivened by the impressive snow-capped High Atlas Mountains and we were flanked in the south by the



equally stunning Anti Atlas Mountains. We passed through several historical towns and stopped in Tarroudannt to enjoy the walled Medina. Despite the hive of activity and the local lads playing a football match, two pairs of White Stork nested in close proximity. Our next stop was Ourzazate where we enjoyed a sit down lunch, a traditional Tajinne meal of either chicken or beef with vegetables. We arrived at our hotel in the afternoon and made our first excursion to the Tagdilt Track for some late afternoon birding. The rubbish dump was fairly birdy and soon we were watching our first Red-rumped Wheatear, Red-throated Pipit and we heard a singing Greater Hoopoe-Lark.

We revisited the Tagdilt Track early the following morning, exploring numerous tracks and roads and even venturing out over the steppe plains on foot. We were scanning hard for Houbara Bustard, which is known to breed in this area but sadly few remain due to heavy hunting by Arab falconers. We did not find any Houbara but were compensated well with Long-legged Buzzard, Crowned and Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Greater Hoopoe-Lark, the attractive Temminck's Lark, Mourning Wheatear and pink Trumpeter Finches. In the afternoon we visited Todra Gorge. A stunning area of towering cliff faces and a crystal clear stream. A single Gray Wagtail and a pair of Bonelli's Eagle were seen while we enjoyed a late afternoon coffee.

The red Saharan sand dunes of Erg Chebbi were our next birding site. Leaving the hotel we picked up our only Little Owl of the tour. *En route*, we were extremely fortunate to find a pair of the nomadic Thick-billed Lark feeding next to the road. After enjoying close scope looks at these highly prized, massive larks, we headed off to Rissani arriving in time for lunch. Thereafter, we swapped our bus for 4x4's and headed out for Erg Chebbi. After crossing a huge gravel plain we came across several regal Cream-colored Courser, Desert and Bar-tailed Desert Lark, as well as three more Thick-billed Larks. We arrived at Erg Chebbi in the late afternoon and savored sun setting behind the impressive dunes.

We had the whole day to explore this splendid area. First off we walked the vegetated areas finding Desert Wheatear, Spectacled Warbler and two brief Desert Sparrows. Merzouga Lake was teeming with birds and held a variety of waterfowl including several Marbled Teal, a lone drake Ferruginous Duck and a variety of waders including Little Ringed Plover and Black-tailed Godwit. We also found several smartly plumaged Yellow Wagtails. An unusual sighting was four winter-plumaged Mediterranean Gulls. A late afternoon visit to a rocky escarpment to look for Pharaoh Eagle Owl drew a blank but we did find a confiding Tristram's Warbler, which allowed good views. Wadis around Erg Chebbi and Rissani produced more Tristram's and a delightful African Desert Warbler singing from a grassy area, which we scoped and enjoyed excellent looks. After that success we then headed off to Rissani for lunch and drove on to Ourzazate. A brief stop *en route* in Boumalne Du Dades produced our only Eurasian Hoopoe of the tour.

An early start had us cruising up the Tizi-n-Tichka Pass in the dark. Our plan was to be in the high mountains around Oukaimeden before lunch to search for a number of target birds. Our first comfort stop yielded African Blue Tit and a singing Cetti's Warbler as well as a spectacular sunrise alongside the snow-capped High Atlas Mountains. An impromptu stop in Pine forest yielded a nice selection of woodland birds more reminiscent of birding in Europe than Africa! These included Great Spotted Woodpecker, Short-toed Treecreeper and Winter Wren. Before we reached Oukaimeden we birded along a road flanked by orchards and several poplar trees. Here we enjoyed excellent close views of the North African endemic Levaillant's Woodpecker and swirling flocks of Red-billed Chough. Arriving in Oukaimeden was surreal with snow laden slopes, ski-runs, hotels and shops! We felt as if we had arrived at a European holiday resort! At our hotel we found a pair of Mistle Thrush and compared flocks of Alpine (Yellow-billed) Chough with the commoner Red-billed. We quickly started birding in earnest and soon we were watching stunning Crimson-winged Finch feeding in grass tufts scattered amongst the snow...what a sight! Other great birds here were numerous Horned (Shore) Lark (of an endemic North African race), the very difficult Hawfinch, Cirl and Rock Bunting and Rock Sparrow. A nearby stream was targeted for the charming White-throated Dipper. After a short while we were soon watching a pair foraging in the clear mountain stream much to the delight of the group. After a great day we relaxed, enjoyed a hot bath and a fine meal at our hotel.

