

## MOROCCO: Agadir & the Southern Desert

Tue 17th - Tue 24th January 2012

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*Trip photos (clockwise, from top left): This **Levaillant's Woodpecker** was a surprise find, being the first ever recorded in the mountains NE of Agadir • **Black-crowned Tchagra** showed well at Oued Massa • One of many trip highlights was the sight of up to 80 **European Storm Petrels** seen from our boat out of Agadir • The elusive **Scrub Warbler** at Goulimime! • No fewer than 40 **Manx Shearwaters**, officially still a rarity in Moroccan waters, were seen from the boat © all photos Arnoud van den Berg • Getting ready for the off, our launch in Agadir harbour © tour participant Geoff Phillipson.*

**report compiled by tour leader:  
Arnoud van den Berg**

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## Trip Diary

**Tour Leader: Arnoud van den Berg**  
with Cecilia Bosman, Anne & David Lloyd, and Geoff Phillipson

This mid-winter tour to Agadir, with excursions to the north (Tamri), west (the Atlantic by boat), south (Anti Atlas and Goulimime) and east (Paradise Valley and Immouzer), was something 'new'. Usually, birders visit the south-west of Morocco in times of migration, either in spring (March-April) or autumn (September-October). But this January trip turned out to be a really successful tour, fully enjoyed by all of us, not only because of the fine winter weather but also because of a range of excellent birding surprises. The temperatures were always in the low 20s Celsius and the only cold was experienced when crossing the Anti Atlas range to reach Goulimime and climbing into the Atlas mountains up to Immouzer. Otherwise, every day was sunny and warm without much cloud cover and the only wind we experienced was in the afternoon in the desert at Goulimime.

After we all met at the Agadir airport on the morning of 17 January, we travelled directly to our comfortable base, the Oasis Tulip Inn Hotel above Agadir Marina, to have a short rest in our room and then a buffet lunch. In the afternoon, we made our first of three visits to the nearby Oued Souss river mouth. This tidal river always attracts a lot of migrant waders and every day one can find different species. This first afternoon had quite a few good species on offer, some of which we would not see again during the rest of our week, such as two Marbled Ducks, a juvenile Barbary Falcon and some 30 swifts which we tentatively identified as wintering Plain Swift. On the mudflats, while the tide was out, we counted no less than 300 adult Greater Flamingos, 70 White Storks, six Spoonbills, 15 wader species including our only Knots for the week, and a surprising 25 first-winter Mediterranean Gulls. There were also wintering flocks of Meadow Pipit and White Wagtails. Just before dusk, we watched two Barbary Partridges trying to find a way underneath the huge fence surrounding the Royal Palace, and the guards allowed us to admire a Green Sandpiper and some Serins at the royal sewage outfall.

The next day, (18th January), we drove north to look for Bald Ibis. We stopped at three gull flocks on beaches near Taghazoute and Tamri, and counted 300, 50 and 150 Audouin's Gulls, respectively. Geoff noted down 15 colour ring codes, which were all from Spanish colonies, and we will receive the life history of each bird in due course (*see below for the first results*). There were huge numbers - tens of thousands - of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, mostly *intermedius* from the Low Countries and southern Scandinavia, and a few tens of local Yellow-legged Gulls for comparison. There were just a few Sandwich Terns at sea and no other terns. We photographed a beautiful White-necked *maroccanus* Cormorant on the beach and were surprised to see many adult Gannets at sea. When we arrived at Tamri, we were exactly on time to see the first Bald Ibis flying in to drink, and before lunch another 30 followed. We walked over the beach to get close views of this rarest bird of our week, which nowadays only breeds at two coastal colonies of a few 100s of birds north and south of Agadir, with just one or two pairs left in the rest of the world (at Palmyra, Syria); however, the species is doing well in zoos and has been reintroduced in, e.g. Turkey, Austria and Spain. The river had broken through the sand bank normally separating it from the ocean and had become largely saline, which explains why there were no waders, but we still had enough to see with a pair of Ruddy Shelduck, an Osprey, a Marsh Harrier, a Little Grebe, a few Coots, Kingfisher and lots of Sardinian Warblers and Chiffchaffs in the surrounding bushes. For lunch, we went to Arnoud's favourite tajine restaurant at Tamri, with a terrace overlooking the rocky slopes above the river offering fine close-range views of Black Wheatear, Moussier's Redstart and House Bunting. After lunch, we spent some time further along the coast and, on our way back, turned left into the Atlas foothills, where we found a lot of Blackcaps and were successful in luring a male Tristram's Warbler into view.

