

## United Arab Emirates February 18th – 28th 2005

By Vegard Bunes

This report covers a birding trip to the United Arab Emirates in late February 2005 made by the Norwegian quartet Gunnar Gundersen, Jarl Nystrøm, Ken A Jensen and Vegard Bunes. For Gunnar and Vegard this was the third visit to the Emirates since 2003, while Jarl and Ken visited the Arabian Peninsula for their first time. The total number of species recorded was 184 (but see comments to species list at bottom).

Like last year we stayed at the Princess Hotel in the Al Qusais area east of Dubai Intl Airport (Al Nahda Rd – D93). The Hotel is fairly cheap and is located a bit off the busy Dubai downtown traffic. To our experience traffic had increased markedly since our last visit in late February 2004. Our flight was made with Lufthansa from Oslo via Frankfurt to Dubai. Car rental, a Honda CRV 4W drive, was arranged through Hertz after arrival in Dubai. Our intention of a day trip to the Musandam Peninsula (Oman) was dropped. After contacting several car rentals we were not able to arrange an Omani car insurance with a 4W drive. For European citizen a Visa is not necessary in the UAE. You get a 60 days tourist Visa (stamp in you passport) when arriving at the airport.

Dubai is the ideal base for birding in UAE as all important birding sites are less than 2 hours drive away. For information on recent bird observations we checked the excellent weekly *Twitcher's Guide* published on various mailing lists and on [www.uaeinteract.com](http://www.uaeinteract.com). Necessary literature is *The Shell Birdwatching Guide to the United Arab Emirates* (Richardson & Aspinall 1998) and *Emirates Bird Report No.20*. These two publications give detailed information on most major birding sites and detailed occurrence of birds in the UAE the last years. The *Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East* (Porter et al. 1996) and *Collins Field Guide to Britain and Europe* (Svensson et al. 1999) are also of good help. A good road map is important when driving in the UAE. We used the "satellite map" and *Dubai tourist map*.

The following section shows each birding site visited with date and time of day. The code in parenthesis refers to the locality code in the *Shell Guide*. For most sites a total species list is made. The number of individuals is usually counted, but sometimes estimates. Note that observations of Caspian Gull refer to either *barabensis* or *cachinnans*. Our impression is that *barabensis* is the most common of the two, at least on the east coast. Bird names are only given in English. Scientific names are also available upon request.

### **Al Mamzar Park, Dubai (A7). Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 0650 – 1145**

After arriving in Dubai late the previous night we took a taxi from our Hotel to Al Mamzar Park in the north-eastern corner of Dubai. Unfortunately the gates didn't open until 8 o'clock so the first hour of birding was made outside the park. Entry fee is 5 Dhr pr person. The park is good for passerines and the seaside always produces gulls and terns. It is possible to get a hot bite at the main gate cafeteria.

Socotra Cormorant 1  
Grey Francolin 20+

Grey Plover 1  
Common Sandpiper 2

Sooty Gull 1  
Black-headed Gull 1000+  
Caspian Gull c.30  
Sandwich Tern 10+  
Feral Dove 10  
Collared Dove 50+  
Palm Dove 75+  
Rose-ringed Parakeet 75+  
Alexandrine Parakeet 4  
Pallid Swift 7  
Little Green Bee-eater 1  
Indian Roller 5  
Hoopoe c.20  
White Wagtail 4  
White-cheeked Bulbul c.200

Red-vented Bulbul 100+  
Black Redstart 1  
Song Thrush 1  
Graceful Warbler 10  
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 1  
Chiffchaff 7  
Purple Sunbird c.20  
Isabelline Shrike 8  
Masked Shrike 1 male  
House Crow c.20  
Pied Mynah 12  
Common Mynah 40+  
House Sparrow c.200  
Indian Silverbill 10+

When returning to the Hotel we arranged car rental. It took less than 2 hours until the car was delivered at our Hotel!

### **Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 1530 – 1745**

The Pivot Fields has always been one of our favourite birding sites in the Emirates with numerous pipits, wagtails, larks and more. No disappointment this year either. The site is not mentioned in the *Shell Guide*. Follow the Hatta Rd (E44) from Dubai for 15-20 minutes and turn right towards the Sewage Treatment Plant (signposted) after passing the International City (and Dragon Mall). Turn immediately left after two speed bumps, following the numerous waste-water trucks, and another left at the end of the line of trees on your left hand side. Show your binoculars at the gate and the gatekeeper will happily let you in. They are used to birdwatchers.

Cattle Egret 10  
Glossy Ibis 4  
Marsh Harrier 1-2  
Kestrel 1  
Grey Francolin 15  
*Crake sp (unidentified)* 1  
Black-winged Stilt 3  
Little Ringed Plover 5  
Red-wattled Lapwing 15  
Sociable Plover 2  
White-tailed Plover 37  
Temminck's Stint 10+  
Jack Snipe 1  
Common Snipe 4  
Marsh Sandpiper 1  
Wood Sandpiper 1  
Common Sandpiper 5  
Collared Dove c.50  
Palm Dove c.40

Common Swift 1-2  
Pallid Swift c.30  
Hoopoe c.10  
Short-toed Lark 8  
Crested Lark c.40  
Skylark 4  
Swallow 1  
Richard's Pipit 5  
Tawny Pipit 4  
Meadow Pipit 1  
Red-throated Pipit c.40  
Water Pipit c.50  
Yellow Wagtail c.40 (ssp not counted)  
Citrine Wagtail 10+  
White Wagtail c.60  
White-cheeked Bulbul 3  
Bluethroat 4  
Siberian Stonechat 2  
Isabelline Wheatear 2

