



# Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## Egypt & Petra

*1<sup>st</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006*

**Trip Report compiled by Tour Leaders Erik Forsyth & Fraser Gear**

### **Trip summary**

#### *Day 1, 1st April: Arrival in Cairo.*

On the first day of the tour, the early arrivals made our way through the bustling city of Cairo (with its 20 million inhabitants) to the Gezira Sports Ground. After ten minutes we had located a flock of both Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, both species are breeding residents in Cairo. At the golf range we located Black-eared and Northern Wheatears and Woodchat Shrike. In some nearby scrubby wasteland we were lucky to find a small flock of Indian Silverbills, a pair of White-throated Kingfisher nesting in an earthbank and a singing Eurasian Blackbird. Back at the hotel we met the later arrivals and enjoyed an afternoon birdwalk which produced Collared Flycatcher, Subalpine, a stunning Rueppell's and Booted Warblers (the latter, a very rare bird in Egypt) In the evening we met all the participants and enjoyed our first of many meals together.

#### *Day 2, 2nd April: Cairo to Abu Simbel.*

This morning we had a very early start, with a flight to the far south of the country. Approaching Abu Simbel we enjoyed stunning views of the Lake Nasser and the surrounding desert. After checking into our hotel we started birding in earnest finding many migrant warblers feeding in the bushes around our hotel as well as stunning Masked Shrikes. We then headed to the Lake Nasser shoreline. An hour at a small marsh, produced some excellent and difficult to see birds including Spotted and Baillon's Crakes, Common Snipe and several Bluethroat's. After lunch we visited the Abu Simbel Temples. This site has two massive temples, both of which were moved to higher ground in the 1960's when the Aswan Dam was built. The first temple is dedicated to the sun god Ra, although it was actually built to proclaim the greatness of Rameses II! The 100 feet high facade of the temple has four colossal seated statues of the Pharaoh, each 65 feet tall! Upon entering the temple we stepped into a beautiful colonnade hall and it seemed that every inch of the rock face was covered with hieroglyphs. The engravings told stories of ancient battles and of course boasted the powers of the Pharaoh. This temple also contained numerous sub-chambers where we especially enjoyed the many bird hieroglyphs. The second temple was built for Rameses' favourite wife, Nefertari (he had over 34 wives). The temple is dedicated to the goddess of love and beauty Hathur. This temple facade has six standing statues, four of Rameses and two of Nefertari. Though much smaller than the temple of Rameses II, this one is just as impressive.



Abu Simbel

Kom Ombo

*Day 3, 3rd April: Lake Nasser and Abu Simbel.*

An early morning visit to a nearby Camel Station did not produce any camels but we did admire a flock of Crowned Sandgrouse. On the return drive we found an immature Egyptian Vulture at a goat carcass and several migrating White Storks. Most of today was spent birding around Lake Nasser in search of birds. Some of the birding highlights included some very special birds for the Western Palearctic; Yellow-billed Stork, Egyptian Goose and African Pied Wagtail. A second visit to the marsh in the late afternoon became a crake extravaganza with Spotted, Baillon's and both a male and female Little Crakes and a stunning flyby Barbary Falcon. To end off this fun day, we attended the Sound-and-Light show at the Abu Simbal Temples. We were entertained by an orchestra of sound, dramatic voices and technicolor images projected onto the temple facades.

*Day 4, 4th April: Abu Simbel to Aswan*

An early morning visit to a nearby wetland produced several good birds including Common Kingfisher, but the star was John's find..... a female Greater Painted-Snipe! We then headed off to Aswan driving through the desert. After checking into our cruise liner, we enjoyed a peaceful felucca ride, the boat was old and colourful and powered by the wind and a very 'holy' mast. On the banks of the Nile we saw the Mausoleum of Aga Khan in the distance, as well as a beautiful old monastery. In the late afternoon we visited the Nubian Museum. This superb museum was very informative and well presented. Some of the group had their first of many experiences with an Egyptian market this evening!

*Day 5, 5th April: Aswan to Edfu via Kom Ombo.*

After breakfast we set off to visit the impressive temple of Philae. This was one of the many temples which would have been inundated when the Aswan Dam was built, as a result this temple was relocated onto a piece of higher land which is now an island. The temple of Philae was dedicated to the goddess Isis. Philae means 'the end', signifying the (then) southernmost border of Egypt. This temple also became the very final bastion of ancient Egyptian religion and hieroglyphic usage as Christianity spread through the land during the Roman times. Here, we added the beautiful Nile Valley Sunbird to our ever-growing bird list and a large flock of migrating White Storks held a single Eurasian Griffon. This morning we also met our Egyptologist, Nora for the first time. Later in the afternoon we began cruising down the Nile. In the evening, we stopped at Kom Ombo Temple. The main temple building consisted of two equal halves; one side was dedicated to the god Sobek (the crocodile god) and the other to Horus. We saw our first mummies here; well, crocodile mummies anyhow! This temple was extremely impressive and it was the first temple where we saw remains of original colour on the walls. It also contained one rather special hieroglyph scene displaying medical instruments used over 3,500 years ago. This evening on the boat was rather festive; cocktails were served and those of us who still had energy left played some fun Bingo.



*Day 6, 6 April: Edfu to Luxor via Esna.*

Today we had a very early start and set off to see the temple of Horus at Edfu. This temple was rather remarkable. It was exceptionally well preserved under the desert sands for hundreds of years, and rediscovered when a local donkey fell through a hole in the sand! It is actually situated below ground level of the nearby town. This temple contains fabulous examples of embossed (raised) as well as engraved hieroglyphs. Here it seemed that no space was to be spared and every inch was decorated. Years later this temple was re-used by Coptic Christians who defaced many of the Egyptian gods and engraved their own signs on the temple walls. This afternoon our cruise liner had to wait in queue for our turn to go through the Esna Lock. At the lock we added a few good birds including Black-necked Grebe, Tufted Duck and Common Pochard.



Typical Nile cruise ship



Market scene

*Day 7, 7<sup>th</sup> April: Luxor.*

This was the beginning of a long and exciting cultural day. We started off by visiting the Valley of the Kings. The valley is a desolate area that was used to hide the mummies and treasures of buried pharaohs, as tomb robbery was a huge problem even in ancient times. There is not much to be seen from the outside, but deep shafts lead to highly decorated burial chambers, most of which still failed to evade the robbers. The first tomb that we explored was that of Rameses III. It is one of the most elaborately decorated tombs in the valley. The walls are covered in numerous colourful hieroglyphs displaying scenes of the royal army. This tomb consisted of many highly decorated chambers. The second tomb that we negotiated was that of Rameses I. It had a very short entrance hall, leading into a vast chamber containing a pink granite sarcophagus, and only this particular room contained hieroglyphs. The third tomb that we decided to visit was the tomb of Rameses IV. This tomb has a very long hallway that leads into a chamber where a world famous scene of the goddess Nut is painted on the ceiling. This chamber is highly decorated with simple yet colourful hieroglyphs and contains an enormous sarcophagus. Some of us were adamant to see the tomb of King Tut, the only pharaoh's tomb that had evaded ancient robbers, and for some it was a very emotional though breathtaking experience.