On our third day (19th January), we boarded a sea-going launch from Agadir marina to go out for seabirds. The sea was calm as there was no wind. Nevertheless, as soon as we left port, we came across European Storm Petrels, which would be with us most of the time. It formed a highlight of the tour to see these small birds so closely, tripping on the water surface and checking out the smelly basket of "chum" that was floating with us. The adult Gannets we watched at long range the day before now at times flew almost overhead. Surprisingly, no less than at least 40 Manx Shearwaters flew past our boat as well, officially still a rarity in Moroccan waters! A few Sandwich Terns carrying fish were attacked by Arctic and at least two Pomarine Skuas, both being photographed and, typically, the catch was then subsequently eaten by a few Yellow-legged Gulls. There were a few Lesser Black-backed, Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls present, too. A Mediterranean Shearwater and a Madeiran Storm Petrel were too fast to be well-photographed. After lunch on board, 6km off Agadir, with freshly caught and barbecued fish, we returned after 14:00 to the harbour, where an Osprey and a White-

breasted Cormorant were waiting us. We phoned our faithful driver, Abdul, to transport us for a second visit to Oued Souss. As always, this area was productive with some interesting birds in a concealed pool beside the river including Common Teal, Wood Sandpiper, Common Snipe, nine Ruff and Little Ringed Plover. The number of roosting White Storks on the mudflats was now an astounding 400. Also, this time, we had good views of small waders which were too far away on our first visit, with more than 100 Kentish Plovers, many Dunlin, two Little Stints and a Curlew Sandpiper. Two Slender-billed Gulls and a Caspian Tern were showing nicely to round off another superb day.

The next two days (20th and 21st January) were devoted to travelling over the Anti Atlas range to the desert towns of Bouizakarne and Goulimime, and back. We stopped each way at the highest parts of the beautiful Anti Atlas to watch birds such as Cirl and Rock Buntings, Barbary Partridge, African Chaffinch, and Black and Moussier's Redstarts. At a police stop in Bouizakarne, we had time to watch our first White-crowned Black (or White-tailed) Wheatears and a confiding flock of Trumpeter Finches. After lunch in Goulimime, we went south of town along the TanTan road, and walked to a field where Arnoud and Cecilia had seen Thick-billed Larks a couple of days before the tour started. Sure enough, we found quite a number of pairs. Also in the field, we found Temminck's Horned Larks, Bar-tailed Desert Larks, Corn Buntings and Spanish Sparrows, while a Spectacled Warbler was fluttering about in very little vegetation and Anne spotted two beautiful adult Atlas Long-legged Buzzards circling past us. Red-rumped Wheatears were common in this area and singing. At dusk, back in Goulimime, we found our well-hidden hotel, which presented us with our best tajine of the tour.

Next morning, we drove towards the Asrir oases, stopping at fields where we first discovered a few Desert Larks, Bar-tailed Desert Larks and Desert Wheatears before flocks of Black-bellied Sandgrouse flew in from the desert to drink. It became quite a spectacle, with at least a 100 sandgrouse landing and walking nearby. A little further, we stopped at a wadi that offered us not only a family group of Fulvous Babbler but also a sublime pair of Scrub Warblers. These normally very skulking warblers paid no attention to our presence and hopped from desert bush to desert bush, searching for moths and other food, and keeping in contact to each other by uttering various calls at times. It was hard to let go and move on, but we then continued further along the road to stop at pylons with a Long-legged Buzzard which was soon attacked by a Lanner and, when it flew, also got a Kestrel hanging on its tail. In the end, we had amazing views of the Lanner escorting its female that was carrying a Fat Sand Rat, and both falcons took turns eating it. On our return to Goulimime, we first watched the hirundines foraging above the town's river (four species, including Crag Martins) and then drove a few kilometres south to see Black-winged Kite. After lunch in town, it was time to retrace our route across the Anti Atlas back to Agadir. Just before reaching our Oasis Tulip Inn hotel, at 18:30, the last bird of the day was a Barn Owl flying across our bus.