The following morning we were out early in search of Alpine Accentor. It didn't take too long to find this accentor, a great tick for the African list, and soon we were enjoying close views. Below in some Argan trees, Mark pointed out the call of Ring Ouzel and after several minutes we managed to scope a male. On our return to the hotel Mark was on form again finding a Brambling amongst a flock of Common Chaffinch,



a good find and scarce winter visitor so far south. Making our way down the scenic Tiz-n-Test Pass we found our only flock of Black Kites and a smart little Firecrest.

We arrived in Agadir in the evening and quickly made our way to the Oued Souss estuary. In fading light we still managed to add seven species new to our trip list including over fifty Greater Flamingo, European Oystercatcher, Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone Curlew) and a spot lit Red-necked Nightjar to finish the tour off in style. This late winter tour had been a great success with all the North African endemics seen well and a huge range of desert and mountain birds enjoyed in some spectacular scenery.

Annotated Checklists of Birds and Mammals

Birds: nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. F. Clements *Birds of the World: A Checklist* 5th Edition (2000) Ibis Publishing Company, with updates to July 2005. Any deviations from Clements are indicated by square brackets and explained in taxonomic notes. Extensive research has been conducted into potential splits.

Mammals: nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. Kingdon *The Kingdon Fieldguide to African Mammals* (1997) Academic Press.

BIRDS

Grebes *Podicipedidae*

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Twenty at Oued Massa near Agadir and a single bird at the temporary Merzouga Lake.

Shearwaters and Petrels *Procellariidae*

Cory's Shearwater

Calonectris diomedea

Two birds were seen gliding beyond the breaking waves at Oued Massa.

Mediterranean Shearwater

Puffinus yelkouan

A single bird was seen from the Casablanca Lighthouse on the post tour extension.

Gannets *Sulidae*

Northern Gannet

Morus bassanus

Up to forty birds were seen during our short seaway from Cap Rhir. A single bird was seen from the Casablanca Lighthouse on the post tour extension.

Cormorants & Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus

Thirty birds were seen at Oued Massa and a single bird was seen on the Oued Souss near Talouine.

NOTE: The resident white-breasted African subspecies P. c. lucidus is regarded by some authorities to be a distinct species; White-breasted Cormorant.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns *Ardeidae*

Gray Heron

Ardea cinerea

Five at Oued Massa, a single at Merzouga Lake and ten at Oued Souss.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Four at Oued Massa, a single at Merzouga Lake and six on our post tour to Casablanca.

NOTE: Clements lumps Little and Madagascar's Dimorphic Egret E. dimorpha into a single species. This treatment is not widely accepted

Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

Three birds were seen at reedbeds at Oued Massa.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Regularly recorded throughout the tour in farmlands alongside rivers with our highest count of one-hundred and forty at the Oued Massa.



NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret (which is what we recorded in Morocco) and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret *E. coromanda*. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements.

Storks *Ciconiidae*

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

Recorded throughout in pairs or small colonies at their nests, which are typically placed on tops of chimneys and roofs of buildings. A flock of sixty was seen feeding in agricultural lands 30km from Marrakesh *en route* to Oukaimeden.

Ibises & Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae*

Waldrapp (Northern Bald Ibis) Cr

Geronticus eremita

We enjoyed excellent close views of a flock feeding in a field near the road. Later we saw several other small flocks flying down to their nesting colony near the sea. This is a highly threatened species with a tiny world population that we were privileged to enjoy at our leisure.

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Two birds were seen flying at Oued Massa.

Eurasian Spoonbill

Platalea leucorodia

Three at Oued Massa and three at Oued Souss.

Flamingos *Phoenicopteridae*

Greater Flamingo

Phoenicopterus ruber

Up to fifty birds were seen at dusk at Oued Souss.

NOTE: The Greater Flamingo (*P. roseus*) and the Caribbean Flamingo (*P. ruber*) are now considered monotypic species according to Clements.

Swans, Geese & Ducks *Anatidae*

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Commonly recorded at freshwater, temporary pans in the Merzouga area with a further sighting of a pair at Oukaimeden.

Common Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

Two at Merzouga Lake and twenty-eight at Oued Souss.