The birding highlight was a flock of attractive Trumpeter Finches in the Valley of Kings and a few Black-shouldered Kites dotted on the powerlines.

Next we were off to the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. This was a magnificent sight, though it has been damaged, the greater part of it still gives justice to its former beauty. Here we could also see beautiful hieroglyphs and large areas still had brilliant color remnants. Before lunch we visited the Colossi of Memnon, famed for their haunting chanting but now silent after an ancient repair job went wrong! After lunch on the boat we transferred to the nearby Crocodile Island and commenced birding. Here we had Eurasian Wryneck and other new birds for our list included Senegal Thick-knee, Whinchat and a male Little Bittern.

*Day 8, 8<sup>th</sup> April: Luxor to Hurghada.*

First off today we visited Karnak; few sights in Egypt are as impressive as this colossal temple complex. It was built in the time of Rameses III, and is the largest temple complex ever built in antiquity. It consists of three



main temples, smaller enclosed temples, and several outer temples. We paid a quick visit to a papyrus factory, before visiting the Temple of Luxor. This temple has been used for religious purposes up to present times. During the Christian era, the huge hypostyle hall was converted into a Christian church. Then for centuries it was buried under the sand, and the buildings of Luxor town crept closer. Today one can see a mosque, which is still in use, built on top of a section of the original temple. We then headed off by convoy to Hurghada arriving in the early evening.



Egyptian dress party, Nile cruise



Queen Hatshepsut's Temple, Luxor



One of the many statues, Temple of Karnak



Typical mountain desert scenery

*Day 9, 9th April: Hurghada and the Red Sea.*

Early morning birding on the golf course produced many Yellow Wagtails, Greater Short-toed Larks and Tawny Pipits. It was then off for a snorkeling trip to Giftun Island. Much admired en route were Western Reef-Heron, White-eyed and Sooty Gulls and Common Terns. The snorkeling was truly spectacular and a highlight for all!

*Day 10, 10th April: Hurghada*

An incredibly good day was had at the Abu Shir Mountains. First seeing 30+ White Storks and three Steppe Eagles at a freshwater spring, then suddenly we found the raptor migration in full swing with 80+ Common Buzzards, small numbers of Short-toed and Booted Eagles, a Long-legged Buzzard and several Eurasian Sparrowhawks. A wonderful experience and a group of content birders headed for lunch. After lunch we birded a nearby wetland adding Western Reef Heron, Wood Sandpiper and a flock of winter-plumaged Sanderling.

*Day 11, 11th April: Hurghada to Sharm El Shiekh.*

From Hurghada we caught a fast ferry to the Sinai Peninsular at Sharm El Sheik. The crossing was rather rough.



Once we were firmly on land again, and after a break at our hotel, we birded the nearby sewage works until dark adding Common Greenshank, Common Redshank and a confiding Eurasian Wryneck to our list.

*Day 12, 12<sup>th</sup> April: Sharm El Shiek to St Katherine via the Ras Mohammed National Park.*

An early visit to the sewage works ended in disappointment as the caretaker would not allow us entry due to the Bird Flu scare; however as compensation we did see a pair of Barbary Falcon. After breakfast we visited the Ras Mohammed National Park, few birds were around but we did see our first Eurasian Curlew, Greater Sandplover and Slender-billed Gull. The snorkeling however was incredible. Just off the beach, the reef dropped off forming a sheer cliff face filled with amazing corals and bright fish. For most of us this was one of the many highlights of the trip! Ron and Fraser were lucky to find a Green Turtle. After lunch we headed to St Katherine, arriving in the late afternoon.

*Day 13, 13<sup>th</sup> April: St Katherine to Ain Sukhna via Wadi Feiran.*

Today we visited the St Katherine Monastery. The monastery was built in a Greek Orthodox style in 337 AD. Later it was converted into a fort, to protect it against raiders. This monastery is considered a very holy place to Coptic Christians who perform an annual pilgrimage here. It is believed to contain a descendant of the original Burning Bush, and it is built at the foot of Mt Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Great birds here included Tristram's Starling, a male Collared Flycatcher, a few Sinai Rosefinches including one stunning male and a pair of Desert Larks. Later we headed to Ain Sukhna via Suez, first stopping to bird at the Palm orchard gardens at Wadi Fieran. This was a worthwhile stop and new birds found here included Blackstart, Spectacled Bulbul and the beautiful Palestine Sunbird. At Suez, we crossed back into Africa. After a long day we arrived in the evening at our hotel.

*Day 14, 14<sup>th</sup> April: Ain Sukhna and Suez.*

Ain Sukhna is a well known raptor migration point where thousands of birds use the thermals of the nearby Bir Abu Darag Mountain range to migrate across the desert into Israel. This area lived up to its reputation. Today, we saw thousands of raptors and storks, first forming large "kettles" and then flying low across the road, just above where we were standing. We were absolutely enthralled by this amazing spectacle! White Storks, Common Buzzards and Steppe Eagles were particularly numerous but also seen were Short-toed, Booted, Greater Spotted, Imperial and Lesser Spotted Eagles, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard and several stunning Egyptian Vultures. Up to 25 Black Storks were also found amongst the raptors. After enjoying this spectacular show of migration we enjoyed an excellent lunch overlooking the Suez Canal. An afternoon vigil at Fowzy's Cafeteria looking for raptors was quiet but en route back to our hotel was enlivened by 12 Bottle-nosed Dolphins close to shore.

*Day 15, 15<sup>th</sup> April: Ain Sukhna to Cairo via Wadi Hagul and Gabel Asfar*

An early start today and we birded through the Eastern Desert at Wadi Hagul en route to Cairo. Few birds were seen but of note was a flushed Common Quail, a singing Bar-tailed Desert Lark and a pair of Mourning Wheatear. At Gabal Asfar we located our target bird, the stunning White-throated Kingfisher and enjoyed some bathing Water Buffalo. Travelling to our hotel in the early afternoon we were struck by the beauty of the Giza Pyramids through the city smog. In the evening several participants visited the Giza sound and light show.