January 22nd was spent as a full day's birding in Morocco's most important nature reserve: Oued Massa. We first walked from Massa village to the reserve's entrance, watching birds along the river and in the small-scale agricultural fields. After our picnic lunch at the museum outside Tassila village, we worked our way from bridge to bridge, ending at Sdi Rbat. We added quite a lot of species to our tour list. Among the highlights were a handful of Black-crowned Tchagras showing well, three Little Owls, a huge flock of more than 100 Glossy Ibises flying overhead, a flock of 16 Common Cranes roosting with two Spoonbills, a Great White Egret, a hovering Black-winged Kite, a juvenile Bonelli's Eagle, many Laughing Doves, a few Kingfishers and a Hoopoe, a couple of Brown-throated (Plain) Martins circling over a recently excavated nest, 100s of Barn Swallows and plenty of Crag, Sand and House Martins, a Common Starling discovered by Cecilia in a flock of Spotless Starlings, our first and only Blue Rock Thrush and our only Song Thrush, a briefly showing Moroccan Reed Warbler, and many Moussier's Redstarts and Stonechats... *Phew!!*

On our last birding day (23rd January), we drove up into the Atlas Mountains from Agadir past Paradise Valley to the scenic mountain village of Immouzer. A few stops along the way revealed not only the presence of Grey Wagtails and Black Wheatears but also many Blackcaps and Robins as winterers from Europe. Up at Immouzer, it was freezing - and there was frost on the ground below the flowering almond trees! So, we started with a series of hot teas and coffees in the village overlooking a few mature pines, watching our target species appear: Ultramarine Tits and Moroccan Crossbills. We then walked along an irrigation canal through the old pine wood above the village, seeing yet more of the crossbills, several Cirl Buntings, many Serins and a singing Jay. Most astonishingly, we encountered two Olive-backed Pipits, only the second and third records for Morocco!! Our good fortune continued on the way back down, we enjoyed a modest lunch at a restaurant overlooking some palm trees where, apart from innumerable Blackcaps, we had surprise sightings of a pair of Bonelli's Eagles

circling above our heads and a male Levaillant's Woodpecker calling and showing itself. In the late afternoon, we paid our third and final visit to Oued Souss to see a range of waders including Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits in an unusual setting comprising some 246 Greater Flamingos and 235 White Storks. And, finally, we succeeded in finding a Moroccan Wagtail amongst the many White Wagtails foraging on the mudflats.

With an 08.45am check-in for our return flight from Agadir to London, January 24th saw us returning home at the end of an extremely successful and hugely enjoyable week, with great company and some brilliant birds!

*Arnoud van den Berg*

**Systematic List of Species Recorded**  
(Total of 140 species recorded by the group)

**Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara***

In the evening of 17/1, two were running back and forth along the fence around the Royal Palace at Oued Souss. On 18/1 and 23/1, the species was heard along the Imouzzer road. On 21/1, we flushed a total of 27 individuals, including three flocks, during a short walk at the pass of the Anti Atlas driving south to Goulmime.

**Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea***

On 18/1, a pair was present at the Tamri river mouth. In the afternoon of 19/1, a pair was swimming at the Oued Souss mouth.

**Shoveler *Anas clypeata***

On 22/1, a female-type was briefly seen at the river near Massa, Oued Massa.

**Common Teal *Anas crecca***

On 19/1, a flock of at least 20 was seen at a pool between the Oued Souss mouth and the Royal Palace.

**Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris***

On 17/1, two were swimming and flying at the Oued Souss mouth.

**Common Pochard *Aythya ferina***

On 22/1, a female was swimming at Massa in Oued Massa.

**Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula***

On 22/1, two small groups of five and three were seen at Massa in Oued Massa.

**Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus***

Between 10:00 and 14:00 h on 19/1, during calm weather without much wind, a total of at least 40, with some small groups of three and four, were seen and photographed from our boat 6 km off Agadir at N30 23'.26,34" W009 41' 43,35".

**Mediterranean Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus***

On 19/1, one was photographed 6 km off Agadir (*see above, Manx Shearwater for location details*).

**European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus***

On 19/1, between 10:00 and 14:00 h, during calm weather without much wind, most of the time our boat was surrounded by a few individuals, already present alongside the Agadir harbour pier but also clearly coming to inspect our 'chum', and we estimated that we watched and photographed a total of c 80 individuals.