Eurasian Wigeon

Anas Penelope

Three at Oued Massa were a trip exclusive.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

Twenty-eight at Oued Massa

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Fifteen at Oued Massa.

Northern Pintail

Anas acuta

Four at Oued Massa and four at Merzouga Lake.

Northern Shoveler

Anas clypeata

One hundred + at Merzouga Lake.

Marbled Duck

Marmaronetta angustirostris

Sixteen at Oued Massa and ten at Merzouga Lake.

Red-crested Pochard

Netta rufina

A female was found by Mark at Oued Massa. A scarce winter visitor this far south.

Common Pochard

Aythya ferina

Two hundred and thirty five at Oued Massa and thirty at Merzouga Lake.

Ferruginous Duck

Aythya nyroca

Singletons were seen at both Oued Massa and at Merzouga Lake.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Ten at Oued Massa.

Ospreys *Pandionidae*

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus



A single bird was seen at Oued Souss.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures *Accipitridae*

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Singletons were seen east of Agadir, near Talouine and at Casablanca.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Eight birds were seen on the Tiz ‘n’ Test Pass.

Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Two at Oued Massa and singletons at Merzouga Lake and at Casablanca

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Two seen at Oued Massa and a single bird near Ourzazate.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

Single birds at the Tagdilt Track, *en route* to Erfoud and two *en route* from Erfoud to Ourzazate.

Bonelli’s Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

A pair was seen coming in to their roost while we were enjoying a coffee at Todra Gorge.

Falcons & Caracaras *Falconidae*

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Recorded almost daily with a high of thirty on the drive between Boumalne Du Dades and Erfoud.

NOTE: Some authorities split this species into Common Kestrel, F. tinnunculus which we observed (occurring in East Africa and the Palaearctic region) and Rock Kestrel, F. rupicolus that occurs in Southern Africa. Clements does not as yet recognize these splits

Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

An immature bird roosting at our hotel in Agadir, three scoped (allowing excellent close studies) at Tamri and finally two at Oukaimeden.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

An adult was seen at the Tagdilt Track.

Pheasants & Quails *Phasianidae*

Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*

We had excellent looks at six birds at Oued Massa. Our final sighting was of a single bird flushed *en route* to Oukaimeden.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Two birds were seen well at Merzouga Lake.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Eight at Oued Massa, a single bird at Merzouga and fifteen near Casablanca.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

A thousand at Oued Massa, Seventy-nine at Merzouga Lake and three near Casablanca.

Stilts & Avocets *Recurvirostridae*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Nine at Merzouga and five near Casablanca.

Thick-knees *Burhinidae*

Eurasian (Stone Curlew) Thick-knee *Burhinus oediconemus*

Seven were heard calling and seen at Oued Souss.

Courser & Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

Cream-colored Courser *Cursorius cursor*

We recorded twenty-five birds on gravel plains between Rissani and Merzouga.



Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae**Black-bellied Plover***Pluvialis squatarola*

Ten at Oued Souss and thirty at Casablanca on our post tour extension.

Common Ringed Plover*Charadrius haiticula*

Two at Oued Souss and ten at Casablanca on our post tour extension.

Little Ringed Plover*Charadrius dubius*

Three birds were seen at Merzouga Lake

Snowy (Kentish) Plover*Charadrius alexandrinus*

Fourteen birds were recorded at temporary wetlands in Merzouga.

Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae**Common Snipe***Gallinago gallinago*

A single bird at Oued Massa, two at Merzouga and a single bird at a wetland near Casablanca on our post tour extension.

*Note: New World race delicata of Common Snipe has been raised to species level, Wilson's Snipe Gallinago delicata.***Black-tailed Godwit***Limosa limosa*

Twenty-two at Merzouga Lake.

Bar-tailed Godwit*Limosa lapponica*

Six birds were seen at the Oued Souss by Dave, Debbie and Tadd who were catching a later flight.

Eurasian Curlew*Numenius arquata*

Up to fifty birds at Oued Massa on our last day.

Spotted Redshank*Tringa erythropus*

A single bird was seen at Merzouga Lake.

Common Redshank*Tringa totanus*

A single bird at Oued Massa on our last day was a trip exclusive.

Common Greenshank*Tringa nebularia*

Six at Merzouga Lake and heard at Oued Souss.

Green Sandpiper*Tringa ochropus*

Two at Oued Massa and Six at Merzouga Lake.

Wood Sandpiper*Tringa glareola*

Three at Merzouga Lake.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

Three at Oued Massa.