*Day 16, 16<sup>th</sup> April: Day trip to El Fayoum and Giza.*

This morning, we visited the wetlands of El Fayoum that teemed with waders and herons. Many of the waders were attaining their full breeding plumage and the highlight was finding several summer-plumaged Spotted Redshanks as well as superb views of Little Owl. After an early lunch we made our way to the world-famous Great Pyramids at Giza. These three pyramids are the burial place of three pharaohs, father (Cheops), son (Khafre), and grandson (Menkaure). They are also sized in this order, as the son respected his father by building a slightly smaller pyramid. The first pyramid that we explored was that of Cheops. This 321 foot tall stone structure is truly remarkable. One cannot exactly grasp the sheer size of this pyramid from mere pictures; standing beside it leaves one feeling breathless. We also visited the recently discovered solar boat, a truly



spectacular ceremonial boat that was wonderfully preserved in the sands next to the pyramid. This 101ft long boat was used for symbolic purposes; it was destined to take the king into the afterlife. The second pyramid appears to be larger than that of Cheops, but this is because it is placed at a slightly higher elevation. This pyramid still shows remnants of the marble outer layer that once covered all three pyramids. Some of us were brave enough to hike through the narrow shaft at the base of the pyramid to the very heart of the structure, where Khafre was buried. What an experience! We did not go up close to the third and smallest pyramid; instead we went to the view-point from where we could see all three of the Great Pyramids in a panoramic view. Here some of us seized the opportunity to ride a camel and took some pictures with the majestic pyramids in the background. We next visited another celebrated structure; the Sphinx. One enters this area through the Temple of the Sphinx. It is here where the embalming ceremony for the king Khafre was held. One then walks through the various chambers and out into an open area where you are almost startled by the alluring Sphinx. It was truly fantastic!



The Pyramid of Khafre



The fabled Sphinx

*Day 17, 17<sup>th</sup> April: Cairo to Amman.*

Our first stop was the famous 'Zoser's Step Pyramid'. This was the very first pyramid to be built. The king wanted a more elaborate tomb than his predecessors, so he hired the best architect of the time, Imhotep. This genius built six layers of tombs one on top of the other another. The final product was this fabulous step pyramid, the first of over 100 pyramids built in ancient Egypt! The excitement was high when we managed to spot the Pharaoh Eagle Owl, high up hiding in a crevice between the pyramid stones. Our visit to the Egyptian Museum was also fascinating. After a guided tour of the highlights, we had a few hours to roam around on our own. The collection of ancient artifacts, consisting of over 120 000 exhibits, was truly remarkable. The room containing the fabulous death mask and jewelry of Tutenkhamun was a favourite and the less squeamish of us ogled over 3 000 year old mummies of several pharaohs and queens. It was very difficult to select a favoured artifacts, there was simply too much from which to choose! Afterwards we enjoyed lunch at a restaurant on a stationary boat on the Nile. In the late afternoon we flew to Jordan, staying in the capital, Amman.





The Step Pyramid of Zoser

Pharaoh Eagle Owl

*Day 18, 18<sup>th</sup> April: Amman to Petra via Shaumari Reserve and the Azraq Wetland.*

An early start and we were soon at the Shaumari Breeding Centre for endangered mammal species of the Middle East. Our drive produced smartly plumaged Temminck's Horned Larks, several Eurasian Rollers and a Lesser Gray Shrike. At the centre we saw the stunning Scimitar-horned Oryx, Arabian Ass or Onager and Ostrich. Other birds around or nearby the centre included Long-legged Buzzard, a male Eurasian Marsh Harrier, Common Redstart, an immature Hooded Wheatear and flocks of Ortolan Buntings. Our journey out of Shaumari was highlighted by a spectacular Greater Hoopoe Lark feeding next to scrub, the white in the wings was noticeable in flight. Arriving in the late afternoon at our hotel we were pleased from the hotel reception to find an eye-level Bonelli's Eagle.

*Day 19, 19<sup>th</sup> April: Petra.*

An early start produced Thrush Nightingale and a fly-by pair of Rock Partridge, we then headed back for breakfast. Petra in Jordan is one of the world's most remarkable antiquities and regarded as the most astounding ancient city left to the modern world. This ancient capital of the Nabataeans' housed an estimated 30,000 people in its heyday and was manually hewn from the blood-red cliffs of the sandstone Sharrah Mountains. Petra flourished as a vast trading city and controlled a large part of the "Incense Route" thus profiting from the trade between the Greeks, Persians, Medes and Egyptians. The Nabataean's were at their peak from the 3rd century before Christ until the 1st century after Christ when Petra was annexed by the Romans. Several earthquakes and the rerouting of the main trade routes sidelined Petra until it was finally abandoned and remained hidden and forgotten for many centuries until its dramatic rediscovery in the early 19th century by German explorer Johann Burckhardt. Petra's intricately carved multistory temples and buildings became familiar to many people when it was used as the set for Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade and from the cover of National Geographic Magazine. This is without a doubt, the most "must-see" site in the entire Middle East.

The journey to the ancient city starts off with a kilometer walk to the Siq entrance. Some people walked, others decided to be cowboys and cowgirls and took a guided horse ride down the path. The Siq is a two-kilometer long narrow crevasse through tall canyon walls. The rock is sandstone that has many varieties of dramatic colour patterns. Here and there are rock carvings, tombs and statues of gods. At the end of this very long tunnel of rock one sees blaze of pink sandstone, and then it appears...the first glimpse of the impressive Treasury. This stone-carved building is approximately 88 foot tall and was extremely well preserved considering the soft sandstone from which it was hewn. The Treasury was built from the top to bottom; this may explain how they were able to carve such tall structures without modern tools. There is not much to see in the small hollow chambers inside this building, the main attraction is the elaborate facade.

Our guide then took us further into the old city and it was amazing to see how many rock-cut tombs there were. We all went to a nice little restaurant for lunch after which our antiquities guide was happy to send us on our own ways. Some people just explored more of the main area, some people shopped, some climbed up to the high viewpoint from where the entire area could be seen, and others decided to endure the 800-step climb up



the mountain to see the Monastery. There are also structures built when the Romans took over the area, the original stone pathway is still there, and the Roman amphitheatre is quite impressive. The birding at Petra was also excellent with migrating Common Buzzards and Steppe Eagles, Fan-tailed Raven, Blue Rock Thrush and a good find was the much sought after Scrub Warbler. A late afternoon visit to a nearby orchard was good with Thrush Nightingale scoped, Eurasian Blackbird, Linnet, Blackcap and Ortolan Bunting.



