



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Egypt & Petra

14th April - 2nd May 2007



Trip Report compiled by Tour Leaders Erik Forsyth & Cuan Rush

Tour Summary

On the first day of the tour, we enjoyed a leisurely afternoon birdwalk around our hotel grounds situated very close to the airport. The gardens are a mixture of exotic trees and flowers and a welcome stopover for migrant birds to refuel before the final journey to their breeding grounds in the north. The stroll around the grounds produced a stunning male Collared Flycatcher, Meadow Pipit, Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin, Lesser Whitethroat and a male Woodchat Shrike. In the evening we enjoyed the first of many great meals together.

Today we had a very early flight to Abu Simbel. Some of us enjoyed stunning views of the Abu Simbel Temple and Lake Nasser. After checking into our hotel we started birding in earnest. First off we visited a nearby Camel Station, an area seldom used by Camel caravans these days, but a good site for sandgrouse. Soon we were enjoying good scope looks at a flock of Spotted Sandgrouse and a single male Crowned Sandgrouse was also located. Other birds recorded here and in nearby agricultural fields were Brown-necked Raven, Whinchat and Black-eared and Northern wheatear. A visit to a nearby orchard gave us stunning close views of a feeding Eurasian Wryneck, playing hide and seek in a grassy patch, as well as Eurasian Pied and Spotted Flycatcher and a daytime flock of Black-crowned Night Heron which were flushed nearby.



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. A late afternoon visit to a nearby marsh produced a lone Moorhen, singing Clamorous Reed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat and several roosting Yellow Wagtail.

Most of today was spent birding around Lake Nasser. Careful scanning produced a lone Pink-backed Pelican at its most northerly known locality in Africa, Gull-billed Tern, Collared Pratincole and several White Stork feeding on the opposite shoreline. Colourful flocks of Red-throated Pipits and several races of Yellow Wagtail kept us entertained. In the late afternoon we returned and birded the Lake Nasser shoreline again. Here we found six Yellow-billed Stork and several Egyptian Goose - two very special birds at their most northerly distributions in Africa. To end off an exciting day, we attended the Sound-and-Light show at the Abu Simbal Temples. Here we were entertained by an orchestra of sound, dramatic voices and technicolor images projected onto the temple facades.



An early morning search at the edge of Lake Nasser produced our target bird in the form of African Pied Wagtail (at its most northern locality in Africa). We then headed off to Aswan driving through the desert. This afternoon we also met our Egyptologist, Jasmin, for the first time. After checking into our cruise liner, we enjoyed a peaceful felucca ride, the boat was old and colourful and powered by the wind and had 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. Birding highlights included sightings of Little Bittern, Senegal Thick-knee and a group of the scarce wintering Ferruginous Pochard. 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!

After breakfast we set off to visit the impressive temple of Philae. First off we made a short visit to the Aswan High Dam, a remarkable structure, 3,6km wide and 111m high and completed in 1971 after 11 years of work. A highlight here was excellent views of a hunting Barbary Falcon that soared around at eye level. We then drove to a nearby jetty to catch our boat across to the island. 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 several stunning Masked Shrike. 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.

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 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.

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 consists 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, breathtaking experience.

The birding highlight was a flock of attractive Trumpeter Finch in the Valley of Kings and a few Black-shouldered Kite dotted on the powerlines en route to and from the boat.

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 colour 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 our hotel on the nearby Crocodile Island and commenced birding. The island is excellent for migrants due to its well-watered lawns and abundance of plants. Here we had excellent close looks at many stunning Nile Valley Sunbird, scope views of Senegal Thick-knee, a male Little Bittern, Temminck's Stint and a fabulous Greater Painted-snipe to end off a fabulous afternoons birding.

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. Common Kestrel and Barn Swallow were the only notable bird species.

Early morning birding around our resort produced several hunting Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Yellow Wagtail and a pair of European Golden Oriole. It was then off for a snorkelling trip to Gifton Island. Much admired en route were Western Reef Heron, White-eyed and Sooty Gull and Common Tern. The snorkelling was truly spectacular and a highlight for all!

An incredibly good day was had at the Abu Shir Mountains. Initially the birding started slowly with a trickle of Common Buzzards and Eurasian Sparrowhawks, then suddenly we found the raptor migration in full swing with 600+ Common Buzzards and small numbers of Short-toed and Booted Eagle, Eurasian Honey and Long-legged Buzzard seen over the next two hours. A lone and distant Levant Sparrowhawk was also noted.