Song Thrush 1  
Mistle Thrush 1  
Graceful Warbler 5  
Purple Sunbird 5+  
Isabelline Shrike 2  
Starling 7

Common Mynah 2  
Bank Mynah 20  
House Sparrow 500+  
Indian Silverbill 6  
Corn Bunting 3

### **Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 1745 – 1830**

Only a few hundred meters east of Dubai Pivot Fields. Not mentioned in the *Shell Guide* as the lake was man made in the late 1990's. When leaving E44 towards the Sewage Treatment Plant (see Dubai Pivot Fields) go straight ahead passing the workers village on your left and take one of the newly paved roads to the right when you see the lake. It is now possible to drive on paved roads all the way down to the lake. Only about a quarter is left of the lake compared to our first visit in 2003, but the rest will hopefully be saved. A superb site for grebes and ducks, and a good place for hirundines at dawn. Breeding site for Red-knobbed Coot and grey headed Purple Gallinule since 2004!

Little Grebe 200+  
Black-necked Grebe 50+  
Cattle Egret c.10  
Little Egret c.30  
Grey Heron 4  
Glossy Ibis 1  
Teal c.10  
Mallard c.20  
Pintail 2  
Shoveler c.30  
Pochard 65  
Marsh Harrier 1  
Moorhen c.30  
Coot 50+  
Black-winged Stilt 15

Kentish Plover 5  
Red-wattled Lapwing 3  
White-tailed Plover 10  
Little Stint 1  
Temminck's Stint 10  
Common Sandpiper 5  
Black-headed Gull 3  
Chlidonias sp 2  
Collared Dove 2  
Palm Dove 5  
Sand Martin c.20  
Swallow c.50  
Red-rumped Swallow 1  
White Wagtail 5

### **Mushrif Park, Dubai (A6). Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 2115 – 2215**

Along D89 crossing Emirates Highway (E311), well signposted. The park is famous for Striated (Bruce's) Scops Owl. Avoid Thursday and Friday nights as the park turns into a major picnic destination for locals. The park is open until 2330 and entry fee is 10 Dhr pr car. Park along the palm plantation in front of the Main Plaza and check the trees around the restroom area to the left. A good spotlight makes it all much easier.

Striated (Bruce's) Scops Owl 2  
Collared and/or Palm Doves several flushed from the trees when spotlighting  
Red-wattled Lapwing 1-2 heard

**Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba (G8). Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 0715 – 1130**

Follow the description in the *Shell Guide* to get there. Park along the administration office and check the whole area. The site is known for producing mega rarities! The rocky area along the Omani border fence to the left is good for wheatears and buntings while the gravel track along the fence to the right is good for warblers, shrikes and more. Check also the irrigated fields, cattle bins and small ponds. The area outside the Dairy Farm is also worth checking. Look out for raptors in the sky. For a hot meal try the Bon Burger on the way south towards Ras Dibba.

Cattle Egret 50+	White Wagtail 15
Western Reef Heron 1	White-cheeked Bulbul 2
Grey Heron 1	Yellow-vented Bulbul 5
Teal 4	Bluethroat 4
Greater Spotted Eagle 1	Black Redstart 1
Kestrel 1	Stonechat (ssp) 6-8
Quail 12	Isabelline Wheatear 3
Black-winged Stilt 2	Desert Wheatear 3
Red-wattled Lapwing c.20	Red-tailed Wheatear 4
Common Snipe 2	Graceful Warbler c.10
Green Sandpiper 2	Clamorous Reed Warbler 2
Feral Dove 50+	Ménétries' Warbler 5+
Collared Dove 20+	Eastern Orphean Warbler 1
Palm Dove 50+	Desert Lesser Whitethroat 1
Rose-ringed Parakeet 5	Arabian Babbler 1
Pallid Swift 15	Purple Sunbird c.10
Little Green Bee-eater 2	Isabelline Shrike 10+
Indian Roller c.30	Woodchat Shrike 1
Hoopoe 5	House Crow c.200
Desert Lark 7	Common Mynah 15
Crested Lark 15	Bank Mynah 3
Skylark 2-3	House Sparrow c.150
Tawny Pipit 5	Indian Silverbill 100+
Citrine Wagtail 5	House Bunting c.15

**Ras Dibba (G5). Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1145 – 1230**

Drive south from Dibba for about 10 km and take left to the beach at Ras Dibba. The best site is on the small plateau in the northern end of the beach. One of the better seabird sites in the Emirates. Check the fish farms out at sea for potential rarities (we had a Common Noddy there in 2004).

Socotra Cormorant 5	Swift Tern 1
Western Reef Heron 5+	Palm Dove 2
Great White Egret 2	Pale Crag Martin 3-4
Grey Heron 5	White-cheeked Bulbul 1
Greenshank 1	Desert Wheatear 1
Sooty Gull 5+	Purple Sunbird 2
Slender-billed Gull c.15	House Sparrow 3
Caspian Gull 10	

### **Dibba Breakwater (G6). Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1240 – 1300**

A short stop at the Dibba breakwater to look for waders, gulls and terns. Not too exiting.