The Treasury, Petra



The Monastery, Petra

#### Day 20, 20<sup>th</sup> April Petra to Amman

For several participants there was still time for some last minute birding. We had planned a tour to the Amman NP on our return to the capital. Highlights here were the strikingly plumaged Eurasian Jay of the *atricapillus* race, Spectacled Warbler, singing Corn Buntings, Woodchat Shrike and a brief European Cuckoo.

## Annotated Checklists of Birds and Mammals

**Birds:** nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. F. Clements *Birds of the World: A Checklist* 5<sup>th</sup> 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*

#### Black-necked Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

4 birds were scoped at our Lock crossing at Esna.

### Pelicans *Pelecanidae*

#### Great White Pelican

*Pelecanus onocrotalus*



6 birds were seen on our first afternoon at Abu Simbel, flying over Lake Nasser.

### Cormorants & Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

#### **Great Cormorant**

#### *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Small flocks were seen at Abu Simbel and on our Nile boat cruise with a high count of 20 near Aswan.

*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*

Regularly recorded at most wetland sites and along the Nile River with highest daily count of 45+ between Aswan and Edfu.

#### **Purple Heron**

#### *Ardea purpurea*

Commonly recorded on our Nile cruise with a high count of 40 between Esna and Luxor.

*NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands A. p. bournei is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.*

#### **Great Egret**

#### *Ardea alba*

Irregularly recorded with a high count of three birds between Aswan and Edfu.

*NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World A. a. egretta which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.*

#### **Western Reef-Egret**

#### *Egretta gularis*

Three birds were seen at on our snorkeling day to Gifton Island, three more birds were seen at a wetland near our resort in Hurghada.

*NOTE: Clements used to lump Little, Western Reef E. gularis and Madagascar's Dimorphic Egret E. dimorpha into a single species. Clements has now placed E gularis as a full species, Western Reef-Egret, which we recorded in Egypt.*

#### **Little Egret**

#### *Egretta garzetta*

Regularly recorded at water bodies with highest number being 100+ on our Nile Valley cruise from Esna to Luxor.

*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*

Regularly recorded at most wetland sights and along the Nile River where we recorded a high count of 200+ between Edfu and Luxor.

#### **Cattle Egret**

#### *Bubulcus ibis*

Regularly recorded throughout Egypt in small numbers with highest number being over 300 in breeding colonies en route to Gabel Asfar.

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

#### **Striated Heron**

#### *Butorides striata*

2 were found by John at Crocodile Island.

*NOTE: This species group is treated by Clements as 2 species, the nominate Striated Heron and Little Green Heron of North America ( B. sundevalli Lava Heron of the Galapagos has recently been lumped into Striated Heron.) Other authorities lump all three forms into a single species, called Green-backed Heron (as per Handbook of Birds of the World.)*

#### **Black-crowned Night-Heron**

#### *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Regularly recorded on the Nile with highest count of 30+ at Abu Simbel where we were treated to superb views.

#### **Little Bittern**

#### *Ixobrychus minutus*

This skulking species was seen well during our tour, a single bird was located by John at our boat launch at Aswan and another at Crocodile Island which the whole group saw in flight and then quickly disappearing into the reeds.



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## Storks *Ciconidae*

**Yellow-billed Stork***Mycteria ibis*

5 birds were seen flying from Lake Nasser. This is the only site in Egypt where they are regularly recorded.

**Black Stork***Ciconia nigra*

An individual was seen at Aswan and loose groups comprising 25+ birds were seen high above the mountain at Fowsyz's Café, Suez, whilst watching migrating raptors.

**White Stork***Ciconia ciconia*

Seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt with our highest count being 4,000 circling in "kettles" in the Ain Sukhna area.

## Ibises & Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae*

**Glossy Ibis***Plegadis falcinellus*

Small flocks were seen during our Nile boat cruise with further sightings at Lake Fayoum and Gabel Asfar.

**Eurasian Spoonbill***Platalea leucorodia*

One flock of 24 were seen flying in v-formation to Lake Nasser, a trip exclusive.

## Flamingos *Phoenicopteridae*

**Greater Flamingo***Phoenicopterus ruber*

19 birds were seen flying at Lake Nasser.

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

## Swans, Geese & Ducks *Anatidae*

**Egyptian Goose***Alopochen aegyptiacus*

10+ were seen on the shoreline of Lake Nasser. In Egypt this species is only found in the south of the country around Abu Simbel

**Garganey***Anas querquedula*

8 birds were seen on our Nile boat cruise to Kom Ombo.

**Northern Shoveler***Anas clypeata*

Seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt with our highest count being 200+ between Edfu and Luxor.

**Common Pochard***Aythya ferina*

Three birds were seen at the loch at Esna.

**Tufted Duck***Aythya fuligula*

Three birds were seen near Edfu and an individual at the loch at Esna on our Nile River cruise.

## Osprey *Pandionidae*

**Osprey***Pandion haliaetus*

Seen at Abu Simbel, Aswan and Hurgada where we were treated to excellent fly-by looks.

## Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures *Accipitridae*

**Black-shouldered Kite***Elanus caeruleus*

We enjoyed our first views of this attractive species from our boat cruise on the Nile with a further sighting of 6 birds in the farmlands to and from the Valley of the Kings.



**Black Kite***Milvus migrans*

This Inter-African migrant breeds in Egypt and is often considered a distinct species, Yellow-billed Kite *M. parasitus*. This raptor was recorded on most days of the tour with highest numbers being over 50+ migrating in the Ain Sukhna area.

NOTE: Clements treats Yellow-billed and Black Kite as one species.

**Egyptian Vulture***Neophron percnopterus*

We enjoyed superb views of an immature at a carcass at Ain Sukhna. A further 10 birds mainly adults were seen migrating at Ain Sukhna.

**Eurasian Griffon***Gyps fulvus*

A singleton circling with White Storks above the Aswan Low Dam.

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

30+ were seen migrating in the Ain Sukhna area. Most sightings were of individuals and we had a further sighting of a single bird at the Saqqara Pyramid.

NOTE: This superspecies, consisting of three species, Short-toed *C. gallicus*, Beaudouin's *C. beaudouini* and Black-breasted *C. pectoralis* Snake-Eagle, is often considered a single species, which is then named Short-toed Snake-Eagle.

**Western Marsh-Harrier***Circus aeruginosus*

4 female birds were recorded on our Nile Valley cruise and finally a male seen at Shaumari Game Reserve in Jordan.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk***Accipiter nisus*

20+ were found migrating along the Abu Shir Mountain range at Hurghada, others were seen at Sharm El Shiek and at Fowsy'z Café at Ain Sukhna where we had 10+.