**Madeiran Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma castro***

On 19/1, one flying past could not be well photographed and, therefore, has not been submitted to the Moroccan rarities committee. However, the dark underwings, the more shearwater-like direct flight and its size larger than European Storm Petrel meant that it was another species of storm petrel and probably one of the *castro* group.

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis***

On 17/1, one was seen at Oued Souss. On 18/1, a single one was swimming at the Tamri mouth. On 22/1, a (meagre) total of 12 was seen at Oued Massa.

**Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus***

On 17/1 and 19/1, an estimated 300 birds were present at Oued Souss, nearly all adults and only a handful of first-winters. On 23 January, we counted 246 birds (126 plus 120) at this site.

**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia***

The numbers roosting at Oued Souss were 70, 400 and 235 on 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively. In addition, one was seen on top of a palm tree north of Tiznit on 20/1 and three were flying S of Ait Melloul on 21/1.

**Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita***

Around midday on 18/1, a total of 31 arrived in singles and small groups over a two-hour period to drink at the Tamri river mouth. In the middle of the afternoon, there were still four present here.

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

In the morning of 22/1, four flew downstream over Oued Massa towards the sea coast. Later the same afternoon, at the bridge near Massa, an impressive flock of 110 flew close over our heads upstream over the river.

**Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

On 17/1, six were present at Oued Souss, including one wearing colour rings from the Netherlands. On 22/1, two joined a roosting flock of Common Cranes beyond the reserve's entrance at Oued Massa.

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***

Abundant and many seen on most days: 50 in a roosting tree north of Agadir on 18/1, flocks of 100s near Tiznit on 20/1 and 21/1, more than 100 on the way to Oued Massa on 22/1, and several were noted on 23/1 as well.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Common and seen on every day except at Goulimime, with up to 50 at Oued Souss, three at Tamri and more than 10 at Oued Massa.

**Great White Egret *Casmerodius albus***

On 22 January, one was photographed in the dense vegetation on the shore of Oued Massa near Massa village; the lack of yellow on the tibia indicates that it may concern the American subspecies *egretta* but, probably, the European nominate cannot be ruled out.

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Common and seen on virtually every day, though not in high numbers, with only two at Tamri on 18/1, one at the Agadir harbour on 19/1, one to three at Goulimime on 20/1 and 21/1, (only) a handful at Oued Massa on 22/1, and up to 20 at Oued Souss.

**Gannet *Morus bassanus***

Numerous at sea with 100s seen off Tamri on 18/1 and off Agadir on 19/1, and also noted off Sdi Rbat at Oued Massa on 22/1. Interestingly, nearly all were adults or subadults.

**(Great) Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis***

This subspecies was more common than the *lucidus/maroccanus* subspecies combined, with up to 30 at Oued Souss, four at Tamri on 18/1, a handful at Agadir on 19/1, and c 10 at Oued Massa (including an individual in full breeding dress).

**“White-necked” Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus***

On 18/1, two were photographed at the Taghazoute beach. On 22/1, one was seen with four White-breasteds at Oued Massa.

**“White-breasted” Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo lucidus***

At Oued Souss, up to 10 were seen (17/1, 19/1 and 23/1); several were present at the Agadir marina on 19/1 and four at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

Common and at least a handful seen daily, including a heroic individual chasing an Atlas Long-legged Buzzard at Asrir on 21/1.

**Lanner *Falco biarmicus erlangeri***

On 21/1, a pair was photographed on pylons near Asrir. First, one of the two chased off an unlucky Atlas Long-legged Buzzard, and later the pair had caught a Fat Sand Rat, taking turns in eating it on the pylon.

**Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides***

On 17/1, a juvenile circled high above us at Oued Souss and was photographed.

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

In total, five migrants were encountered: one at Oued Souss on 17/1 and two here on 19/1, one was roosting at the Tamri river mouth on 18/1, and one flew low over the Agadir marina on 19/1.

**Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus***

We had two encounters with this beautiful species: one 8 km south of Goulimime perched along the TanTan road on 21/1 and one hovering above Sdi Rbat near Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

Three were seen along the road between Agadir and Goulimime on 20/1 (one) and 21/1 .