Western Reef Heron 2  
Osprey 1  
Kentish Plover 1-2  
Lesser Sand Plover 5  
Greater Sand Plover 5  
Dunlin 6  
Spotted Redshank 1  
Arctic Skua 1

Sooty Gull 2+  
Slender-billed Gull 50+  
Caspian Gull 1  
Sandwich Tern 1  
Short-toed Lark 1  
  
Slender-billed / Black-headed Gull  
at sea 700+

### **Masafi Wadi (G1). Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1320 – 1615**

A favourite site looking for Plain Leaf Warbler and Long-billed Pipit. Easily accessed from the Dibba – Masafi road by following the directions in the *Shell Guide*. The Wadis were a lot greener than on previous visits due to the unusual rainy (and snowy!) winter. Observations with \*) were made along the Dibba – Masafi road further east.

Kestrel 1  
Palm Dove 5  
Little Green Bee-eater 1 \*)  
Desert Lark 2  
Long-billed Pipit 1 \*)  
Black Redstart 1  
Hume's Wheatear 3 \*)

Red-tailed Wheatear 1  
Scrub Warbler 1  
Desert Lesser Whitethroat 1  
Plain Leaf Warbler 1  
Purple Sunbird 2  
Indian Silverbill 2  
House Sparrow 5

### **Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 1730 – 1820**

Another short stop before dawn on our way back to the Hotel.

Little Grebe 200+  
Black-necked Grebe 50+  
Cattle Egret 30+  
Western Reef Heron 10  
Little Egret 15  
Grey Heron 5+  
Glossy Ibis 3  
Wigeon 2  
Teal 30  
Mallard 15  
Pintail 4  
Shoveler c.20  
Pochard c.60  
Ferruginous Duck 1  
Marsh Harrier 3

Moorhen c.100  
Purple Gallinule 1  
Coot c.200  
Red-knobbed Coot 2  
Black-winged Stilt 15  
Little Ringed Plover 1  
Kentish Plover 3  
Red-wattled Lapwing c.10  
White-tailed Plover c.15  
Temminck's Stint c.10  
Ruff 1  
Marsh Sandpiper 1  
Green Sandpiper 4  
Common Sandpiper 2  
Collared Dove 3

Palm Dove c.10  
Pallid Swift 15  
Crested Lark 2  
Sand Martin c.20  
Swallow c.30

Red-rumped Swallow 1  
Citrine Wagtail 2  
White-cheeked Bulbul 2  
Reed Warbler (fuscus) 1  
Striped Weaver 5

**Khor al Beidah, Umm al Qawain (C2). Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 0830 – 1300**

A major wader site known for Crab Plovers and wintering Great Knots. If entering the area driving around the Ruler's Palace show extremely caution if stopping at the first site close to the mudflats (with "No Stop & No Photography" signs, facing the Palace). A local birder was arrested a few weeks earlier by civilian police. They probably won't see the difference between a telescope and a camera lens. You get closest to the waders at high tide, but 2 hours before or after high tide is usually optimal for the good ones. A hot lunch is possible at KFC or Pizza Hut in Umm al Qawain city.

Great Cormorant 1  
Western Reef Heron c.25  
Little Egret 4  
Great White Egret 1  
Grey Heron c.10  
Flamingo 100+  
Marsh Harrier 2  
Greater Spotted Eagle 3  
Osprey 1  
Oystercatcher c.200  
Black-winged Stilt c.10  
Crab Plover 260  
Ringed Plover 6  
Kentish Plover 500+  
Lesser Sand Plover c.300  
Greater Sand Plover 75+  
Grey Plover 250+  
Temminck's Stint c.30  
Little Stint 2  
Curlew Sandpiper c.20  
Dunlin 700+  
Bar-tailed Godwit c.75  
Whimbrel 10  
Curlew 60+  
Spotted Redshank 5  
Redshank 250+  
Marsh Sandpiper 5

Greenshank c.80  
Wood Sandpiper 1  
Terek Sandpiper c.20  
Common Sandpiper 5  
Turnstone 100+  
Slender-billed Gull 15  
Gull-billed Tern 50+  
Caspian Tern 1  
Lesser Crested Tern 1  
Collared Dove 1  
Palm Dove 10  
Rose-ringed Parakeet 2  
Pallid Swift c.20  
Little Green Bee-eater 3  
Crested Lark c.20  
Red-rumped Swallow 1  
Desert Wheatear 2  
Graceful Warbler 1  
Clamorous Reed Warbler 2  
Ménétries' Warbler 1  
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 1  
Chiffchaff 5  
Purple Sunbird 2  
Isabelline Shrike 1  
Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris) 1  
House Sparrow c.15

**Dreamland Beach (C4). Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 1330 – 1400 and 1500 – 1630**

Another good wader site a bit further north along the coast, just north of the Dreamland Beach Resort. Probably best on falling tide as the birds are active foraging.