**Eurasian Buzzard***Buteo buteo*

Recorded in the Suez area (a well known raptor migration route) where a high count of 13,000+ birds was made during one day. Smaller numbers were seen migrating elsewhere in Egypt and through the Petra Valley in Jordan (120+).

NOTE: The subspecies which we mostly encountered is the northern breeding *B. b. vulpinus*, sometimes regarded as a separate species; Western Steppe Buzzard, from the nominate Common Buzzard and three other incipient groups in eastern Asia. Clements does not as yet recognise any of these splits.

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

Singletons were seen migrating at several sites in Egypt with the highest count being 6 at Ain Sukhna. A further sighting was of 2 birds at Shaumari Game Reserve where they are breeding residents.

**Lesser Spotted Eagle***Aquila pomarina*

10 birds were seen at Ain Sukhna and a further individual was seen at Petra in Jordan.

Note: Race *hastata* of Lesser Spotted Eagle is raised to species level, Indian Spotted Eagle *A. hastata*.

**Greater Spotted Eagle***Aquila clanga*

We had good views of an adult bird at Ain Sukhna. This is the scarcest of the "Aquila eagles" with a world population of less than 2000 birds.

**Steppe Eagle***Aquila nipalensis*

Three birds were found resting at the Abu Shir Mountain range at Hurghada. A further 150+ birds were seen on our full-day in the Ain Sukhna area and at Fowzy's Café. 12 birds were seen on our day visit to the city of Petra.

NOTE: The Western Steppe Eagle *A. n. orientalis* which we recorded, may be split from the Eastern Steppe Eagle *A. n. nipalensis*. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

**Imperial Eagle***Aquila heliaca*

An immature bird was seen at Ain Sukhna.

**Bonelli's Eagle***Hieraaetus fasciatus*

We were fortunate in finding an immature flying in the late afternoon at our hotel in Petra. We had excellent eye-level views from the hotel reception.

**Booted Eagle***Aquila pennatus*

Pale and dark morph individuals were seen amongst migrating Common Buzzards at the Abu Shir Mountains, Hurghada with a further sighting of 6 birds at Ain Sukhna.



## Falcons & Caracaras *Falconidae*

### **Eurasian Kestrel**

*Falco tinnunculus*

Regularly recorded, almost daily, in small numbers throughout Egypt with highest numbers being 10 on our full day in Hurghada.

*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 which occurs in Southern Africa. Clements does not as yet recognize these splits*

### **Eurasian Hobby**

*Falco subbuteo*

A single bird was seen by Ron, Fraser and Erik at the Amman NP in Jordan on the 21/4.

### **Lanner Falcon**

*Falco biarmicus*

We had excellent views of a singleton at Hurghada.

### **Barbary Falcon**

*Falco pelegrinoides*

We enjoyed excellent but brief views of a bird trying to catch a Eurasian Hoopoe at Abu Simbel. A further sighting was of a pair at the new sewage plant at Sharm El Shiek.

## Pheasants & Quails *Phasianidae*

### **Rock Partridge**

*Alectoris graeca*

2 birds were seen in flight at Petra in Jordan.

### **Common Quail**

*Coturnix coturnix*

A single was seen at Hurghada and another flushed at Wadi Hagul.

## Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

### **Purple Swamphen**

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

Fairly common on the Nile River where the highest count of 15 birds were made at Crocodile Island.

*NOTE: This cosmopolitan species is currently in taxonomic review and several forms are expected to be recognised as distinct species. The form we recorded would then become African Swamphen (P. madagascariensis.) Other forms to be recognised may include Indian Swamphen (P. poliocephalus,) Philippine Swamphen (P. pulverulentus) and Eastern Swamphen (P. melanotus).*

### **Common Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

Seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt with the highest count of 500+ on the Nile cruise between Edfu and Luxor.

### **Eurasian Coot**

*Fulica atra*

4 birds were seen on our Nile cruise at the loch at Esna with a further sighting of three at El Fayoum.

### **Spotted Crake**

*Porzana porzana*

We enjoyed good views of a single bird at a freshwater marsh at Abu Simbel.

### **Baillon's Crake**

*Porzana pusillus*

Excellent views were had of at least 2 individuals at the freshwater marsh at Abu Simbel.

### **Little Crake**

*Porzana parva*

Unbelievably! our third crake species at this marsh. We had brief but good views of a female and then a male.

## Painted-Snipe *Rostratulidae*

### **Greater Painted-snipe**

*Rostratula benghalensis*

We enjoyed excellent and close flight views of a female bird found by John at a wetland in Abu Simbel.



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### Stilts & Avocets *Recurvirostridae*

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

Seen at scattered wetland sites with highest count being 50 on our Nile cruise from Esna to Luxor.

### Thick-knees *Burhinidae*

**Senegal Thick-knee***Burhinus senegalensis*

We had good looks at 2 birds on Crocodile Island, Luxor and a further sighting was at El Fayoum.

**[Eurasian Thick-knee***Burhinus oediconemus*]

A singleton found by Ron in the Amman NP during an extra day in Jordan

### Coursers & Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

**Collared Pratincole***Glareola pratincola*

Three birds were seen on the golf course at Hurghada.

### Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae*

**Spur-winged Plover***Vanellus spinosus*

The commonest wetland lapwing occurring at virtually every wetland, the highest count being over 40 on our Nile Cruise between Aswan and Edfu.

**Black-bellied Plover***Pluvialis squatarola*

Three seen at El Fayoum.

**Common Ringed Plover***Charadrius haiticula*

A single at Lake Nasser, 2 daily at Hurghada and another at El Fayoum.

**Little Ringed Plover***Charadrius dubius*

A single at Lake Nasser and 10+ were seen at the Sharm El Sheik sewage works.

**Snowy (Kentish) Plover***Charadrius alexandrinus*

A single at Giftun Island and 6 at an inland wetland, Hurghada.

**Greater Sandplover***Charadrius leschenaultii*

A stunning individual in full breeding dress was seen at the Ras Mohammed NP, Hurghada .

### Sandpipers & Allies *Scolopacidae*

**Common Snipe***Gallinago gallinago*

5 were flushed at Lake Nasser and a single at Crocodile Island.

*Note: New World race delicata of Common Snipe has been raised to species level, Wilson's Snipe Gallinago delicata.*

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

2 birds were seen on our Nile cruise between Edfu and Esna.

**Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus*

A single at Hurghada and another at the Ras Mohammed NP.