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

A total of seven were seen, probably on migration, of which six at Oued Souss (on 17/1 (two northward), 19/1 (three) and 23/1), and one flew over the Tamri mouth on 18/1.

**“Atlas” Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus cirtensis***

A total of six was seen in the Goulimime area, including two adults together at 23 km south of Goulimime along the TanTan road on 20/1, two at the Asrir oasis on 21/1 and two near Goulimime on 21/1.

**Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata***

On 22/1, we photographed a juvenile flying past at Oued Massa. On 23/1, a pair of adults circled above our lunch restaurant at Paradise Valley, Agadir.

**Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

On 17/1, one was calling from the royal sewage at Oued Souss. On 22/1, a total of 10 was noted at Oued Massa.

**Common Coot *Fulica atra***

On 18/1, seven were swimming at the Tamri mouth. On 22/1, more than 40 were present at Oued Massa.

**Common Crane *Grus grus***

At midday on 22/1, a flock of 16 arrived from the south at the seaside of the reserve's entrance of Oued Massa, where they went roosting.

**Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus***

On 17/1, one was heard at Oued Souss.

**Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus***

At Oued Souss, five were seen on 17/1 and one on 23/1.

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

Common at Oued Souss with 10, five and 50 counted in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively.

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Common at Oued Souss with 50+, 40+ and 10 in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively.

**Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Common at Oued Souss with four, more than 20 and 40 in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively.

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

On 19/1 and 23/1, up to three 10 were seen at Oued Souss.

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

On 19/1, at least 100 were seen at the Oued Souss mouth.

**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

On 19/1, seven were seen at a pool in the flats between the Oued Souss mouth and the Royal Palace.

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

On 17/1 and 23/1, respectively, three and four were feeding at Oued Souss.

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica***

At Oued Souss, 20 were seen on 17/1 and two on 23/1.

**Curlew *Numenius arquata***

Common at Oued Souss with 40, more than 10 and five in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively.

**Redshank *Tringa totanus***

Common at Oued Souss in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, with c 50 seen.

**Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

Several were present at Oued Souss with 10, four and three seen in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively. One was found at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus***

At total of six seen: one at the royal sewage of Oued Souss on 17/1 and three in this area on 19/1, and two singles at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

On 19/1, at least two were seen at a pool in the flats between the Oued Souss mouth and the Royal Palace.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Up to 10 were present at Oued Souss in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1. One occurred at the Agadir marina on 19/1 and one was seen at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Knot *Calidris canutus***

On 17/1, four were present at the Oued Souss mouth.

**Sanderling *Calidris alba***

Probably common at Oued Souss with two, three and 20 seen in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, respectively.

**Little Stint *Calidris minuta***

At Oued Souss, two were seen both on 19/1 and 23/1.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

On 19/1, one was seen at Oued Souss.

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Common at Oued Souss with up to 40 in the afternoons of 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

On 19/1, nine were seen at a pool in the flats between the Oued Souss mouth and the Royal Palace. On 23/1, three were noted at Oued Souss.

**Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei***

At Oued Souss, an adult and a first-winter were found on 19/1 and two first-winters on 23/1.

**Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Numerous at Oued Souss on 17/1, 19/1 and 23/1, and more than 10 at 6 km off Agadir on 19/1.

**Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii***

On 18/1, there were large flocks on the beaches between Agadir and Tamri, with 300, 50 and 150 (at Tamri river mouth). In addition, Geoff took details of 15 colour rings (eight at the first stop, four at the second N30 35'56,20" W009 46' 30.16", and three at Tamri), all originating from Spain. All 15 were subsequently found on the ringers' database and added to the information about the birds' movements and longevity. With the help of this database, Geoff found that five were ringed as nestling on Islas Chafarinas, Spanish islets at short distance from the Mediterranean coast of Morocco, and others in the Ebro delta or elsewhere in Spain. The oldest bird was ringed on 4 July 1990 (making it 21 years old), another one was 19 years old, and three were 13 to 15 years old. The youngest had been ringed in June 2009, making it a third-winter. All previous records for these 15 individuals were from Spain and Mediterranean Morocco in March-August while in September-November many were also from the Atlantic coast of Morocco, south to Dakhla, in Western Sahara.