Great Cormorant 4  
Western Reef Heron c.10  
Great White Egret 2  
Grey Heron 5  
Flamingo 50+  
Crab Plover 15  
Kentish Plover c.20  
Lesser Sand Plover c.30  
Greater Sand Plover 5  
Grey Plover c.30  
Great Knot 17  
Sanderling 5  
Temminck's Stint 15  
Curlew Sandpiper 5  
Dunlin c.200  
Bar-tailed Godwit c.30

Curlew 10  
Redshank c.30  
Marsh Sandpiper 2  
Greenshank 2  
Terek Sandpiper 3  
Common Sandpiper 5  
Turnstone 10  
Slender-billed Gull 5  
Siberian Gull (heuglini) 2  
Gull-billed Tern 10  
Crested Lark 10  
Short-toed Lark 1  
Isabelline Wheatear 1  
Graceful Warbler 1  
Brown-necked Raven 2  
House Sparrow 5

#### **Khor Dubai (A1). Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 1730 – 1800**

One of UAE's better wetland sites. A perfect pull off from E44 is constructed with a nice parking and a hide. The problem is that you won't get access to the hide without a permit (supposedly gained in a downtown (Deira) office, but we know of no one who has been able to get one!). We were even asked to leave the parking area by police guards since we didn't have a permit.

Great Cormorant c.10  
Western Reef Heron c.10  
Little Egret 1  
Great White Egret 1  
Grey Heron c.10  
Spoonbill 12  
*Sacred Ibis* 2  
*Yellow-billed Stork* 3  
Flamingo c.400  
*Black Swan* 1  
Teal 20+

Mallard 80+  
Pintail c.20  
Shoveler 2  
Marsh Harrier 6  
Osprey 1  
Black-winged Stilt 10  
Red-wattled Lapwing 3  
Common Snipe 15  
Black-tailed Godwit 4  
Turnstone 10  
Caspian Tern 2

#### **Al Wathba Camel Racetrack, Abu Dhabi (B7). Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 0630 – 2130**

One of the best birding sites in UAE and much visited by Abu Dhabi birders. When driving from Dubai stay on E11 towards Tarif until you have passed E22 (towards Al Ain). After a few more km take off on the "Truck Road" towards Al Ain and follow this for a few km until you pass the Al Wathba Lake on your left hand side. The Camel Racetrack is signposted right after you have passed the lake. Drive through the parking area and turn left after the main building (just before the small stores). Follow the gravel track crossing the racetrack. Be aware of camels, you don't want to hit one. Both the irrigated fields and the dry desert area inside the racetrack are worth checking. If looking for nightjars check all the tracks inside the

racetrack right after dark. The plantation between the Grand Stand and the Ladies Stand might also be good for warblers.

Mallard 4	Sand Martin c.30
Black Kite 1	Swallow 15
Marsh Harrier 3	Red-rumped Swallow 2
Pallid Harrier 3	Richard's Pipit 5
Greater Spotted Eagle 1	Tawny Pipit c.80
Lesser Kestrel 2	Long-billed Pipit 1
<i>Peregrine Falcon 1 (with straps)</i>	Meadow Pipit 8
Grey Francolin 50+	Red-throated Pipit c.40
Quail 8	Water Pipit c.40
Stone Curlew 3	Yellow Wagtail ssp 25
Pacific Golden Plover 66	Citrine Wagtail 1
Kentish Plover 20+	White Wagtail c.30
Lesser Sand Plover 1+	White-cheeked Bulbul 3
Red-wattled Lapwing 2	Bluethroat 10 (1 white-throated)
Curlew 6	Stonechat 2
Ruff c.30	Siberian Stonechat 2
Siberian Gull ( <i>heuglini</i> ) 1	Isabelline Wheatear c.30
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse c.70	Pied Wheatear 7
Feral Dove c.1000	Desert Wheatear c.30
Collared Dove 200+	Graceful Warbler 3
Palm Dove c.200	Ménétries Warbler 5
Egyptian Nightjar 10+	Desert Warbler 6
Syke's Nightjar 1 male	Purple Sunbird 2
Pallid Swift 15	Isabelline Shrike 10
Little Green Bee-eater 2	Steppe Grey Shrike ( <i>pallidirostris</i> ) 2
Black-crowned Finch Lark 1	Woodchat Shrike 1
Bimaculated Lark c.70	Starling 12
Short-toed Lark 100+	Common Mynah 4
Lesser Short-toed Lark 100+	House Sparrow 200+
Crested Lark c.300	Indian Silverbill 10
Skylark 25	Corn Bunting 3
Hoopoe Lark 1	

### **Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 0730 – 1130**

A note: Subspecies (ssp) of Yellow Wagtail at the Pivot Fields include mostly *feldegg* and *beema*, a few *thunbergi* and one *lutea*. We also had a male '*superciliaris*' type.

Grey Heron 1	Collared Dove c.30
Cattle Egret c.20	Palm Dove 50+
Glossy Ibis 3	Pallid Swift 3
Kestrel 1	Hoopoe 5
Grey Francolin 15	Black-crowned Finch Lark 4
Red-wattled Lapwing 5	Short-toed Lark 10
White-tailed Plover 3	Lesser Short-toed Lark 5+
Sociable Plover 2	Crested Lark c.40

Oriental (Small) Skylark 1  
Skylark 2  
Richard's Pipit 2  
Tawny Pipit 5  
Red-throated Pipit c.30  
Water Pipit c.20  
Buff-bellied Pipit 1  
Yellow Wagtail 50+ (ssp not counted)  
Citrine Wagtail 5  
White Wagtail c.20  
White-cheeked Bulbul 3

Bluethroat 1  
Siberian Stonechat 1  
Isabelline Wheatear 3  
Graceful Warbler 5  
Purple Sunbird 2  
Isabelline Shrike 1  
Starling 7  
Bank Mynah 2  
Common Mynah 15  
House Sparrow 300+  
Indian Silverbill 10

### **Emirates Golf Club, Dubai (A4). Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 1530 – 1815**

Historically one of the prime hotspots in the Emirates, but seems like it's not as much visited nowadays. Easiest reached with taxi from Dubai due to lack of parking places. Remember to sign in with the gatekeeper at the main gate, and he'll help you with a taxi on your return. Don't disturb golfers in action. As last year, preparation for a major golf tournament made birding a bit difficult. They even shut off half the area the day after (Feb 24<sup>th</sup>). We found two (!) White-breasted Waterhen, a mega bird in the UAE. One bird was at the exact same pond as last winter, the second was in a pond right behind the main building.