**Eurasian Curlew***Numenius arquata*

A singleton of these long-billed waders seen at the Ras Mohammed NP.

**Spotted Redshank***Tringa erythropus*

15, including 4 in all black full breeding plumage at El Fayoum.

**Common Redshank***Tringa totanus*

A single at the Sharm El Sheik Sewage Works was a trip exclusive.

**Marsh Sandpiper***Tringa stagnatilis*

2 seen on Lake Nasser and another 10 at El Fayoum.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with the highest count being 7 at the Sharm El Sheik sewage works.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Three at Hurghada and three at the Sharm El Shiek sewage plant.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with highest count being 6+ at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with highest counts being 15+ at Lake Nasser.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

A single bird was found at Abu Simbel.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

6 birds in winter plumage were at a wetland in Hurghada.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

2 birds seen briefly at El Fayoum.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Recorded in small numbers scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt.

### Gulls Laridae

**White-eyed Gull** *Larus leucophthalmus*

This strikingly marked gull was only recorded at the Red Sea where it was common and seen daily with highest count of over 100 birds.

**Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii*

10+ birds were seen at Hurghada.

**Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans*

Up to 8 birds were seen at Suez at an island offshore and at the water treatment works.

**Armenian Gull** *Larus armenicus*

2 individuals were identified at the Suez water treatment works, showing the dark marks on the bills, separating them from the above species.

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

30 birds were seen at Suez.

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

Recorded in good numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt with 100+ daily on our Nile boat cruise

**Slender-billed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*

Recorded at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high count of 150 at El Fayoum. Many were in beautiful pink breeding plumage.

### Terns Sternidae

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

Recorded daily at Lake Nasser and along the Nile River.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*

6 seen on the Red Sea at Hurghada and a single bird at Suez

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

30 on our boat trip of Hurghada and 10 at Suez.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*



8 of Hurghada, 6 at Suez and 8+ at El Fayoum.

**Lesser Crested Tern** *Sterna bengalensis*

A singleton was scoped at Hurghada.

**Greater Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii*

Two birds were seen at Hurghada.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus*

Recorded at scattered localities throughout Egypt with a high count of 1000 on our Nile boat trip between Edfu and Luxor.

### Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

**Crowned Sandgrouse** *Pterocles coronatus*

We enjoyed good views of 20 birds at the “Camel Station”, Abu Simbel.

### Doves & Pigeons Columbidae

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Commonly seen at scattered localities throughout the trip. Many of the birds seen in the Sinai were truly wild and pure-bred Rock Pigeons and can be safely ticked by the purist!

**Eurasian Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

Seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt with a high count of 50+ at Abu Simbel.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

First recorded at Sharm El Sheik with further sightings at Suez, El Fayoum and in Jordan.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Commonly recorded, almost daily, at many scattered sites throughout Egypt and high counts of 50+ birds on several days.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis*

2 birds were seen briefly by Ron and Erik at the Azraq Wetland Reserve.

### Parrots Psittacidae

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

8 birds were seen in Cairo by participants who had arrived a day early. Another 2 birds were seen at Gabel Asfar.

**Alexandrine Parakeet** *Psittacula eupatria*

10 birds were seen in Cairo by participants who had arrived a day early.

### Cuckoos Cuculidae

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

2 birds were seen flying at Shaumari Game Reserve, unfortunately only seen by a few. A further bird was seen in the Amman NP.

### Typical Owls Strigidae

**Pharaoh (Desert) Eagle-Owl** *Bubo ascalaphus*

A magnificent adult was seen at the Step Pyramid at Sakkara. What views through the scope we enjoyed!

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

We were fortunate to find one of these cute owls sitting out in the open at El Fayoum.



### Swifts *Apodidae*

#### **Common Swift**

5 at Abu Simbel and 10+ at Luxor.

*Apus apus*

#### **Pallid Swift**

Recorded at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high count of 30 birds in the Valley of the Kings. We were treated to superb views of low flying birds at Crocodile Island.

*Apus pallidus*

### Kingfishers *Alcedinidae*

#### **Common Kingfisher**

One of these beauties was found at Abu Simbel.

*Alcedo atthis*

#### **White-throated Kingfisher**

4+ at Gebel Asfar where we were treated to scope views of this stunning bird, one of Egypt's most colorful.

*Halcyon smyrnensis*

#### **Pied Kingfisher**

Commonly recorded at wetland sites throughout Egypt and highest count being 40+ at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

*Ceryle rudis*

### Bee-eaters *Meropidae*

#### **Green Bee-eater**

Small numbers of these beauties were seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt. Our highest count of 8 was obtained at Crocodile Island.

*Merops orientalis*

#### **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater**

We obtained good views of 6 birds at the Saqqara Pyramids.

*Merops persicus*

#### **European Bee-eater**

5 birds flew over our boat on the Nile near Esna.

*Merops apiaster*

### Rollers *Coraciidae*

#### **Eurasian Roller**

2 of these stunning birds were seen at Shaumari and 3 were seen in the Amman NP in Jordan.

*Coracias garrulus*

### Hoopoes *Upupidae*

#### **Eurasian Hoopoe**

Small numbers seen on almost every day of the tour, at scattered sites throughout Egypt, and the highest count being 30 around Crocodile Island, Luxor. Many were breeding and observed to be carrying food and disappearing into nest holes.

*Upupa epops*

*NOTE: Clements only recognises two species of Hoopoe; Eurasian U. epops and Madagascar U. marginata. One further species, is widely recognised namely African U. africana and a 4<sup>th</sup> is sometimes recognised, West/Central African U. senegalensis. We only recorded the nominate Palearctic form U. e. epops.*

### Woodpeckers & Allies *Picidae*

#### **Eurasian Wryneck**

Good views of this species were had in Cairo, Abu Simbel and Crocodile Island, Luxor. We had excellent views of a bird feeding at the Sharm El Shiek sewage plant.

*Jynx torquilla*



## Larks *Alaudidae*

**Bar-tailed Lark***Ammomanes cincturus*

A single bird was located by its song at Wadi Hagul. The song reminded us of a windmill turning!

**Desert Lark***Ammomanes deserti*

2 at St Katherine, 4+ at Wadi Hagul and finally several sightings at Petra.

**Greater Hoopoe-Lark***Alaemon alaudipes*

One bird was seen by Ron in the early evening on our journey to Ain Sukhna. We all enjoyed good scope views of a bird at Shaumari Game Reserve in Jordan. In flight the upper wings showed the large white secondaries flashes.

**Greater Short-toed Lark***Calandrella brachydactyla*

10 birds were seen on the El Gouna golf course at Sharm El Shiek.