Ruddy Turnstone*Arenaria interpres*

Three birds were seen on the post tour extension to Casablanca.

Red Knot*Calidris canutus*

Six birds were seen at Oued Souss by Dave, Debbie and Tadd who were catching a later flight.

Sanderling*Calidris alba*

Fifteen birds were seen at Oued Souss by Dave, Debbie and Tadd who were catching a later flight.

Little Stint*Calidris minuta*

Eleven at Merzouga Lake.

Temminck's Stint*Calidris temminckii*

A single bird found by Mark at Merzouga Lake.

Dunlin*Calidris alpina*

Ten birds were seen at Oued Souss by Dave, Debbie and Tadd who were catching a later flight.

Ruff*Philomachus pugnax*

Twelve at Merzouga Lake and two at Casablanca on the post tour extension.

Oystercatchers Haematopodidae**Eurasian Oystercatcher***Haematopus ostralegus*

Six birds were seen at Oued Souss.

Gulls Laridae**Audouin's Gull***Larus audouinii*

Two hundred and eighty-one birds recorded at Oued Massa



Yellow-legged Gull*Larus michahellis*

Thirty at Oued Massa and two at Casablanca on our post tour extension.

Lesser Black-backed Gull*Larus fuscus*

Five-hundred at Oued Massa, one thousand at Rabat and three thousand at Casablanca on the post tour extension.

Black-headed Gull*Larus ridibundus*

A single bird at Oued Massa, fifteen at Oued Souss and one hundred seen between Rabat and Casablanca.

Slender-billed Gull*Larus ichthyaetus*

Four seen at Oued Massa.

Mediterranean Gull*Larus melanocephalus*

Four at Merzouga Lake, two at Oued Souss and two at Rabat on our post tour extension.

Terns *Sternidae***Sandwich Tern***Sterna sandvicensis*

A single bird at Oued Massa and fifty at Casablanca on our post tour extension.

Skuas *Stercoraiidae***Great Skua***Stercorarius skua*

Three birds were seen on our post tour extension to Casablanca

Parasitic Jaeger*Stercorarius parasiticus*

A single bird was seen while sea-watching of Cap Rhir.

Sandgrouse *Pteroclididae***Black-bellied Sandgrouse***Pterocles orientalis*

We had excellent scope and flight views of sixteen birds on the Tagdilt Track.

Crowned Sandgrouse*Pterocles orientalis*

Three birds were seen in flight at the Tagdilt Track.

Doves & Pigeons *Columbidae***Rock (Pigeon) Dove***Columba livia*

Commonly seen at scattered localities throughout the trip.

Common Wood-Pigeon*Columba palumbus*Two seen *en route* from Agadir to Boumalne Du Dades and fairly common in the Oukaimeden area.**Eurasian Collared-Dove***Streptopelia decaocto*

Commonly recorded throughout towns in Morocco.

Laughing Dove*Streptopelia senegalensis*

Commonly recorded, almost daily, at many scattered sites throughout Morocco.

Cuckoos *Cuculidae***Great Spotted Cuckoo***Clamator glandarius*

We had excellent scope views of three birds at Oued Massa.

Typical Owls *Strigidae***Little Owl***Athene noctua*

Two birds were seen on a wall at our hotel near Boumalne Du Dades, typically seen sitting on buildings.

Nightjars *Caprimulgidae***Red-necked Nightjar***Caprimulgus ruficollis*

We had good views of a spotlight bird as it flew past at close range, Oued Souss Estuary.

Swifts *Apodidae***Alpine Swift***Tachymarptis melba*

Two at Oued Massa.



Pallid Swift*Apus pallidus*

First recorded at Oued Massa, one hundred *en route* from Agadir to Boumalne Du Dades and finally recorded at Rabat and Casablanca on the post tour extension.

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

A single bird was seen over buildings on the main road from Oued Massa to Agadir.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Common Kingfisher***Alcedo Atthis*

Eric spotted our only bird of the tour at Oued Massa.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops*

Our only birds were a pair at our hotel near Boumalne Du Dades seen on two occasions.

NOTE: Clements only recognizes two species of Hoopoe; Eurasian U. epops and Madagascar U. marginata. One further species, is widely recognized namely African U. africana and a 4th is sometimes recognized, West/Central African U. senegalensis. We only recorded the nominate Palaearctic form U. e. epops.