After a wonderful experience a group of content birders headed for lunch. After lunch we birded a nearby wetland adding Western Reef Heron, Kentish Plover, Tawny Pipit and Common Squacco Heron. A late afternoon walk around the golfcourse produced a male Common Rock Thrush, Northern Wheatear, Common Redstart and many summer plumaged Red-throated Pipit.

From Hurghada we caught a fast ferry to the Sinai Peninsular at Sharm El Sheik. During the crossing we saw several migrating raptors. These comprised mainly of Western Marsh Harrier and Eurasian Honey Buzzard. Once we were firmly on land again, we noticed a raptor passage coming in off the sea. We were watching in awe as dozens of European Honey Buzzards consisting of every colour morph possible flew past us at close range and we estimated 300+ birds seen. After a break at our hotel, we birded the nearby sewage works until dark adding Common Greenshank, Yellow Wagtail and a rare wintering Citrine Wagtail.



After breakfast we visited the Ras Mohammed National Park, a well known stop-over for tired migrants. Here we had excellent close looks at Crowned Sandgrouse near the entrance. Along the shoreline we saw Whimbrel, Slender-billed Gull, a magnificent pair of Sooty Falcon as well as the stunning Common Kingfisher. The snorkelling 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 highlights of the trip! Driving out of the Park we had excellent looks at Osprey and dozens of Western Marsh Harriers and Eurasian Honey Buzzards were seen flying in

off the sea.

After lunch we headed to St Katherine, arriving in the late afternoon. After checking into our hotel we birded a nearby orchard finding Spectacled Bulbul and Blackstart. Unfortunately, an evening search for Hume's Tawny Owl was unsuccessful.

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 a pair of Sand Partridge, a family of Scrub Warbler, Tristram's Starling, a few Sinai Rosefinches including several stunning males and a pair of Desert Larks.

After lunch 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 birds found here included Blackstart and Spectacled Bulbul. A

brief late afternoon stop at a freshwater marsh near Suez gave us our first Garganey, Common Snipe, European Roller and breeding “Egyptian (Yellow) Wagtail”. A pair of Greater Hoopoe Lark was seen briefly nearby. At Suez, we crossed back into Africa and after a long day we arrived in the early evening at our hotel.

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. First off we had 3 small groups of Levant Sparrowhawks flying low across the road, just above where we were standing. We then headed off to a migration-watching site along the coast and on arrival found hundreds of raptors and storks flying low over the surrounding hills. We were absolutely enthralled by this amazing spectacle! Common Buzzard and Steppe Eagle were particularly numerous but also seen were Short-toed, Booted, Lesser Spotted Eagles, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard and several stunning Egyptian Vultures. Up to 35 Black Storks were also found amongst the raptors. After this awesome migration spectacle we headed back to Ain Sukhna for a late lunch. The afternoon birding was slow and only a resting White Stork and two Long-legged Buzzards were of note.

Starting early today, we birded through the Eastern Desert at Wadi Hagul en route to Cairo. Here we had excellent close looks at a close pair of displaying Greater Hoopoe Lark (the white in the wings was noticeable in flight) Greater Whitethroat and Mourning Wheatear. Afterwards we headed to Abassa, east of Cairo where 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 enjoyed a visit to the Giza sound and light show.

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 a summer-plumaged Spotted Redshank as well as superb views of Little Tern, Dunlin and several stunning Blue-cheeked Bee-eater. 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



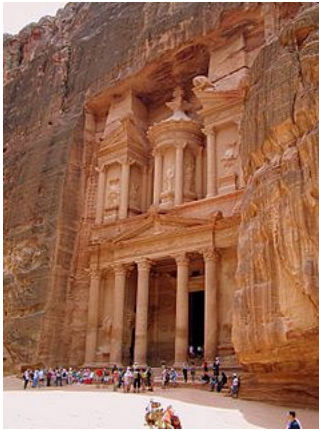
grasp the sheer size of this pyramid from mere pictures; standing beside it leaves one feeling breathless. We also visited the recently discovered solar boat, a truly spectacular ceremonial boat that was wonderfully preserved in the sands next to the pyramid. This 101ft long boat was used for symbolic 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! Instead of going up close to the third and smallest pyramid, 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!