Little Grebe 12  
Black-necked Grebe 1  
Great Cormorant 11  
Night Heron 3  
Little Green Heron 2  
Cattle Egret 10  
Grey Heron 3  
Mallard 2  
Shoveler 1  
Teal 2  
Shikra 1  
Grey Francolin 10  
White-breasted Waterhen 2  
Moorhen 5  
Coot 1  
Black-winged Stilt 6  
Red-wattled Lapwing 5  
Curlew 1  
Marsh Sandpiper 1  
Common Sandpiper 5  
Black-headed Gull 1  
Collared Dove c.20

Palm Dove c.30  
Rose-ringed Parakeet c.10  
Pallid Swift 3  
Indian Roller 5  
Hoopoe 10  
Crested Lark 5  
White Wagtail 3  
Grey Wagtail 2  
White-cheeked Bulbul c.15  
Red-vented Bulbul 2  
Song Thrush 1  
Graceful Warbler 5  
Chiffchaff 5  
Purple Sunbird 3  
Isabelline Shrike 3  
Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri) 1  
House Crow c.200  
Pied Mynah 1  
Common Mynah 100+  
House Sparrow 40  
Indian Silverbill 2

### **Qarn Nazwa, Hatta Road (E2). Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 0600 - 0630**

A short stop for the Desert Eagle Owl on our way to the East Coast. We spotted one before sunrise at the summit of the mountain near site 3 on map 11 (*Shell Guide*). We also heard it calling several times. After a while it flew down the hillside and sat behind a tree, difficult to spot. Other birds... nah!

### **Khor Kalba (G3). Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 0815 – 1300**

Usually there are numerous gulls and terns on the beach when the fishermen are hauling their nets. Be careful driving on the beach as we almost got stuck with a 4W drive in the loose sand. Check the mangroves on low tide as the Indian Pond Herons hunt for crabs together with White-collared Kingfishers on the mudflats. Our favourite checkpoint site 3 on map 16 (*Shell Guide*) was still accessible even if the making of a huge lagoon seems to ruin parts of this site. Go to site 3 on map 16 and check a few hundred meters to the south. You're bound to find Syke's Warblers and White-collared Kingfishers in the mangroves.

Great Cormorant 10	Siberian Gull (heuglini) c.15
Socotra Cormorant 4	Caspian Gull c.100
Little Green heron 2	Gull-billed Tern 3
Indian Pond Heron 5	Lesser Crested Tern c.20
Cattle Egret 1	Sandwich Tern c.60
Western Reef Heron 10	Common Tern 100+
Little Egret 1	White-cheeked Tern 10
Great White Egret 1	Collared Dove 5
Grey Heron 5	Palm Dove 15
Spoonbill 1	Rose-ringed Parakeet 2
Teal 2	Pallid Swift 5
Black-winged Stilt 10	White-collared Kingfisher 10+
Kentish Plover c.20	Common Kingfisher 3
Lesser Sand Plover 10	Little Green Bee-eater 3
Greater Sand Plover 5+	Indian Roller 2
Grey Plover 1	Crested Lark 5
Dunlin 5	Red-rumped Swallow 1
Bar-tailed Godwit 2	Bluethroat 2
Whimbrel 5	Desert Wheatear 1
Curlew 3	Graceful Warbler 2
Redshank c.20	Clamorous Reed Warbler 3
Greenshank c.10	Syke's Warbler 5
Wood Sandpiper 5	Chiffchaff 3
Common Sandpiper c.20	Purple Sunbird 2
Great Black-headed Gull 10	House Crow c.20
Black-headed Gull c.200	Common Mynah c.10
Slender-billed Gull c.20	House Sparrow c.20
Sooty Gull c.80	

### **East Coast (Khor Kalba – Dibba) (G2 + G5-G8). Feb 24<sup>th</sup> Afternoon**

The following is a summary of the best sightings made along the East Coast driving from Khor Kalba to Dibba. The observations from Khor Kalba are not included. Lunch tips KFC or Pizza Hut in Fujairah city (in the main street).

Persian Shearwater c.150	Off Fujairah City
Lesser Kestrel 1	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba
Sooty Gull 250+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Great Black-headed Gull 30	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Black-headed Gull 1500+	Most north of Fujairah oil refinery
Slender-billed Gull 200+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Baltic Gull (fuscus) 1 (probably)	Fujairah oil refinery
Caspian Gull c.200	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Swift Tern 1	Near Dhadnah
Lesser Crested Tern c.20	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Sandwich Tern c.100	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Common Tern 500+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
White-cheeked Tern 70+	North of Khor Kalba to Dibba
Pallid Swift c.500	Island off Rul Dhadnah
Red-rumped Swallow 6	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba
House Martin 5	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba
Isabelline Shrike 8	Outside Fujairah Dairy Farm, Dibba

### **Al Wathba Camel Racetrack, Abu Dhabi (B7). Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 0700 – 1130**

A shorter morning visit. A bit rainy and no intense birding. Bring plenty of water and your own lunch when visiting Al Wathba. There are no decent places for a hot meal closer than Abu Dhabi or along E11 towards Dubai.