**Temminck's Lark***Eremophila bilopha*

Up to 6 of these stunning birds were seen at Shaumari in Jordan.

**Crested Lark***Galerida cristata*

Recorded at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Jordan.

## Swallows *Hirundinidae*

**Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)***Riparia riparia*

Flocks were seen at several scattered sites, the largest numbers being 100+ around Gabel Asfar

**Eurasian Crag-Martin***Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

40 birds were seen at Petra.

**Rock Martin***Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

Regularly seen throughout Egypt with the highest numbers being 30+ on the rocky cliffs at Lake Nasser.

*Note: Rock Martin and Pale Crag-Martin are merged into a single species: Rock Martin Ptyonoprogne fuligula. Race birwae is now considered synonymous with bansoensis; race rufigula now considered synonymous with fusciventris; race peloplasta now considered synonymous with pallida. del Hoyo et al. 2004. op. cit.*

**Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica*

Recorded in large numbers on nearly every day of the tour, the largest count being 250+ on our Nile cruise from Edfu to Luxor. The Egyptian race *r. savignii* which are a deep rusty reddish color were seen on several occasions at scattered sites and we observed flocks of migrating white-bellied Palearctic birds.

*NOTE: This cosmopolitan species complex is likely to be split based on the Old World nominate form and its congeners which would become Eurasian Swallow *H. rustica* and the New World Barn Swallow *H. erythrogaster*. Further splitting within the group may also be done e.g. the distinctive *H. r. savignii* which breeds in the Nile Valley and would be named Egyptian Swallow. We recorded representatives of the Palearctic migrant Barn/Eurasian Swallow as well as reddish bellied resident birds on our Egypt tour. Clements does not as yet recognise any of these splits.*

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

Seen in small numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high count of 20+ at Ain Sukhna.

**House Martin***Delichon urbica*

Small numbers at scattered sites with a high of 20+ at Ain Sukhna.

## Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae*

**White Wagtail***Motacilla alba*

Small numbers seen almost daily throughout Egypt with the highest numbers being 15+ on our visit to the sewage plant at Sharm El Shiek.

**African Pied Wagtail***Motacilla aguimp*

2 birds were seen at Lake Nasser. At their only known site in Egypt.

**(Western) Yellow Wagtail***Motacilla flava*

Small numbers seen almost daily throughout Egypt with the highest numbers being 1000+ dropping into the reedbed at Abu Simbel The attractive and distinctive black-headed, waterside-dwelling *M. f. feldeggi* was frequently recorded during our tour.

*NOTE: Some authorities have recently split the Yellow Wagtail complex into 2 full species, Eastern and Western Yellow Wagtail. Clements does not recognize this split as yet. The feldeggi race we observed may also be split off as Black-headed Wagtail.*

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

2 at Abu Simbel, 5+ at the El Gouna golf course and 2 at Wadi Hagul.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

A single in Cairo and 2 at Hurghada.

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

Seen at scattered sites with a high count of 40 on the El Gouna golf course, Hurghada.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

The commonest pipit on migration with several seen at Lake Nasser, at Hurghada and at Ain Sukhna. Our highest count was of 50 birds on the golf courses at the El Gouna resort, Hurghada.

### Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae*

**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*

Seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt.

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

**White-spectacled Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

4 birds at Wadi Fieran and several seen at Petra.

### Thrushes & Allies *Turdidae*

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

A single male spotted by Ron at the El Gouna Golf course, Hurghada and a female/immature at St Katherine.

**Blue Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

6 birds were enjoyed inside the ancient city of Petra including 2 strikingly plumaged males.

**Eurasian Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

2 males seen and heard in Cairo. This species was also recorded in Petra, Jordan.

### Cisticolas & Allies *Cisticolidae*

**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*

Several birds were seen en route to the Valley of the Kings, at Crocodile Island and lastly a single at Gabel Asfar.

**Streaked Scrub-Warbler** *Scotocerca inquieta*

A bird was watched well in Petra where it was observed carrying nesting material to a nest site.

**Graceful Prinia** *Prinia gracilis*

Commonly seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt. Our first birds were seen at Abu Simbel.

### Old World Warblers *Sylviidae*

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Seen in reedbeds at several sites. First recorded at Abu Simbel.

**Eurasian Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common at Lake Nasser and Crocodile Island, Luxor with a further sighting of an individual at Ain Sukhna.



**Marsh Warbler*****Acrocephalus palustris***

Seen and heard in song at scattered reedbeds throughout. Our highest count was of 30 birds at Abu Simbel.

**Clamorous Reed-Warbler*****Acrocephalus stentoreus***

This large warbler was first heard and then seen at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler*****Hippolais pallida***

A common species seen at scattered localities throughout Egypt and Jordan.

*Note: Olivaceous Warbler is split into two species. Monotypic Western Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais opaca*, and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* with races *elaica*, *reiseri* and *laeneni*.*

**Booted Warbler*****Hippolais caligata***

Excellent close views were had of this confiding bird in the grounds of our hotel in Cairo. All the diagnostic features could be seen: small size (just bigger than Willow Warbler), light brown in colour with flesh-coloured legs and dark feet. A rare and infrequently recorded bird in Egypt!

**Willow Warbler*****Phylloscopus trochilus***

6+ at Abu Simbel, 2 at Hurghada, 2 at St Katherine and 2 in Petra, Jordan.

**Common Chiffchaff*****Phylloscopus collybita***

20 each in Cairo and Abu Simbel, three at Hurghada and 2 at Ain Sukhna.

*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*.*

**Eastern Bonelli's Warbler*****Phylloscopus orientalis***

2 in Cairo, 2-4 at Abu Simbel and another 2 at Hurghada.

*NOTE: Bonelli's Warbler has been split into two species. Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* and Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis*.*

**Blackcap*****Sylvia atricapilla***

We had good views of 2 at the monastery at St Katherine. It was common in Jordan where it is a breeding resident.

**Greater Whitethroat*****Sylvia communis***

An immature bird was seen at Wadi Hagul.

**Lesser Whitethroat*****Sylvia curruca***

Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and the highest count being 20+ at Abu Simbel.

**Rueppell's Warbler*****Sylvia rueppelli***

A stunning male in our hotel grounds in Cairo and another male at Abu Simbel.

**Subalpine Warbler*****Sylvia cantillans***

A strikingly plumaged male was found in our hotel grounds in Cairo.

**[Spectacled Warbler*****Sylvia conspicillata*]**

Excellent scope views were had of this attractive species at the Amman NP. Seen by a few participants that had an extra day in Jordan.

### Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

**Collared Flycatcher*****Ficedula albicollis***

A beautifully plumaged male was found in Cairo and another at St Katherine's. A female *ficedula* was seen by Sally and Erik at Hurghada was believed to be this species.

**Thrush Nightingale*****Luscinia luscinia***

A single was located at Abu Simbel and several birds in orchards and gardens around or near our hotel in Petra.

**Common Nightingale*****Luscinia megarhynchos***

Three birds were found at our hotel grounds in Cairo.

**Bluethroat*****Luscinia svecica***

Three daily at the freshwater marsh in Abu Simbel. We had a further sighting of a bird at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

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

Singelton's were seen at our hotel grounds in Cairo and Sally found one at Crocodile Island, Luxor.



**Common Redstart***Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Singelton's in Cairo and at Ain Sukhna and three in Jordan.

**Whinchat***Saxicola rubetra*

2 at Crocodile Island, 4 at a compost farm, Hurghada and 2 in the Amman NP, Jordan.

**White-tailed (White-crowned Black) Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucopyga*

Several birds at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high of 20 on our drive from St Katherine to Ain Sukhna.

**Hooded Wheatear***Oenanthe monacha*

2 birds were seen by Ron on our drive from St Katherine to Ain Sukhna. We eventually found an immature or female bird at Shaumari in Jordan.

**Northern Wheatear***Oenanthe oenanthe*

Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and the highest count being 20 at Lake Nasser.

*NOTE: The North-West African race may be split off as Black-throated Wheatear O. seebohmi. The Palearctic migrant forms which we recorded would remain within the nominate group.*

**Mourning Wheatear***Oenanthe lugens*

Several birds were seen at Wadi Hagul and around the ancient city of Petra.

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

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

Several birds were seen throughout Egypt. Our first sighting was in our hotel grounds in Cairo.

**Isabelline Wheatear***Oenanthe isabellina*

2-3 at Abu Simbel, and singelton's at Hurghada and at Wadi Hagul.

**Blackstart***Cercomela melanura*

2 were seen at Wadi Fieran, a trip exclusive.

**Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectarinidae****Nile Valley Sunbird***Hedydipna metallica*

4 birds were seen on our visit to the Temple of Philae. We particularly enjoyed our first sighting of a male in stunning plumage displaying to a female at a nest. A further 30+ birds were seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

**Palestine Sunbird***Cinnyris oseus*

A pair were seen at Wadi Fieran and several birds were seen in Petra, Jordan.

**Shrikes Laniidae****Southern Gray Shrike***Lanius meridionalis*

A single bird was seen from the bus en route to Wadi Hagul.

*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 Egypt during our tour. Clements recognises the split from Northern Shrike but not the further splits of the Southern Gray Shrike group.*

**Lesser Gray Shrike***Lanius minor*

A single was seen at Shuamari reserve in Jordan.

**Masked Shrike***Lanius nubicus*

Seen in small numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Petra with a high count of 4+ at Abu Simbel.

**Woodchat Shrike***Lanius senator*

First seen at Abu Simbel and recorded at several sites thereafter. Also found in the Amman NP, Jordan, where it is a breeding resident.

**Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae****House Crow***Corvus splendens*

Encountered at Ain Sukhna and Suez where they were common.

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus corone*

Commonly seen throughout the tour with a high count of 500 on our Nile cruise between Edfu, and Luxor.

*Note: Carrion Crow is split into two species. Carrion Crow Corvus corone and Hooded Crow Corvus cornix. The race orientalis of Hooded Crow, from central and eastern Asia, overlaps locally with C. cornix in Siberia with only limited hybridization, suggesting that it also is a separate species.*

**Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis*

Regularly encountered at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Jordan, the highest count being 25+ between Petra and Amman.

**Fan-tailed Raven** *Corvus rhipidurus*

15+ birds were seen on our visit to the ancient city of Petra.

**[Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius atricapillus]*

Up to 10 of these attractive birds were seen at the Amman NP for a few participants that had an extra day in Jordan.

### Starlings *Sturnidae*

**Tristram's Starling** *Onychognathus tristramii*

10 were seen on the walls of St Katherine's monastery.

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Several large flocks were seen in Cairo.

### Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Commonly seen throughout the tour with up to 200+ seen daily in Cairo.

**Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*

15+ of these attractively marked birds were seen at our hotel in Cairo with a further three in the Amman NP in Jordan.

### Waxbills & Allies *Estrildidae*

**Red Avadavat** *Amandava amandava*

We enjoyed excellent views of at least 30+ birds on Crocodile Island, Luxor.

**Indian Silverbill** *Eodice malabarica*

6 birds were seen at Gezira Sports Club, Cairo by a few early participants.

### Siskins, Crossbills & Allies *Fringillidae*

**Pale (Sinai) Rosefinch** *Carpodacus synoicus*

10 birds were seen at St Katherine, including a stunning male. 4 birds were seen at Petra in Jordan.

**European Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

A singleton at St Katherine's and 30+ around Petra.

**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

2 birds were seen at our hotel in Cairo.

**Eurasian Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

A female bird in Cairo and several pairs in Petra.

**Trumpeter Finch** *Rhodopechys githaginea*

12 birds were seen in the Valley of the Kings and a singleton at St Katherine.



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### Buntings *Emberizidae*

**[Corn Bunting***Miliaria calandra*

A singing male was seen and heard in the Amman NP by a few participants with the extra day in Jordan.

**Ortolan Bunting***Emberiza hortulana*

Singelton's were seen in Hurghada and at Ain Sukhna and several small flocks were recorded at Petra and the Amman NP in Jordan.

## MAMMALS

### Dogs & Allies *Canidae*

**Red Fox***Vulpes vulpes*

We had excellent scope looks at a pair at the Saqqara Pyramid near Cairo.

### Dolphins *Delphinidae*

**Common Dolphin***Delphinus delphis*

A mother and calf were seen well on our boat trip to Giftun Island.

**Bottle-nosed Dolphin***Tursiops truncatus*

12 were seen close to shore, allowing excellent views at Ain Sukhna on the Red Sea.

### Rats *Muridae*

**Brown Rat***Rattus norvegicus*

A few were seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

### Bovids & Horned Ungulates *Bovidae*

**Scimitar-horned Oryx***Oryx dammah*

Up to 30 of these attractive ungulates was seen at the Shaumari Breeding Centre in Jordan.

### Odd – Toed Ungulates *Perissodactyla*

**Wild Ass (Onager)***Equus hemionus*

Up to 5 were seen at the Shaumari Breeding Centre in Jordan.

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