This report covers a birding trip to the United Arab Emirates in late February 2005 made by the Norwegian quartet Gunnar Gundersen, Jarl Nystøm, 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 hasty 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. 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 19th 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 19th 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  Common Mynah 2
Mistle Thrush 1  Bank Mynah 20
Graceful Warbler 5  House Sparrow 500+
Purple Sunbird 5+  Indian Silverbill 6
Isabelline Shrike 2  Corn Bunting 3
Starling 7

**Wimpey Pits, Dubai. Feb 19th 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!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little Grebe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-necked Grebe</td>
<td>50+</td>
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<td>Glossy Ibis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teal</td>
<td>c.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
<td>c.20</td>
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<td>Pintail</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoveler</td>
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<td>c.10</td>
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<td>Moorhen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-winged Stilt</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentish Plover</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-wattled Lapwing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>White-tailed Plover</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Stint</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temminck’s Stint</td>
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<td>Common Sandpiper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-headed Gull</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chlidonias sp</td>
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<td>Collared Dove</td>
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<td>Palm Dove</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Sand Martin</td>
<td>c.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swallow</td>
<td>c.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-rumped Swallow</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Wagtail</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Mushrif Park, Dubai (A6). Feb 19th 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 20th 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.

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

Ras Dibba (G5). Feb 20th 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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird Species</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socotra Cormorant</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reef Heron 5+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great White Egret</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Heron 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenshank 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sooty Gull 5+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slender-billed Gull c.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caspian Gull 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift Tern 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Dove 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale Crag Martin 3-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-cheeked Bulbul 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desert Wheatear 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Sunbird 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Sparrow 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Dibba Breakwater (G6). Feb 20th 1240 – 1300**
A short stop at the Dibba breakwater to look for waders, gulls and terns. Not too exciting.

- 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 20th 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 20th 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 21st 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 21st 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  

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+  

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 21st 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.

Al Wathba Camel Racetrack, Abu Dhabi (B7). Feb 22nd 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 you 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  
Black Kite 1  
Marsh Harrier 3  
Pallid Harrier 3  
Greater Spotted Eagle 1  
Lesser Kestrel 2  
*Peregrine Falcon 1 (with straps)*  
Grey Francolin 50+  
Quail 8  
Stone Curlew 3  
Pacific Golden Plover 66  
Kestrel Plover 20+  
Lesser Sand Plover 1+  
Red-wattled Lapwing 2  
Curlie 6  
Ruff c.30  
Siberian Gull (heuglini) 1  
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse c.70  
Feral Dove c.1000  
Collared Dove 200+  
Palm Dove c.200  
Egyptian Nightjar 10+  
Syke’s Nightjar 1 male  
Pallid Swift 15  
Little Green Bee-eater 2  
Black-crowned Finch Lark 1  
Bimaculated Lark c.70  
Short-toed Lark 100+  
Lesser Short-toed Lark 100+  
Crested Lark c.300  
Skylark 25  
Hoopoe Lark 1

Sand Martin c.30  
Swallow 15  
Red-rumped Swallow 2  
Richard’s Pipit 5  
Tawny Pipit c.80  
Long-billed Pipit 1  
Meadow Pipit 8  
Red-throated Pipit c.40  
Water Pipit c.40  
Yellow Wagtail ssp 25  
Citrine Wagtail 1  
White Wagtail c.30  
White-cheeked Bulbul 3  
Bluethroat 10 (1 white-throated)  
Stonechat 2  
Siberian Stonechat 2  
Isabelline Wheatear c.30  
Pied Wheatear 7  
Desert Wheatear c.30  
Graceful Warbler 3  
Ménétries Warbler 5  
Desert Warbler 6  
Purple Sunbird 2  
Isabelline Shrike 10  
Steppe Grey Shrike (pallidirostris) 2  
Woodchat Shrike 1  
Starling 12  
Common Mynah 4  
House Sparrow 200+  
Indian Silverbill 10  
Corn Bunting 3

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**Dubai Pivot Fields. Feb 23rd 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  
Cattle Egret c.20  
Glossy Ibis 3  
Kestrel 1  
Grey Francolin 15  
Red-wattled Lapwing 5  
White-tailed Plover 3  
Sociable Plover 2  
Collared Dove c.30  
Palm Dove 50+  
Pallid Swift 3  
Hoopoe 5  
Black-crowned Finch Lark 4  
Short-toed Lark 10  
Lesser Short-toed Lark 5+  
Crested Lark c.40
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oriental (Small) Skylark</td>
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<td>Skylark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard’s Pipit</td>
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<td>Tawny Pipit</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-throated Pipit</td>
<td>c.30</td>
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<td>Water Pipit</td>
<td>c.20</td>
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<td>Bluethroat</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Graceful Warbler</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Sunbird</td>
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<td>Isabelline Shrike</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starling</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Sparrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Silverbill</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
| Emirates Golf Club, Dubai (A4). Feb 23\(^{rd}\) 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 of half the area the day after (Feb 24\(^{th}\)). 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.