Interestingly, in December-February, all recordings concentrated in the Agadir-Tamri area where we found them as well, showing a surprising site fidelity. For instance, "AHPD" was seen before in this area on 15-17 February 2005 by A Goedecke, on 15 January 2006 by J Sterup, and on 15 January 2007 by Andrew Green & Mike Marsh.

**Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus***

On 17/1, no less than 25 were roosting at Oued Souss, all first-winters except for one second-winter and one adult. On 19/1, three were seen 6 km off Agadir. On 23/1, seven were counted at Oued Souss.

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis***

Numerous and 10s seen on every day, except 21/1 (Goulimime); also on the hotel's roof.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii/intermedius***

Abundant, especially at the beaches between Agadir and Tamri (10 000s on 18/1) and at Oued Souss, and noted every day except 21/1 (Goulimime).

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

On 19/1, one was roosting at Oued Souss.

**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis***

On 18/1, three were seen along the beaches between Taghazoute and Tamri. On 19/1, a total of 20 was noted 6km off Agadir and at Oued Souss.

**Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus***

On 19/1, two were seen 6km off Agadir.

**Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus***

On 19/1, a dark-morph subadult and a pale-morph subadult were photographed 6km off Agadir.

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

On 21/1, we enjoyed a wonderful early morning performance by c100 birds flying in from the desert and landing at irrigated fields near Asrir. A few km beyond, we found another 10 walking along the roadside.

**Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon *Columba livia***

Noted on all days.

**Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus***

Common at Oued Souss and Oued Massa.

**Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Numerous and seen daily, in every settlement.

**Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis***

On 22/1, at least 30 were seen at Oued Massa.

**Desert Little Owl *Athene (noctua) glaux***

On 22/1, we watched and photographed three singles roosting on walls at Oued Massa.

**Barn Owl *Tyto alba***

At dusk at exactly 18:30 on 21/1, one flew from the coastal parks over the road (and our bus) towards the town centre of Agadir.

**Common Swift *Apus apus***

On 17/1, two flew over the main Agadir road and, at dusk, a few may have been present in a supposedly mixed flock of swifts above the Royal Palace at Oued Souss. On 22/1, c10 were seen at Oued Massa.

**Plain Swift *Apus unicolor***

At dusk on 17/1, more than 30 flew north high over the trees above the Royal Palace, possibly together with a few Common Swifts; quite a few were photographed.

**Little Swift *Apus affinis***

One flew past during lunch at Goulimime on 20/1.

**Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

In total, four individuals were seen on three days: briefly fishing at Tamri river mouth on 18/1, two flying past at Oued Massa on 22/1, and perched on a roadside wall at Paradise Valley on 23/1.

**Hoopoe *Upupa epops***

On 22/1, one flew from the road at Massa.

**Levaillant's Woodpecker *Picus vaillantii***

A male found when calling at midday in Paradise Valley on 23/1, and well-watched when perched on a palm tree, was one of the most unexpected finds of the week. Patrick Bergier subsequently advised that our Levaillant's Woodpecker constituted the first record for the Haha region, *i.e.* the mountains NE of Agadir.

**Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus***

On 22/1, no less than five were seen at Oued Massa (the first could be photographed), and several were heard.

**Desert Grey Shrike *Lanius elegans algeriensis/elegans***

The dark *algeriensis* was common and seen every day, with a maximum of 15 on 18/1. Some were singing, such as the bird photographed at Oued Souss on 17/1. The white nominate *elegans* was found around Goulimime on 20/1 and 21/1.

**“Moroccan” Magpie *Pica pica mauritanica***

Common around Agadir (including Oued Souss and Oued Massa) and seen on every day.

**“North African Common” Raven *Corvus corax tingitanus***

A pair flew over the Bald Ibis drinking spot at Tamri on 18/1.

**Jay *Garrulus glandarius***

Two were found in the old pines above Immouzer village on 23/1, one of which was singing and sound-recorded.

**Coal Tit *Periparus ater***

On 23/1, one was singing at Immouzer.

**Great Tit *Parus major***

Noted on five days: at Oued Souss on 17/1, along the road to Tamri on 18/1, at the pass of the Anti Atlas on 20/1 (more than two), at Oued Massa on 22/1 (five) and at Immouzer on 23/1.