Woodpeckers & Allies Picidae**Eurasian Wryneck***Jynx torquilla*

A single bird was found by Mark at Oued Massa.

Great Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopus major*

Three birds were found in woodland near Oukaimeden.

Levaillant's Woodpecker*Picus vaillanti*

We enjoyed excellent close looks at a pair near Oukaimeden.

Larks Alaudidae**Bar-tailed Lark***Ammomanes cincturus*

Two birds were seen *en route* to Merzouga. The song reminded us of a windmill turning!

Desert Lark*Ammomanes deserti*

A single bird was recorded near Taroudant, four at the Tagdilt Track and finally two *en route* to Merzouga.

Greater Hoopoe-Lark*Alaemon alaudipes*

We had great looks at two at the Tagdilt Track and four near Merzouga. Its melancholy piping song was heard in the early morning and at dusk. In flight the upper wings showed the large white secondaries flashes.

Thick-billed Lark*Ramphocoris clotbey*

We were enthralled in finding two feeding birds alongside the Tagdilt Track *en route* to Erfoud. We enjoyed excellent scope views of this very nomadic species. We had a further sighting of three birds on gravel plains near Merzouga.

Lesser Short-toed Lark*Calandrella rufescens*

A single was seen at the Tagdilt Track, four birds were seen daily in the Merzouga area.

Temminck's Lark*Eremophila bilopha*

Eighteen birds in total were seen in the Tagdilt track area.

Crested Lark*Galerida cristata*

Recorded at scattered sites throughout the tour in the low-lying areas with the highest counts of twenty+ birds daily at Oued Massa and Oued Souss.

Thekla Lark*Galerida theklae*

Recorded in the foothills of the High Atlas and thirty birds were recorded in small loose flocks at the Tagdilt track. Generally a bird of the higher lying areas although easily confused with the previous species.

Sky Lark*Alauda arvensis*

Small flocks totaling fifteen birds were seen at the Tagdilt track.

Horned (Shore) Lark*Eremophila alepstris*

Up to sixteen birds were found feeding in grassy areas at Oukaimeden.

Swallows Hirundinidae**Bank Swallow***Riparia riparia*

Two birds were seen at Oued Massa.



Eurasian Crag-Martin

Sixteen at Todra Gorge and fifteen daily at Oukaimeiden.

Ptyonoprogne rupestris

Barn Swallow

Regularly seen in small numbers throughout Morocco with a high of twenty seen on several days.

Hirundo rustica

Red-rumped Swallow

A single bird was seen near Talouine, a trip exclusive

Cecropis daurica

House Martin

Two at Boumalne Du Dades and a single bird at Merzouga.

Delichon urbicum

Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae***White Wagtail**

Small numbers seen daily throughout Morocco with a high of thirty daily around Merzouga

Motacilla alba

Yellow Wagtail

Five birds were seen at Lake Merzouga.

Motacilla flava

Gray Wagtail

Single birds at Todra Gorge and Oukaimeiden.

Motacilla cinerea

Meadow Pipit

Two at the Tagdilt Track and two at Merzouga Lake.

Anthus pratensis

Red-throated Pipit

A single bird was seen at the Tagdilt Track.

Anthus cervinus

Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae***Common Bulbul**

Recorded throughout Morocco in wooded habitats.

Pycnonotus barbatus

*NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognized as distinct species within the super-species. Several other forms (including ones which we recorded i.e. Egyptian Bulbul *P. arsiniae* and Dark-capped Bulbul *P. tricolor*) are likely to be recognized as distinct once genetic analysis and further study is completed*

Kinglet's *Regulidae***Firecrest**

We had two sightings of this little gem in pine woodland near Oukaimeiden.

Regulus ignicapillus

Dippers *Cinclidae***White-throated Dipper**

A pair was found on a stream at Oukaimeiden much to the delight of everyone. Much appreciated by Eric!

Cinclus cinclus

Wrens *Troglodytidae***Winter Wren**

Six of these tiny little birds were seen in woodland around Oukaimeiden

Troglodytes troglodytes

Accentors *Prunellidae***Alpine Accentor**

A single confiding individual was found at Oukaimeiden.

Prunella collaris

Thrushes & Allies *Turdidae***Blue Rock-Thrush**

Two at Oued Massa, three on buildings at Boumalne Du Dades and two at Todra Gorge.

Monticola solitarius

Ring Ouzel

Two birds were seen in open woodland at Oukaimeiden.

