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**ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

## BIRDS IN SYRIA

During 1997-2000 I made three visits to Syria. Unfortunately my fellow travellers did not share my interest in birds so the possibilities to stop wherever I wanted to were not that big but never the less I made some observations that might be of interest.

I have not found much written about birding in Syria so I am not sure what is interesting or not. Therefore I include all my notations. There are also some notes from 1974 when I spent six months in the country. As I was a young beginner then I have excluded some uncertain observations.

### Shag:

1 on a small island Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

### Grey Heron:

2 passing Tartous 28/3-97

3 S Tartous 11/4-98

3 passing Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00

### White Stork:

4 NE Damascus 27/3-97

4 W Homs 27/3-97

2 SE Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

Several migrating Deir Soleib - Misyaf 29/4-00

Several hundred NW Homs 29/4-00

### Black stork:

1 SW Palmyra 21-22/4-00

1 migrating Apamea 28/4

### Mallard:

50 Deir Ez Zur 8/4-98

### Black Kite:

1 W Homs 27/3-97

30-40 migrating Krak des Chevaliers 11/4-98

### Buzzard:

Hundreds passing Krak des Chevaliers 11/4-98

### Aquila sp:

Several migrating Krak des Chevaliers 11/4-98

### Booted Eagle:

1 30 km SW Palmyra 7/4-98

**Montagu´s Harrier:**

Several migrating in the desert around Palmyra 21-22/4-98

**Kestrel:**

1 Krak des Chevaliers 4/4-74 and 27/3-97

**Lesser Kestrel:**

1 Qalaat As Rabbeh 8/4-98

1 Doura Europous 8/4-98

2 Rasafeh 9/4-98

2 Krak des Chevaliers 11/4-98

1 male Deir Soleib 29/4-00

**Moorhen:**

1 close to Mari 8/4-98

**Coot:**

Several Deir Ez Zur 8/4-98 and 23/4-00

**Great Snipe:**

1 Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Common Sandpiper:**

1 Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00

**Cream-coloured Courser:**

3 Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

Several in the desert Palmyra - Deir Ez Zur 22/4-00

**Yellow-legged Gull:**

Several Tartous 28/3-97

Several Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:**

Several Tartous 28/3-97

**Black-headed Gull:**

Several Tartous 28/3-97

**Palm Dove:**

Common Damascus march 97, april 98 and april 00

**Collared Dove:**

Several along the road Palmyra – Deir Ez Zur 7/4-98

**Rock Dove:**

1 Palmyra – Deir Ez Zur 7/4-98

**Cuckoo:**

1 heard in the mountains E Latakia 28/4-00

**Swift:**

Seen in Damascus 24/3-97, Maloula 12/4-98 and migrating in Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00, but not in great numbers.

**Alpine Swift:**

Seen in Palmyra 13/4-74 and Maloula 12/4-98

**Kingfisher:**

1 Mari 8/4-98

**Pied Kingfisher:**

1 Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater:**

Several Mari 8/4-00

**Bee-eater:**

Several migrating around Palmyra and in Deir Ez Zur 22/4-00

**Roller:**

Several Hama – Misyaf – Homs 29/4-00

**Hoopoe:**

1 Palmyra – Deir Ez Zur 7/4-98

1 Doura Europous 8/4-98

**Wryneck:**

1 (climbing on a wall) Damascus 7/4-98

**Crested Lark:**

Several Ebla 29/3-97, Deir Ez Zur – Palmyra 7/4-98, S Tartous  
11/4-98, Soukneh 22/4-98 and Apamea 28/4-00

**Hoopoe Lark:**

1 Soukneh 22/4-00

**Temminck's Horned Lark:**

2 Homs – Palmyra 13/4-74

**Sand Martin:**

Some migration along the Euphrates, Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00

**Swallow:**

Several in Damascus 24/3-97 and Deir Ez Zur 8/4-98.

Migration in the desert around Palmyra 21-22/4-00

Heavy passage (around 300/minute!!) along the Euphrates, Deir Ez  
Zur, early morning 23/4-00

**Red-rumped Swallow:**

Seen in Palmyra 13/4-74 and Damascus 24/3-97

Some migration Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00

**House Martin:**

Seen in Damascus 24/3-97

**Red-throated Pipit:**

3-4 Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

**Yellow Wagtail:**

Common Palmyra 13/4-74

**White Wagtail:**

1 100 km SW Palmyra 21/4-00

**Red-backed Shrike:**

1 Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Woodchat Shrike:**

1 S Tartous 11/4-98

1 Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 22/4-00

**Magpie:**

2 SE Deir Ez Zur 8/4-98

2 Deir Ez Zur 23/4-00

**Jay:**

Heard in the mountains E Tartous 10/4-98

2 Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Raven:**

3 – 4 Palmyra 7/4-98

**Wren:**

1 singing Krak des Chevaliers 27/3-97

Several singing in the mountains E Tartous 10/4-98 and E Latakia  
28/4-00

**Robin:**

1 Bara 29/3-97

**Nightingale:**

1 singing Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Redstart:**

1 male Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

**Black-eared Wheatear:**

1 male Ebla 29/3-97

**Blackbird:**

Several singing in the mountains E Tartous 10/4-98 and E Latakia  
28/4-00

**Blue Rock Thrush:**

1 singing in the Old City, Damascus 19-30/4-00

**Cetti's Warbler:**

Several singing Deir Ez Zur 8/4-98 and 23/4-00

**Fan-tailed Warbler:**

1 singing close to Krak des Chevaliers 27/3-97

**Blackcap:**

Several singing Damascus 24/3-97

1 male Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

**Lesser Whitethroat:**

Several singing in the mountains E Tartous 10/4-98

1 Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

**Sardinian Warbler:**

Several Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Graceful Warbler:**

1 singing Adra 7/4-98

Very common along the coast S Tartous 11/4-98

A few singing Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Chiffchaff:**

Several singing in Damascus 24/3-97 and in the coastal mountains 10/4-98, 27-28/4-00

**Great tit:**

Singing males heard Krak des Chevaliers 27/3-97, Bara 28/3-97, coastal mountains 10/4-98 and 28/4-00, Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00, Deir Soleib 29/4-00

**Nuthatch:**

Several heard in the mountains E Tartous 10/4-98

**Yellow-vented Bulbul:**

2 Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

**Spanish Sparrow:**

10 Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

**Dead Sea Sparrow:**

10 Mari 8/4-98

**Rock Sparrow:**

Several Maaloula 12/4-98

**Chaffinch:**

Several small flocks Bara 28/3-97

**Linnet:**

Heard Bara 28/-97

**Goldfinch:**

A few Krak des Chevaliers 27/3-97 and Deir Soleib 29/4-00

**Greenfinch:**

A few Krak des Chevaliers 27/3-97

1 singing Maaloula 12/4-98

**Serin:**

Several Bara 28/3-97

Several singing in the mountains E Latakia 27/4-00

**Ortolan Bunting:**

1 Zenobia Desert Camp, S Palmyra 21/4-00

**Cretzschmar's Bunting:**

1 10 km E Tartous 10/4-98

**Black-headed Bunting:**

Very common Ras al-Bassit 28/4-00

Several singing Apamea 28/4-00

**Corn Bunting:**

1 singing Ebla 29/3-97

1 singing close to Krak des Chevaliers 11/4-98

Several singing Ghab 28/4-00

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