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 another. The final product was this fabulous step pyramid, the first of over 100 pyramids built in ancient Egypt! 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 artefacts, consisting of over 120 000 exhibits, was truly remarkable. The room containing the fabulous death mask and jewellery 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 our favourite artefacts, 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.

A short drive took our group to a lush, rocky valley close to Amman. Here we enjoyed fine sunny weather, flowering poppies and many birds in song. Walking along the road we soon found Syrian Woodpecker, Sardinian and Eastern Orphee Warbler, several migrating Levant Sparrowhawk, Black-eared Wheatear and a singing male Cretzschmar's Bunting. In the afternoon we drove to our hotel in Petra with a stunning view overlooking the ancient city. In a nearby orchard we found the shy Thrush Nightingale and Common Cuckoo was heard and seen in flight.

An early start birding around our hotel produced scope looks at a Chukar Partridge posing on a rock and a confiding pair of Palestine Sunbird in the garden. After breakfast we headed for the city of Petra. Petra in Jordan is one of the world's most remarkable antiquities and regarded as the most astounding ancient city left in 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 Burkhart. Petra's intricately carved multi-storey 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 kilometre 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-kilometre 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 is 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 way. 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 and Eurasian Honey Buzzards, Steppe Eagle, Fan-tailed Raven, Blue Rock Thrush, Pale (Sinai) Rosefinch (including some fine males) as well as the much sought after Scrub Warbler. After lunch we drove back to Amman in time to catch our international flights home, so ending an exciting antiquities and bird-filled tour.

Photo credits (in order of appearance): Sinai Rosefinch (Ron Huffman), Queen Hatshepsut's Temple in the Valley of the Kings, Nile River Cruise and Abu Simbel Temple (Erik Forsyth), Nile Valley Sunbird, Gifton Island in the Red Sea, Crowned Sandgrouse (Ron Huffman), Pyramid of Cheops at Giza and The Treasury at Petra (Erik Forsyth).

Annotated Checklists of Birds and Mammals

Birds: nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. F. Clements *Birds of the World: A Checklist* 5th 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*
Five birds were scoped at our Lock crossing at Esna.

Pelicans *Pelecanidae*

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*
A single bird was seen on our second afternoon at Abu Simbel, flying over Lake Nasser.
Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*
A single bird on Lake Nasser and another on the Nile near Edfu was a good find.

Cormorants & Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Small flocks were seen at Aswan, on our Nile boat cruise and at Hurghada
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 20+ between Aswan and Edfu.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
Commonly recorded on our Nile cruise with a high count of 60 between Edfu and Luxor.
NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands A. p. bournei is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.

Western Reef-Egret *Egretta gularis*
Ten birds were seen at on our snorkelling day to Gifton Island, four 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 visit to El Fayoum.
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 80+ between Kom Edfu.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Regularly recorded throughout Egypt in small numbers with highest number being over 300 in breeding colonies at Crocodile Island, Luxor.
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*
Small numbers were seen on at Crocodile Iland and on our Nile boat trip.
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 25+ at Abu Simbel where we were treated to superb views.

Little Bittern*Ixobrychus minutus*

This skulking species was seen well during our tour, four birds were seen on our Felucca ride at Aswan and a female in breeding plumage at Crocodile Island was watched through the scope.

Storks Ciconidae**Yellow-billed Stork***Mycteria ibis*

Six birds were seen daily at Lake Nasser. This is the only site in Egypt where they are regularly recorded.

Black Stork*Ciconia nigra*

Thirty-six birds were seen high over Abu Sher, Hurghada whilst watching migrating raptors. A further thirty-three were seen at St Paul's Monastery south of Ain Sukhna.

White Stork*Ciconia ciconia*

Small flocks were seen at Abu Simbel, Hurghada, and at St Paul's Monastery south of Zafarane.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**Glossy Ibis***Plegadis falcinellus*

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

Eurasian Spoonbill*Platalea leucorodia*

One flock of twenty-five were seen at Lake Nasser, nineteen between Aswan and Kom Ombo and three on our boat trip to Giftun Island.

Flamingos Phoenicopteridae**Greater Flamingo***Phoenicopus ruber*

Fourteen birds were seen feeding in the shallows at Lake Nasser, which included several juveniles.

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*

Commonly 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*

Twenty birds were seen on our Nile boat cruise to Luxor and two at a marsh near Suez.