Black Kite 1	Richard's Pipit 2
Marsh Harrier 3-4	Tawny Pipit 15
Pallid Harrier 2	Meadow Pipit 1
Lesser Kestrel 1	Water Pipit 20
Grey Francolin c.15	Yellow Wagtail 1
Pacific Golden Plover 38	White Wagtail 10
Red-wattled Lapwing 1	Bluethroat 2
Ruff c.100	Isabelline Wheatear 2
Curlew 6	Desert Wheatear 10
Caspian Gull c.10	Graceful Warbler 5
Feral Dove 100+	Ménétries' Warbler 5
Palm Dove c.60	Desert Warbler 7
Collared Dove c.50	Purple Sunbird 2
Hoopoe 1	Isabelline Shrike 5
Bimaculated Lark 35	Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris) 1
Short-toed Lark c.20	Starling 17
Lesser Short-toed Lark 5	Common Mynah 2
Crested Lark 100+	House Sparrow c.50
Skylark 20	Indian Silverbill 15
Hoopoe Lark 1	Corn Bunting 10
Swallow 1	

### **Ghantoot (A9). Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 1300-1500**

No sightings of Grey Hypocolius the last months, but we had to look for it anyway. Park next to the Hotel (see map 3 in the *Shell Guide*). Walk around in the plantation or check from the top of the hill overlooking the area. We were also permitted to enter the Polo Club area by a kind (but a bit uncertain) gatekeeper. Observations are from both the plantation and the Polo Club. The Black Tern is a mega with less than 10 observations in UAE. It was seen very well sitting and in flight for several minutes.

Little Grebe 5  
Egyptian Goose 2  
Teal 2  
Pochard c.20  
Ferruginous Duck 1  
Grey Francolin 5  
Moorhen 3  
Coot 1  
Pacific Golden Plover 10  
Red-wattled Lapwing 5  
Black-headed Gull 2  
Black Tern 1 winter  
Feral Dove c.100  
Collared Dove 15  
Palm Dove 15  
Rose-ringed Parakeet 2  
Little Green Bee-eater 2

Hoopoe 1  
Crested Lark c.20  
Richard's Pipit 4  
White Wagtail 1  
White-cheeked Bulbul c.30  
Red-vented Bulbul c.15  
Stonechat 1  
Isabelline Wheatear 1  
Desert Wheatear 6  
Graceful Warbler 2  
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 4  
Chiffchaff 3  
Purple Sunbird 5  
Isabelline Shrike 1  
Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri) 2  
Common Mynah 5  
House Sparrow 10

### **Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 1730 – 1830**

To the discussion on hybrid Red-knobbed Coots that has been going on; which characters are seen that indicates hybrids? The extremely reduced red knobs are typical of young and non-breeding individuals. The black feathering in front of the face (behind the bill) seems perfect for Red-knobbed Coot. More interesting (?); one of the Purple Gallinules was grey-headed and the other blue-headed! Are they different subspecies?

Little Grebe 100+  
Black-necked Grebe 66  
Cattle Egret 10  
Little Egret 5+  
Grey Heron 2  
Glossy Ibis 3  
Teal 20+  
Mallard 30+  
Pintail 2  
Shoveler 15  
Pochard c.30  
Marsh Harrier 1

Moorhen 50+  
Purple Gallinule 2  
Red-knobbed Coot 1  
Coot 100+  
Black-winged Stilt 5  
Ringed Plover 1  
Red-wattled Lapwing 3  
White-tailed Plover 1  
Marsh Sandpiper 1  
Wood Sandpiper 5  
Redshank 5+  
Temminck's Stint 10

Feral Dove 10+  
Collared Dove 5  
Palm Dove 5  
Pallid Swift 1  
Crested Lark 5  
Sand Martin c.40

Swallow c.15  
House Martin 1  
White-cheeked Bulbul 2  
Reed Warbler (fuscus) 2  
Striped Weaver 5

**Umm al Qawain Breakwater (C3). Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 0700 – 0900**

A good site for gulls and terns, and a good combination to birding at Khor al Beidah. Birding is best in the morning due to the sunlight.

Great Black-headed Gull 14  
Black-headed Gull 1000+  
Slender-billed Gull c.150  
Caspian Gull c.25  
Gull-billed Tern 10

Caspian Tern 2  
Swift Tern 3  
Lesser Crested Tern 10+  
Sandwich Tern 200+  
Common Tern c.10

**Al Jazeerah Khor, Ras al Khaimah (D1). Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 1000 – 1100**

A nice place that can host egrets, waders, terns and gulls. Check the trees for passerines. The area is now halfway filled with sand as they are doing construction work on a large scale in the area. The total numbers of species seen here is not mentioned.

Pacific Golden Plover 5  
Saunders's Little Tern 17  
Gull-billed Tern 10

Flamingo 15  
Also few waders and egrets ++

**Hamraniyah fields, Ras al Khaimah (D2). Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 1300 – 1730**

The agricultural area of Hamraniyah is extensive with a labyrinth of tracks and fields. Lots of birds, and the water supplies seemed good this year. Khatt Lake nearby which was dried out last February was now filled with water (but few birds).