Turdus torquatus

Eurasian Blackbird

Commonly recorded throughout Morocco in open woodland.

Turdus merula

Song Thrush

Three birds were recorded east of Agadir and a further two in woodland near Oukaimeiden.

Turdus philomelos

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus



Two pairs were seen at Oukaimeden.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis

Not recorded on the main tour. A single bird was seen on the post tour extension to Casablanca

Old World Warblers Sylviidae

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

We had excellent looks at two birds at Oued Massa. Also heard in song along wooded streams *en route* to Oukaimeden.

Savi's Warbler

Locustella luscinioides

A bird was heard in song at Oued Souss by Dave, Debbie and Tadd who were catching a later flight out.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Four birds were seen in flooded tamarisk bushes at Merzouga Lake.

Eurasian Reed-Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

A single bird heard singing and seen in a reedbed at Oued Massa.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

A single bird was seen in woodland near Oukaimeden.

Common Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

Recorded daily in small numbers throughout with a high count of thirty birds in woodland around Oukaimeden.

NOTE: Most authorities split; including Clements have split the Chiffchaff complex into 4 full species. The nominate form which we recorded is known as Common Chiffchaff P. collybita.

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Six at Oued Massa, three east of Agadir and three near Oukaimeden.

African Desert Warbler

Sylvia nana deserti

We enjoyed excellent scope views of this scarce and localized desert specialist, thanks to the persistence of Dave and Mark for not giving up!

Sardinian Warbler

Sylvia melanocephala

Commonly recorded in scrubby vegetation throughout with a high of twenty seen at Oued Massa.

Spectacled Warbler

Sylvia conspicillata

Excellent scope views were had at Merzouga of this attractive species in song and performing display flights. This may have been due to heavy rains that had fallen in the previous weeks.

Tristram's Warbler

Sylvia deserticola

Up to seven birds were seen around Merzouga. An attractive North African endemic

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

European Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Two at Oued Massa and five at Oukaimeden. An attractive bird with a delightful song, which we see, depicted on Christmas cards.

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

Recorded almost daily throughout and often seen favoring buildings and ruins. First recorded at Taroudant.

Moussier's Redstart

Phoenicurus moussieri

This North African gem was pleasantly common in scrub vegetation. Our first birds were seen at Oued Massa.

Common Stonechat

Saxicola rubicola

Recorded in rank vegetation adjoining wetlands and first seen at Oued Massa..

White-tailed (White-crowned Black) Wheatear

Oenanthe leucopyga

A common roadside bird in Steppe Desert throughout Morocco. Our highest count was forty birds in the Merzouga area.

Black Wheatear

Oenanthe leucura

First recorded east of Agadir with further sightings at Boumalne Du Dades and at Oukaimeden.

Mourning Wheatear

Oenanthe lugens

Four birds were seen around the Tagdilt Track area.



NOTE: This extremely variable complex with an extensive range and many distinctive isolated populations is a perfect candidate for multi-splitting.

Red-rumped Wheatear*Oenanthe moesta*

Commonly seen on Steppe Desert at the Tagdilt Track with a final sighting near Ourzazate.

Desert Wheatear*Oenanthe isabellina*

We recorded five birds near Merzouga Lake.

Babblers *Timaliidae***Fulvous Chatterer***Turdoides fulvus*

Unfortunately, not recorded on the main tour but Eric and Patsy saw four birds sitting on a bush on our arrival at Casablanca Airport. A good find!

Tits *Paridae***Coal Tit***Periparus ater*

Six birds daily at Oukaimeden.

Great Tit*Paris major*

Singleton's at Oued Massa and Todra Gorge and up to nine seen in the Oukaimeden area.

African Blue Tit*Cyanistes teneriffae*

A single bird at Todra Gorge and sixteen recorded in the Oukaimeden area.

Creepers *Certhiidae***Short-toed Treecreeper***Certhia brachydactyla*

We had excellent looks at two individuals near Oukaimeden.

Shrikes *Laniidae***Southern Gray Shrike***Lanius elegans*

A common roadside bird seen at several localities throughout the tour.

NOTE: This complex which used to be lumped with Northern Shrike *L. excubitor* is being considered for further splitting. These splits would include the nominate Southern Gray Shrike, the migrant Steppe Shrike (*L. pallidirostris*) and Saharan Shrike (*L. leucopygos*) which is the form we recorded in Morocco during our tour. Clements recognizes the split from Northern Shrike but not the further splits of the Southern Gray Shrike group.