Northern Shoveler*Anas clypeata*

Four on Lake Nasser and nine birds on the Nile.

Ferruginous Pochard*Aythya nyroca*

Seven birds were seen from our Felucca boat ride at Aswan.

Common Pochard*Aythya ferina*

Six birds were seen at the loch at Esna.

Tufted Duck*Aythya fuligula*

A female was seen near Edfu on our Nile River cruise.

Osprey Pandionidae**Osprey***Pandion haliaetus*

Eight were seen on our trip to Giftun Island, Hurghada where we were treated to excellent fly-by looks. A further sighting of a single bird was at Ras Mohammed NP.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures Accipitridae**European Honey Buzzard***Pernis apivorus*

First seen at the Ber Sher Mountains where we saw up to fifteen birds. More impressive was the birds seen migrating from Hurghada to Sharm El Shiek across the Red Sea. Various colourfully plumaged individuals were seen at close quarters as they reached land at the Ras Mohammed NP. Up to six hundred birds were seen over two days. Further sightings included two birds near Suez and fifteen+ south of Ain Sukhna

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 and three birds around Cairo.

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 100+ migrating in the Ain Sukhna area.

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

Egyptian Vulture*Neophron percnopterus*

First recorded at the Ber Sher Mountains where we saw five. A further eight birds mainly juveniles were seen migrating at Ain Sukhna.

Short-toed Eagle*Circaetus gallicus*

Six were seen migrating at the Ber Sher Mountains. With a further sighting of a single bird near Ain Sukhna.

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*

First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings on the Nile, four birds were seen migrating across the Red Sea between Hurghada and Sharm El Shiek and lastly six birds were seen around Ain Sukhna.

Montagu's Harrier*Circus pygargus*

A female of this species was seen by a few on our boat trip to the Temple of Philae, Aswan Dam.

Pallid Harrier*Circus macrourus*

A female was seen flying up the lagoon at El Gouna resort, Hurghada.

Levant Sparrowhawk*Accipiter brevipes*

Our first sighting was a good look at a single bird at Sharm El Shiek. We then had further excellent looks at three small flocks comprising forty birds migrating north at Ain Sukhna. Our final sighting was of three birds seen well near Amman, Jordan.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

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

Eurasian Buzzard*Buteo buteo*

Recorded first at the Abu Sher Mountains where we recorded 600+ in 4 hours. A further 1000+ birds was made on our "raptor watch" day in the Ain Sukhna area. Smaller numbers were seen migrating elsewhere in Egypt and through the Petra Valley in Jordan (100+).

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*

Ten birds each at Hurghada and at Ain Sukhna where we enjoyed excellent close studies through the scope as they came to drink at an open water spring. A further two birds were seen near Amman in Jordan.

Lesser Spotted Eagle*Aquila pomarina*

Two birds were seen at Hurghada, six birds were seen at Ain Sukhna and a further three were seen at Petra in Jordan.

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

Steppe Eagle*Aquila nipalensis*

Fifteen birds were seen at the Abu Shir Mountain range at Hurghada. A further 10+ birds were seen on our full-day in the Ain Sukhna area. A single bird was seen near Amman and two on our day visit to the city of Petra, Jordan.

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 the Abu Shir Mountains, Hurghada.

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 and a single bird at Petra, Jordan.

Falcons & Caracaras *Falconidae***Eurasian Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

Regularly recorded, almost daily, in small numbers throughout Egypt and Jordan.

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

Sooty Falcon***Falco concolor***

We had excellent looks at two birds sitting on a gravel bank at the Ras Mohammed NP. Just recently arrived from their wintering grounds in South-east Africa or Madagascar.

Lanner Falcon***Falco biarmicus***

A single bird was seen on a power cable stand on the Nile between Edfu and Esna.

Barbary Falcon***Falco pelegrinoides***

We enjoyed excellent views of a bird drifting on the wind at the Aswan High Dam.

Pheasants & Quails *Phasianidae***Chukar Partridge*****Alectoris chukar***

A single bird was scoped and enjoyed at Petra in Jordan.

Sand Partridge *Ammoperdix heyi*

A pair was scoped by half during our tour of St Katherine's Monastery.

Common Quail***Coturnix coturnix***

A single bird was flushed near a reedbed at Sharm El Sheik.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae***Purple Swamphen*****Porphyrio porphyrio***

Fairly common on the Nile River where the highest count of twenty birds were made between Edfu and Esna.