**African (Ultramarine) Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae ultramarinus***

On 23/1, common in and around Immouzer, where six were seen including one fighting its mirror image at the window of a house in the main street.

**Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola mauritanica***

On 22/1, one flew past at Sdi Rbat, Oued Massa, and two were circling above a freshly created nesthole at the Massa bridge.

**Sand Martin *Riparia riparia***

We watched three at Oued Souss on 19/1, one at the Goulimime river on 21/1 and six at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris***

Common and seen on five days: singles at Tamri on 18/1 and Oued Souss on 19/1, a handful at Goulimime both on 20/1 and 21/1, and c 30 at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Numerous and seen on all days, with 100s at Oued Souss on 17/1 and 19/1 and at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**House Martin *Delichon urbica***

On 17/1, at least three were flying above Oued Souss. The species was also noted at Oued Souss on 19/1. On 22/1, more than five were present at Oued Massa.

**Bar-tailed Desert Lark *Ammomanes cinctura***

On 20/1, one (photographed) and two were seen 23 km south of Goulimime along the TanTan road. On 21/1, one was present at the Asrir fields.

**Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti***

On 31/1, three and two were seen at the Asrir fields.

**Thick-billed Lark *Ramphocoris clotbey***

Always a treat to see this impressive lark. On 20/1, at 23 km south of Goulimime along the TanTan road, we watched c 40 birds well spread in a large field, and a flock of 30 flew past. The next day, three flew past at Asrir.

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

On 20/1, at 23 km south of Goulimime, 10 were flying past and landed in a large field with Thick-billed Larks.

**Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae***

Numerous and seen on every day in all areas.

**Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus***

Numerous and seen (and heard) on every day in all gardens.

**Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis***

No song heard and, therefore, only a few were found: two at Oued Souss on 19/1 and four at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta theresae***

Following a foraging pair for a long time at an extremely close range at Asrir on 21/1 was one of the highlights of the tour; the birds were also well photographed. Birds at Goulimime are of the Western Saharan subspecies *theresae*, which may one day be lumped with *saharae* as a species separate from the Streaked Scrub Warblers in the Middle East.

**Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti***

Heard on 17/1 (Oued Souss), 18/1 (Tamri) and 22/1 (Oued Massa; two).

**Moroccan (or African) Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus cf baeticatus***

On 22/1, one was briefly seen at the Tassila bridge, Oued Massa. This presently undescribed taxon shows very short wings, blackish flight feathers, dark grey legs with contrasting yellow soles, and other features separating it from northern migrants.

**Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***

Numerous winterers and seen on every day in all areas.

**Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla***

On 23/1, remarkably abundant winterer in Paradise Valley, where literally 100s were seen. Also eight were present in a bush at the Alma village on 18/1, and a total of five at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Tristram's Warbler *Sylvia deserticola***

In the afternoon of 18/1, a male was seen above Alma.

**Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata***

One turned up in very small bushes alongside a field full of larks 23 km south of Goulimime.

**Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala***

Numerous and seen every day, despite its skulking habits, in all areas.

**Fulvous Babbler *Turdoides fulva***

On 21/1, a group of at least four was found at Asrir.

**(Common) Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

One was photographed in a flock of Spotless Starlings at Sdi Rbat, Oued Massa, on 22/1.

**Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor***

Numerous and flocks were seen on every day.

**(Moroccan) Blackbird *Turdus merula mauritanicus***

Common to numerous and seen daily.

**Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos***

On 22/1, one was found at Sdi Rbat, Oued Massa.

**Robin *Erithacus rubecula***

On 22/1, a few were seen and heard at Sdi Rbat, Oued Massa. On 23/1, a handful was seen along Paradise Valley and at Immouzer.

**Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros gibraltariensis***

A total of six was seen on five days, all female-types and one male: at the Tamri road, in the Anti Atlas, at Oued Massa and at Oued Souss.

**Moussier's Redstart *Phoenicurus moussieri***

On 17/1, a male was seen at the airport. On 18/1, two were watched during lunch at Tamri and an additional six were found along the road between Tamri and Agadir. On 20/1, six were observed in the Anti Atlas, with another three here on 21/1. The species was common at Oued Massa with a total of 20 on 22/1 and along the road to Immouzer with more than 20 on 23/1.

**European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola***

Common and recorded daily in every area.