<table>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cattle Egret</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Heron</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
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<td>Shoveler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shikra</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>White-breasted Waterhen</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moorhen</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coot</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-winged Stilt</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curlew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marsh Sandpiper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-headed Gull</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collared Dove</td>
<td>c.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm Dove</td>
<td>c.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose-ringed Parakeet</td>
<td>c.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pallid Swift</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Roller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoopoe</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>White-cheeked Bulbul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-vented Bulbul</td>
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<td>Song Thrush</td>
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<td>Chiffchaff</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Grey Shrike</td>
<td>(aucheri) 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Crow</td>
<td>c.200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pied Mynah</td>
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<td>House Sparrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Silverbill</td>
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</table>
Qarn Nazwa, Hatta Road (E2). Feb 24th 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 24th 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Socotra Cormorant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cattle Egret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Reef Heron</td>
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<td>Spoonbill</td>
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<td>Teal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-winged Stilt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentish Plover</td>
<td>c.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser Sand Plover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Sand Plover</td>
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<td>Grey Plover</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunlin</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bar-tailed Godwit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whimbrel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curlew</td>
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<td>Redshank</td>
<td>c.20</td>
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<td>Greenshank</td>
<td>c.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood Sandpiper</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Sandpiper</td>
<td>c.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Black-headed Gull</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-headed Gull</td>
<td>c.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slender-billed Gull</td>
<td>c.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sooty Gull</td>
<td>c.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siberian Gull (heuglini)</td>
<td>c.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caspian Gull</td>
<td>c.100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gull-billed Tern</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser Crested Tern</td>
<td>c.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich Tern</td>
<td>c.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Tern</td>
<td>100+</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Collared Dove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose-ringed Parakeet</td>
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<tr>
<td>White-collared Kingfisher</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Red-rumped Swallow</td>
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<td>Clamorous Reed Warbler</td>
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<td>House Crow</td>
<td>c.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Mynah</td>
<td>c.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Sparrow</td>
<td>c.20</td>
</tr>
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</table>
East Coast (Khor Kalba – Dibba) (G2 + G5-G8). Feb 24th 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 25th 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 25th 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 25th 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+                     Swallow c.15
Collared Dove 5                      House Martin 1
Palm Dove 5                       White-cheeked Bulbul 2
Pallid Swift 1                  Reed Warbler (fuscus) 2
Crested Lark 5                        Striped Weaver 5
Sand Martin c.40

Umm al Qawain Breakwater (C3). Feb 26th 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           Caspian Tern 2
Black-headed Gull 1000+                 Swift Tern 3
Slender-billed Gull c.150             Lesser Crested Tern 10+
Caspian Gull c.25                    Sandwich Tern 200+
Gull-billed Tern 10                   Common Tern c.10

Al Jazeerah Khor, Ras al Khaimah (D1). Feb 26th 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                  Flamingo 15
Saunders’s Little Tern 17                Also few waders and egrets ++
Gull-billed Tern 10

Hamraniyah fields, Ras al Khaimah (D2). Feb 26th 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                         Hoopoe 5
Greater Spotted Eagle 1                  Crested Lark 20
Bonelli’s Eagle 1                        Red-rumped Swallow 2
Sparrowhawk 1                            White-cheeked Bulbul 20
Grey Francolin 5+                       Black Redstart 5
Quail 2                                  Isabelline Wheatear 1
Red-wattled Lapwing 10                   Desert Wheatear 1
Collared Dove 50+                        Eastern Pied Wheatear 1
Palm Dove 70+                             Graceful Warbler 10
Rose-ringed Parakeet 10                  Ménétries’ Warbler 1
Pallid Swift 10                           Eastern Orphean Warbler 1-2
Little Green Bee-eater 150+              Desert Lesser Whitethroat 3
Indian Roller 40+                        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 27th 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 27th 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
Ghantoot (A9). Feb 27th 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…

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).

| 4.  | Great Cormorant                       | 27. | Ferruginous Duck         | 49. | Stone Curlew           |
| 5.  | Socotra Cormorant                     | 28. | Black Kite               | 50. | Little Ringed Plover   |
| 7.  | Little Green Heron                    | 30. | Pallid Harrier           | 52. | Kentish Plover         |
| 8.  | Indian Pond Heron                     | 31. | Greater Spotted Eagle    | 53. | Lesser Sand Plover     |
| 10. | Western Reef Heron                    | 33. | Shikra                   | 55. | Pacific Golden Plover  |
| 11. | Little Egret                          | 34. | Osprey                   | 56. | Grey Plover            |
| 15. | Glossy Ibis                           | 38. | Grey Francolin           | 60. | Great Knot             |
| 17. | Spoonbill                             | 40. | White-breasted           | 62. | Little Stint           |
| 18. | Flamingo                             | 41. | Moorhen                  | 63. | Temminck’s Stint       |
| 19. | Black Swan                            | 42. | Purple Gallinule         | 64. | Curlew Sandpiper       |
| 20. | Egyptian Goose                        | 43. | Red-knobbed Coot         | 65. | Dunlin                 |
| 21. | Wigeon                                | 44. | Coot                     | 66. | Ruff                   |
| 23. | Mallard                               | 46. |                           | 68. | Common Snipe           |

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
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. Lesser Black-backed Gull
86. Caspian Gull
87. Gull-billed Tern
88. Caspian Tern
89. Crested (Swift) Tern
90. Lesser Crested Tern
91. Sandwich Tern
92. Common Tern
93. White-cheeked Tern
94. Saunter’s Little Tern
95. Whiskered / White-winged Tern
96. Whiskered Tern
97. Black Tern
98. Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse
99. Striated (Bruce’s) Scops Owl
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
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. Ménétres’ 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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