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 100+ on the Nile cruise between Edfu and Luxor.

Painted-Snipe *Rostratulidae***Greater Painted-snipe*****Rostratula benghalensis***

We enjoyed excellent scope views of a male bird at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

Stilts & Avocets *Recurvirostridae***Black-winged Stilt*****Himantopus himantopus***

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

Thick-knees *Burhinidae***Senegal Thick-knee*****Burhinus senegalensis***

First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Aswan, Luxor and at El Fayoum.

Coursers & Pratincoles *Glareolidae***Collared Pratincole*****Glareola pratincola***

Four birds were seen at Lake Nasser.

Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae***Spur-winged Plover*****Vanellus spinosus***

The commonest wetland lapwing occurring at virtually every wetland, the highest count being over 25 on our Nile Cruise between Aswan and Edfu.

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

Twenty at Hurghada and three seen at El Fayoum.

Common Ringed Plover***Charadrius haiticula***

A single at Lake Nasser, two daily at Hurghada and further singleton at El Fayoum.

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

Two at Giftun Island and a further two at Ras Mohammed NP.

Little Ringed Plover***Charadrius dubius***

A single bird was seen at a small marsh near Suez.

Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae

Common Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

A single bird was flushed at a wetland near Suez.

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

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

A single bird was seen at Giftun Island.

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

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

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

A single at the Ras Mohammed NP.

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

We enjoyed good scope looks at a single bird was moulting into full breeding plumage at El Fayoum.

Common Redshank

Tringa totanus

A single bird was found by Ken at Hurghada.

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with our first sighting at Lake Nasser.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with our first sighting at Lake Nasser.

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 25+ at Lake Nasser.

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Two at Crocodile Island Luxor and a further sighting of a single bird at the sewage plant, Sharm El Shiek.

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

Up to thirty birds were seen at ponds in the El Fayoum area including several in stunning breeding plumage.

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Ten birds were seen in smart breeding plumage at El Fayoum.

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

Recorded in small numbers scattered wetland sites throughout Egypt with a high count of seventy on our day trip to El Fayoum.

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 at Hurghada and ten daily at Ain Sukhna.

Sooty Gull

Larus hemprichii

Six+ birds were seen at Hurghada.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

A single bird seen near Esna and forty birds were seen at Suez.

Black-headed Gull

Larus ridibundus

Recorded in good numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt with 200+ on our Nile boat cruise between Esna and Luxor.

Slender-billed Gull

Larus ichthyaetus

Recorded at scattered sites throughout Egypt with a high count of 200 at El Fayoum. A few were in beautiful pink breeding plumage.

Terns Sternidae

Gull-billed Tern

Sterna nilotica

Recorded daily at Lake Nasser and a few along the Nile River.

Caspian Tern

Sterna caspia

Six seen on the Red Sea at Hurghada Three at Ras Mohammed NP and a single bird at Suez

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

Ten on our boat trip of Hurghada and ten at Suez.

Little Tern*Sterna albifrons*

Thirty at El Fayoum.

Saunders's Tern*Sterna saundersi*

Three off Hurghada and eight at Ras Mohammed NP.

Greater Crested Tern*Sterna bergii*

A single bird was 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.

White-winged Tern*Chlidonias leucopterus*

An adult found by John near Esna and a further four at El Fayoum.

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae**Spotted Sandgrouse***Pterocles senegallus*

Up to twenty birds were watched near Abu Simbel. We had excellent scope views as they fed quietly in the desert.

Crowned Sandgrouse*Pterocles coronatus*

Two birds were heard and then seen at Abu Simbel. We enjoyed our best views of two birds close to the road at the Ras Mohammed NP.

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 30+ daily 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 30+ birds on several days.

Cuckoos Cuculidae**Common Cuckoo***Cuculus canorus*

First heard calling at Wad Sir and then seen and heard at Petra, Jordan.

Typical Owls Strigidae**European Scops Owl***Otus scops*

A single of these migrants was seen well at Abu Simbel. A good find!

Swifts Apodidae**Common Swift***Apus apus*

A migrant seen in small numbers with our highest count of ten at Ras Mohammed NP.

Pallid Swift*Apus pallidus*

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 Petra Jordan.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Common Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis*

Two of these beauties were watched as they hunted along the beach at Ras Mohammed NP.