**Red-rumped Wheatear *Oenanthe moesta***

Common in the Goulimime desert on 20/1 and 21/1, with quite a few uttering their 'boiling kettle' song.

**Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti***

On 21/1, six were seen in the Asrir area.

**White-crowned Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga***

On 20/1, four were found at Bouizakarne and along the road between Bouizakarne and Goulimime. On 21/1, four were seen at Asrir.

**Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura***

On 18/1, 4+ were seen in the Tamri area, also at the lunch restaurant. On 21/1, two were present along the road east from Goulimime. On 23/1, the species was common along the road to Immouzer, where more than 10.

**Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius***

Strangely, the female perched on a building of Sdi Rbat at Oued Massa on 22/1 was the only one we found.

**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***

Common to numerous and seen on every day in all suitable areas.

**Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis***

Common and seen on most days, with a male at Alma on 18/1, flocks of 60 along the TanTan road 25 km south of Goulimime, flocks at Asrir on 21/1, several at Oued Massa on 22/1, and a mixed flock of 30 at Oued Souss on 23/1.

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

On 23/1, a total of three was seen at Paradise Valley on 23/1 and up the road to Immouzer.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba***

Abundant and seen on every day in all areas.

**Moroccan Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) subpersonata***

With determination, one was found amidst White Wagtails foraging on the mudflats of Oued Souss on 23/1.

**Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis***

Common and seen on most days, with flocks of 15 and five at Oued Souss on 17/1 and 19/1, respectively. Several at Tamri river 18/1; two at the Asrir fields with Corn Buntings on 21/1; and a few heard at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus trivialis***

On 22/1, two were found in the pine wood above Immouzer, where AvdB managed to get a sound recording of two "tree pipits" flying off. Subsequently, after checking all the sounds, it became clear that the calls belonged to two Olive-backed Pipits, as they were far too high (higher than 7.5 kHz) for any Tree Pipit. Both species are rare in winter in Morocco but for Olive-backed there is only one previous record (a single bird photographed at Agadir in November 2007).

**Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs coelebs***

On 22/1, one was heard at the reserve's entrance of Oued Massa.

**"North African" Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs africana***

Numerous and recorded every day.

**Serin *Serinus serinus***

Common and seen on most days, with handfuls at Oued Souss and more than 100 along the Immouzer road.

**Greenfinch *Chloris chloris voousi***

Noted on four days: along the Immouzer road on 18/1 and 23/1, a few in the Anti Atlas on 21/1 and more than five at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis parva***

Common and seen on all days except 19/1; also one 23 km south of Goulimime along the TanTan road on 20/1. Most numerous at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Linnet *Carduelis cannabina***

On 22/1, two were seen at the sea side of Oued Massa.

**Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus***

Common in the Goulimime area with close views of a flock of 15 at Bouizakarne on 20/1, several at 25 km south of Goulimime on 20/1, and five at Asrir on 21/1.

**"Moroccan" Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra poliogyna***

On 23/1, more than 30 were feeding, drinking and sunning in the pine woods at Immouzer.

**Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra***

On 20/1, two were found in a large field with Thick-billed Larks 23-25 km south of Goulimime. On 21/1, a flock of 25 was foraging at the Asrir fields.

**Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia***

On 20/1, two were briefly seen and flying off beyond the Anti Atlas pass.

**Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus***

On 20/1, we had excellent views of a foraging pair at the Anti Atlas pass. On 23/1, several pairs, with some six individuals, were seen at Immouzer.

**House Bunting *Emberiza (striolata) sahari***

Numerous and seen on every day in suitable habitat, including hotels and lunch stops.

**MAMMALS**

**Barbary Ground Squirrel *Atlantoxerus getulus***

Common in suitable habitat (rocks) and seen on four days: 18/1 two at the lunch restaurant at Tamri; 20/1 c 60 (!) at the Anti Atlas pass and more than a handful here on 21/1; and 10 on old walls in fields at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**Fat Sand Rat *Psammomys obesus***

On 20/1, one was seen along the TanTan road 25 km south of Goulimime. The next day, one freshly killed was being eaten by two Lanners at Asrir.

**Egyptian Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon***

One was briefly seen when crossing the road at Oued Massa on 22/1.

**REPTILES**

**Spanish Turtle *Mauremys leprosa***

Common at Oued Massa on 22/1.