Pallid Harrier 1  
Greater Spotted Eagle 1  
Bonelli's Eagle 1  
Sparrowhawk 1  
Grey Francolin 5+  
Quail 2  
Red-wattled Lapwing 10  
Collared Dove 50+  
Palm Dove 70+  
Rose-ringed Parakeet 10  
Pallid Swift 10  
Little Green Bee-eater 150+  
Indian Roller 40+

Hoopoe 5  
Crested Lark 20  
Red-rumped Swallow 2  
White-cheeked Bulbul 20  
Black Redstart 5  
Isabelline Wheatear 1  
Desert Wheatear 1  
Eastern Pied Wheatear 1  
Graceful Warbler 10  
Ménétries' Warbler 1  
Eastern Orphee Warbler 1-2  
Desert Lesser Whitethroat 3  
Chiffchaff 5

Arabian Babbler 17  
Purple Sunbird 15  
Isabelline Shrike 2  
Southern Grey Shrike (aucheri) 13  
House Crow 15

Brown-necked Raven 1  
Starling 15  
Common Mynah c.30  
Bank Mynah c.40  
House Sparrow 50+

### **Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 0700 – 1200**

Much time devoted to the Oriental (Small) Skylarks...

Cattle Egret 10  
Glossy Ibis 3  
Grey Francolin 5  
Red-wattled Lapwing 2  
White-tailed Plover 3  
Sociable Plover 2  
Common Snipe 2  
Jack Snipe 1  
Collared Dove c.20  
Palm Dove c.30  
Hoopoe 2  
Black-crowned Finch Lark 1  
Crested Lark c.20  
Oriental (Small) Skylark 2  
Skylark c.10  
Swallow 2  
Richard's Pipit 2

Tawny Pipit 2  
Red-throated Pipit 30+  
Water pipit 20+  
Buff-bellied Pipit 1  
Yellow Wagtail 50+  
Citrine Wagtail 3  
White Wagtail c.30  
White-cheeked Bulbul 5  
Isabelline Wheatear 1  
Graceful Warbler 5  
Purple Sunbird 3  
Starling 5+  
Common Mynah c.10  
Indian Silverbill 10  
House Sparrow 100+  
Striped Weaver 2+

### **Safa Park, Dubai (A5). Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 1230 – 1400**

Park of the escapes birds...and some good ones too. A popular picnic area. Open from 8 o'clock. Entry fee 5 Dhr pr person. Hot meal possible at the Malik cafeteria inside the park.

Great Cormorant 2  
Night Heron 6  
Western Reef heron 1  
Great White Egret 1  
Grey Heron 1  
Mallard 50+  
Shikra 1 (nesting?)  
Grey Francolin 2  
Red-wattled Lapwing 3  
Common Sandpiper 5  
Black-headed Gull 300+  
Slender-billed Gull <5  
Caspian Gull <5  
Caspian Tern 1  
Collared Dove 15

Palm Dove 15  
Rose-ringed Parakeet 5  
Alexandrine Parakeet 3  
Indian Roller 5  
Hoopoe 8  
White Wagtail 2  
Grey Wagtail 1  
White-cheeked Bulbul 50+  
Red-vented Bulbul 15+  
Black Redstart 2-3  
Song Thrush 4  
Graceful Warbler 10  
Chiffchaff 1  
Purple Sunbird 5  
Isabelline Shrike 1

House Crow 5  
Common Mynah 10+

Indian Silverbill 5  
House Sparrow 20+

### **Ghantoot (A9). Feb 27<sup>th</sup> Afternoon.**

After a disappointing stop at Jebel Ali Golf Resort we decided to use what was left of daylight on our last birding day at Ghantoot. Maybe the wish for *Hypocolius* led the way? A check at the Al Jazirah Resort (Golden Tulip Hotel) seemed dull until UAE's second ever Dusky Thrush suddenly appeared in front of us. What a delight...

Pallid Harrier 1  
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse 6  
Collared Dove 10  
Palm Dove 20  
Little Green Bee-eater 2  
Pale Crag Martin 2  
Red-vented Bulbul c.10  
White-cheeked Bulbul c.15  
Blue Rock Thrush 1

Song Thrush 1  
Dusky Thrush 1  
Graceful Warbler 5+  
Lesser Whitethroat (ssp) 1+  
Purple Sunbird 2  
Isabelline Shrike 1  
Southern Grey Shrike (*aucheri*) 2  
Common Mynah 5+  
House Sparrow c.10

### **Species list**

The species list covers all species recorded on our trip. Species in *italics* are escapes. For some other species the status is a bit more unclear (e.g. Shikra). We have also given the different Stonechats, Grey Shrikes (*aucheri* and *pallidirostris*) and Lesser Whitethroats (*curruca* and *minula*) species account even though this is not completely correct (depending on which systematics you follow).