White-throated Kingfisher*Halcyon smyrnensis*

Six at Abassa where we were treated to good views of this stunning bird, one of Egypt's most colorful. A further two birds were scoped at Wadi As Sir in Jordan.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

Commonly recorded at wetland sites throughout Egypt and highest count being 50+ on our Nile boat cruise between Edfu and Luxor.

Bee-eaters *Meropidae*

Little Green Bee-eater

Merops orientalis

Small numbers of these colourful birds were seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt. Our highest count of ten was obtained at Crocodile Island.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

Merops persicus

A single bird was seen near Luxor. Later we obtained good views of ten birds daily around Cairo.

European Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

Recorded almost daily throughout Egypt and Jordan. Our highest count was of forty birds seen on several days.

Rollers *Coraciidae*

Eurasian Roller

Coracias garrulus

Two of these stunning birds were seen on a hill near Suez while we were searching for Greater Hoopoe Lark.

Hoopoes *Upupidae*

Eurasian Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Small numbers seen on almost every day of the tour, at scattered sites throughout Egypt. Many were breeding and observed to be carrying food and disappearing into nest holes.

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 4th is sometimes recognised, West/Central African U. senegalensis. We only recorded the nominate Palaearctic form U. e. epops.

Woodpeckers & Allies *Picidae*

Eurasian Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

We had excellent views of a bird feeding at Abu Simbel.

Syrian Woodpecker

Dendrocopus syriacus

Three birds were seen well at Wadi As Sir in Jordan.

Larks *Alaudidae*

Desert Lark

Ammomanes deserti

Six at St Katherine and a pair at Petra.

Greater Hoopoe-Lark

Alaemon alaudipes

A single bird was seen by Ron and Erik near Suez in the early evening on our journey to Ain Sukhna. We all enjoyed good scope views of a pair at Wadi Hagul. In flight the upper wings showed the large white secondaries flashes.

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 our resort at Hurghada.

Eurasian Crag-Martin

Ptyonoprogne rupestris

Three birds were seen at Abu Simbel and a further three at Petra, Jordan.

Rock Martin

Ptyonoprogne fuligula

Regularly seen throughout Egypt and in Petra, Jordan with the highest numbers being 30+ on the rocky cliffs at Lake Nasser, Egypt.

Note: Rock Martin and Pale Crag-Martin are merged into a single species: Rock Martin Ptyonoprogne fuligula. Race birvae 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 Egyptian race *r. savignii* which are a deep rusty reddish colour were seen on several occasions at scattered sites and we observed flocks of migrating white-bellied Palaearctic 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*

Recorded in good numbers at scattered sites with a high of 100+ at Hurghada.

Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae***White Wagtail***Motacilla alba*

Singles at Abu Simbel, Luxor and El Fayoum.

African Pied Wagtail*Motacilla aguimp*

Two 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 30+ at Abu Simbel The attractive and distinctive black-headed, waterside-dwelling *M. f. feldeggii* 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 feldeggii race we observed may also be split off as Black-headed Wagtail.

[(Eastern) Yellow Wagtail*Motacilla flava pygmaea]*

An adult was seen feeding two fledglings at a marsh near Suez.

NOTE: Some authorities have recently split the Yellow Wagtail complex into 2 full species, Eastern and Western Yellow Wagtail. The species that we saw in Egypt is referred to as Egyptian Wagtail.

Tawny Pipit*Anthus campestris*

Singles at Hurghada and Ras Mohammed NP.

Red-throated Pipit*Anthus cervinus*

Seen at scattered sites with a high count of 20 on the shoreline around Lake Nasser.

Meadow Pipit*Anthus pratensis*

The commonest pipit on migration with several seen at Lake Nasser, at Hurghada and at Ain Sukhna. Our first birds were seen in our hotel grounds in Cairo.

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*

Four birds at Wadi Fieran and several seen at Petra.

Thrushes & Allies *Turdidae***Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush***Monticola saxatilis*

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

Blue Rock-Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

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

Eurasian Blackbird*Turdus merula*

A male was seen and heard in Cairo. This species was also recorded in good numbers at Wadi As Sir 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 at Abassa.

Streaked Scrub-Warbler*Scotocerca inquieta*

Good views were had of four birds at St Katherine. A further three birds were seen at Petra, Jordan.