Bushshrikes *Malaconotidae***Black-crowned Tchagra***Tchagra senegala*

Two were seen briefly and then we had excellent scope views of a confiding calling individual at Oued Massa. Several other birds were heard in song.

Crows, Jays & Magpies *Corvidae***Eurasian Magpie***Pica pica mauritanica*

Five at Oued Massa, two east of Agadir and another eight seen on our return to Agadir at the end of the tour. The North African race has a distinct blue patch behind the eye.

Red-billed Chough*Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax*

Up to a hundred birds were seen in and around Oukaimeden. Flocks were heard and seen swirling above the mountains.

Yellow-billed (Alpine) Chough*Pyrrhonorax graculus*

Less numerous than its predecessor, we had good close looks at several small flocks around our hotel.

Common Raven*Corvus corax*

We recorded pairs in the Mountainous country around Tamri, Rissani and four on the drive to Oukaimeden.

Starlings *Sturnidae***Spotless Starling***Sturnus unicolor*

Small numbers were seen around Agadir and at Oued Massa.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

Recorded daily throughout Morocco with a high of one-hundred+ birds around Merzouga.

Spanish Sparrow*Passer hispaniolensis*Fifty recorded at Oued Massa, fifty *en route* from Agadir to Boumalne Du Dades and finally three seen *en route* from Oukaïmeden to Agadir.**Desert Sparrow***Passer simplex*

Twenty of these scarce birds were seen around Merzouga.

Rock Petronia*Petronia petronia*

Recorded daily around Oukaïmeden.

Siskins, Crossbills & Allies *Fringillidae***Common Chaffinch***Fringilla coelebs*The resident subspecies *africana* was seen almost daily throughout the tour. Up to twenty of the nominate race *coelebs*, which is a wintering migrant from Europe, were seen at Oukaïmeden.**Brambling***Fringilla montifringilla*

Mark found a female bird amongst a flock of wintering Common Chaffinch. A further two birds were seen on our drive from Oukaïmeden to Tahanaoute.

European Greenfinch*Carduelis chloris*

Commonly recorded in the mountains and wooded areas of Morocco.

European Goldfinch*Carduelis carduelis*

Thirty birds at Oued Massa, five near Boumalne Du Dades and seven at Oukaïmeden.

Eurasian Linnet*Carduelis cannabina*

Twenty at Oued Massa, five at Boumalne Du Dades and the Tagdilt Track and lastly a single bird calling in flight at Merzouga Lake.

European Serin*Serinus serinus*

Commonly recorded in mountains and wooded areas.

Hawfinch*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Six birds were seen and heard calling near Oukaïmeden.

Crimson-winged Finch*Rhodopechys sanguinea*

Up to fifteen of these attractive high mountain birds were seen feeding in grassy patches surrounded by snow.

Trumpeter Finch*Rhodopechys githaginea*

Twenty birds were seen daily at the Tagdilt Track and in the Merzouga areas.

Buntings *Emberizidae***Cirl Bunting***Emberiza cirlus*

A pair was found at Oued Massa, a male east of Agadir and finally a pair found by Eric near Oukaïmeden.

Rock Bunting*Emberiza cia*

Eleven birds seen near Oukaïmeden.

House Bunting*Emberiza striolata*

Common throughout Morocco and often seen around buildings. We often heard singing birds at our hotels.

Corn Bunting*Emberiza calandra*

Mark found a single bird east of Agadir and sixteen were seen on the coastal road between Rabat and Casablanca on the post tour extension.

Mammals:

Dogs & Allies *Canidae***Red Fox***Vulpes vulpes*

Singleton's were seen at the Tagdilt Track, Erfoud, Merzouga and at Oukaïmeden.

Rats *Muridae*

Fat Sand Rat

Three at the Tagdilt Track.

Psammomys obesus

Ground Squirrels

Barbary Ground-Squirrel

Recorded in rocky terrain near Ourzazate, Todra Gorge and at Oukaimeden.

Alantocerus getulus

Reptiles:

Striped-necked Terrapin

Three at Oued Massa.

Mauremys caspica

Spiny-tailed Agama (or Bell's Dab Lizard)

Two green individuals shown to us by locals and a black and red specimen near Boumalne Du Dades.

Uromastix accunthinarus