- |                                |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Little Grebe                | 24. Pintail                    | 46. Black-winged Stilt    |
| 2. Black-necked Grebe          | 25. Shoveler                   | 47. Avocet                |
| 3. Persian Shearwater          | 26. Pochard                    | 48. Crab Plover           |
| 4. Great Cormorant             | 27. Ferruginous Duck           | 49. Stone Curlew          |
| 5. Socotra Cormorant           | 28. Black Kite                 | 50. Little Ringed Plover  |
| 6. Night Heron                 | 29. Marsh Harrier              | 51. Ringed Plover         |
| 7. Little Green Heron          | 30. Pallid Harrier             | 52. Kentish Plover        |
| 8. Indian Pond Heron           | 31. Greater Spotted Eagle      | 53. Lesser Sand Plover    |
| 9. Cattle Egret                | 32. Bonelli's Eagle            | 54. Greater Sand Plover   |
| 10. Western Reef Heron         | 33. Shikra                     | 55. Pacific Golden Plover |
| 11. Little Egret               | 34. Osprey                     | 56. Grey Plover           |
| 12. Great White Egret          | 35. Sparrowhawk                | 57. Red-wattled Lapwing   |
| 13. Grey Heron                 | 36. Lesser Kestrel             | 58. Sociable Plover       |
| 14. <i>Yellow-billed Stork</i> | 37. Kestrel                    | 59. White-tailed Plover   |
| 15. Glossy Ibis                | 38. Grey Francolin             | 60. Great Knot            |
| 16. <i>Sacred Ibis</i>         | 39. Quail                      | 61. Sanderling            |
| 17. Spoonbill                  | 40. White-breasted<br>Waterhen | 62. Little Stint          |
| 18. Flamingo                   | 41. Moorhen                    | 63. Temminck's Stint      |
| 19. <i>Black Swan</i>          | 42. Purple Gallinule           | 64. Curlew Sandpiper      |
| 20. Egyptian Goose             | 43. Red-knobbed Coot           | 65. Dunlin                |
| 21. Wigeon                     | 44. Coot                       | 66. Ruff                  |
| 22. Teal                       | 45. Oystercatcher              | 67. Jack Snipe            |
| 23. Mallard                    |                                | 68. Common Snipe          |

69. Black-tailed Godwit  
70. Bar-tailed Godwit  
71. Whimbrel  
72. Curlew  
73. Spotted Redshank  
74. Redshank  
75. Marsh Sandpiper  
76. Greenshank  
77. Green Sandpiper  
78. Wood Sandpiper  
79. Terek Sandpiper  
80. Common Sandpiper  
81. Turnstone  
82. Arctic Skua  
83. Sooty Gull  
84. Great Black-headed Gull  
85. Black-headed Gull  
86. Slender-billed Gull  
87. Lesser Black-backed Gull  
    - heuglini  
    - fuscus  
88. Caspian Gull  
    - cachinnans  
    - barabensis  
89. Gull-billed Tern  
90. Caspian Tern  
91. Crested (Swift) Tern  
92. Lesser Crested Tern  
93. Sandwich Tern  
94. Common Tern  
95. White-cheeked Tern  
96. Saunder's Little Tern  
97. Whiskered / White-winged Tern  
98. Black Tern  
99. Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse  
100. Feral Dove  
101. Collared Dove  
102. Palm Dove  
103. Rose-ringed Parakeet  
104. Alexandrine Parakeet  
105. Striated (Bruce's) Scops Owl  
106. Desert Eagle Owl  
107. Egyptian Nightjar  
108. Syke's Nightjar  
109. Common Swift  
110. Pallid Swift  
111. White-collared Kingfisher  
112. Common Kingfisher  
113. Little Green Bee-eater  
114. Indian Roller  
115. Hoopoe  
116. Black-crowned Finch Lark  
117. Desert Lark  
118. Hoopoe Lark  
119. Bimaculated Lark  
120. Short-toed Lark  
121. Lesser Short-toed Lark  
122. Crested Lark  
123. Oriental Skylark  
124. Skylark  
125. Sand Martin  
126. Pale Crag Martin  
127. Swallow  
128. Red-rumped Swallow  
129. House martin  
130. Richard's Pipit  
131. Tawny Pipit  
132. Long-billed Pipit  
133. Meadow Pipit  
134. Red-throated Pipit  
135. Water Pipit  
136. Buff-bellied Pipit  
137. Yellow Wagtail  
    - feldegg  
    - beema  
    - thunbergi  
    - lutea  
138. Citrine wagtail  
139. Grey Wagtail  
140. White Wagtail  
141. White-cheeked Bulbul  
142. Yellow-vented Bulbul  
143. Red-vented Bulbul  
144. Bluethroat  
145. Black Redstart  
146. Stonechat  
147. Siberian Stonechat  
148. Isabelline Wheatear  
149. Pied Wheatear  
150. Desert Wheatear  
151. Red-tailed Wheatear  
152. Eastern Pied Wheatear  
153. Hume's Wheatear  
154. Blue Rock Thrush  
155. Song Thrush  
156. Mistle Thrush  
157. Dusky Thrush  
158. Graceful Warbler  
159. Scrub Warbler  
160. Reed Warbler  
161. Clamorous Reed Warbler  
162. Syke's Warbler  
163. Ménétries' Warbler  
164. Desert Warbler  
165. Eastern Orphean Warbler  
166. Lesser Whitethroat  
167. Desert Lesser Whitethroat  
168. Plain Leaf Warbler  
169. Chiffchaff  
170. Arabian Babbler  
171. Purple Sunbird  
172. Isabelline Shrike  
173. Steppe Grey Shrike  
174. Southern Grey Shrike  
175. Woodchat Shrike  
176. Masked Shrike  
177. House Crow  
178. Brown-necked Raven  
179. Starling  
180. Pied Mynah  
181. Common Mynah  
182. Bank Mynah  
183. House Sparrow  
184. Indian Silverbill  
185. House Bunting  
186. Corn Bunting  
187. Striped Weaver

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