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*
First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Crocodile Island.
- Eurasian Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
Several birds were seen in reedbeds at Lake Nasser.
- Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*
Two identified at Abu Simbel with a further sighting at a wetland near Suez.
- Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
Two birds were seen at a reedbed 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 and El Fayoum.
- Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Hippolais pallida*
A fairly 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 elaeica, reiseri and laeneni.
- Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais caligata*
A single bird at Petra, Jordan.
- Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Two at Hurghada.
- Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*
Singles at Abu Simbel and 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.
- Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
We enjoyed good views of several birds at our hotel grounds at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Luxor and Wadi As Sir near Amman, Jordan.
- Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*
We had good views at Hurghada and St Katherine. It was common in Jordan where it is a breeding resident.
- Greater Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*
A single bird was seen at Wadi Hagul.
- Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*
Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and the highest count being 15+ at Abu Simbel.
- (Eastern) Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensis*
Excellent views were had of this attractive species at Wadi As Sir.
- Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala*
Three birds were seen at Wadi As Sir. A pair was seen carrying food to a nest.

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

- Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*
A single at Abu Simbel and two at Wadi As Sir.
- European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*
A male was found at Abu Simbel.
- Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis*
A male and a female bird were found in Cairo and another male at Abu Simbel.
- Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia*
A single was located in an orchard at Petra.
- Common Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*
First recorded in Cairo with further sightings at Hurghada and St Katherine.
- Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes*
Two at Abu Simbel and a further two at Crocodile Island, Luxor.
- Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
A single bird in Cairo, three at Abu Simbel, a male at Hurghada and a further sighting at Wadi As Sir in Jordan.
- Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*
Several birds were seen at Abu Simbel, Hurghada and at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

White-tailed (White-crowned Black) Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga*
Common around Abu Simbel with further sightings at Aswan and on our drive between St Katherine and Ain Sukhna.

Hooded Wheatear *Oenanthe monacha*
A single bird was found between St Katherine and Wadi Fieran.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout Egypt and the highest count being four 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*
First recorded at St Katherine with further sightings around Wadi Hagul and 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 and at Wadi As Sir in Jordan where it is a breeding migrant.

Blackstart *Cercomela melanura*
Two 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 single bird was seen at Wadi Fieran and several birds were seen in Petra, Jordan.

Orioles Oriolidae

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
First recorded at Abu Simbel with further sightings at Luxor, Hurghada and near Amman, Jordan.

Shrikes Laniidae

Southern Gray Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*
Two at Suez and three at Wadi As Sir.
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.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*
Seen in small numbers at scattered sites throughout Egypt and Petra with a high count of 10+ at Wadi As Sir, Jordan where it is a breeding migrant.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*
First seen in Cairo and recorded at several sites thereafter including Wadi As Sir, Jordan, where it is a breeding migrant.

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 Egypt.
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 80+ between Luxor and Hurghada.

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*
Six+ birds were seen on our visit to the ancient city of Petra.

Starlings *Sturnidae***Tristram's Starling***Onychognathus tristramii*

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

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae***House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

Commonly seen throughout the tour.

Waxbills & Allies *Estrildidae***Indian Silverbill***Eodice malabarica*

Two birds were seen in Cairo. An introduced species.

Siskins, Crossbills & Allies *Fringillidae***Pale (Sinai) Rosefinch***Carpodacus synoicus*

Four were seen at St Katherine, including a stunning male. Six birds were seen at Petra in Jordan.

European Greenfinch*Carduelis chloris*

Twenty at Wadi As Sir and four around Petra.

European Goldfinch*Carduelis carduelis*

A single bird was seen at our hotel in Cairo.

Eurasian Linnet*Carduelis cannabina*

Six birds in Petra.

Trumpeter Finch*Rhodopechys githaginea*

Seven birds were seen in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor.

Buntings *Emberizidae***Cretzschmar's Bunting***Miliaria caesia*

A singing male was seen at Wadi As Sir in Jordan.

MAMMALSDogs & Allies *Canidae***Red Fox***Vulpes vulpes*

We had excellent looks at an individual hunting along a bank near Esna on the Nile.

Dolphins *Delphinidae***Bottle-nosed Dolphin***Tursiops truncatus*

We had excellent looks at four on our boat trip to Giftun Island on the Red Sea.

Rats *Muridae***Brown Rat***Rattus norvegicus*

A few were seen at Crocodile Island, Luxor.

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