

# Southern Morocco

Naturetrek Tour Report

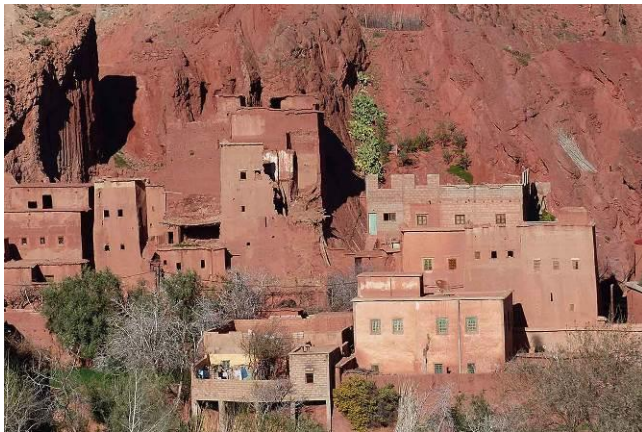
26 February – 7 March 2015



nomad making tea



Bald Ibis



Dades Valley



Spectacled Warbler

Report & images compiled by Chris Murphy



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour Leaders:                      Chris Murphy                      Ornithologist  
   Mohammed Zaki                      Ornithologist

Participants:                      Carl Baggott  
   Dawn Baggott  
   Mervyn de Winter  
   Ann de Winter  
   John Gill  
   Nicky Gill  
   Patrick Hogston  
   Dave Cox  
   Sara Crichton  
   Philip Clark  
   Ann Clark  
   Emma Crookenden  
   Justin Crookenden  
   Andy Amery

## Introduction:

Naturetrek's first trip to Southern Morocco of 2015 was one of sunshine and spring migration combined with such North African specialities as Bald Ibis, Houbara Bustard, Pharaoh Eagle Owl, Egyptian Nightjar, Levillant's Woodpecker, Tristram's Warbler, Desert Grey Shrike and Desert Sparrow. The weather could not have been more perfect. February rains had helped to bring the countryside into flower with the 'blooming desert' a thrill to see.

## Day 1

Thursday 26th February

### Marrakech

We landed at 11.40am and promptly made our way to 'arrivals' to be greeted by Mohammed, our ever-smiling Moroccan co-leader. Two hundred and fifty Black Kites were watched migrating over the airport terminal before we boarded the bus for the short drive to our hotel. White Wagtail, Swallow and Spotless Starling were noted on the way.

After freshening up, we went into the old Medina where Mohammed guided us to a balcony restaurant for the first of many tasty tagines. We then had a guided tour of the souks and alleyways that radiate from Jemma el F'na, overlooked by the towering 12th century Koutoubia Mosque. Birds from the hotel garden before dinner included Booted Eagle, Pallid and Little Swifts, Common Bulbul and Serin.

## Day 2

Friday 27th February

### Over the Atlas Mountains to Boulmane de Dades

An 8am departure ahead of a long day found us birding in verdant foothills of the High Atlas Mountains before 9am. A Long-legged Buzzard showed well and we studied some tricky 'crested' larks, which we identified as

Thekla. At Toufliht we explored some mixed woodland, eventually obtaining excellent views of Levillant's Woodpecker, Firecrest, Goshawk, Rock Bunting and Crossbill.

After a break for coffee and mint tea we explored some Juniper forest where several Tristram's Warblers together with Subalpine Warbler, Barbary Partridge and Cirl Bunting were found. Once over the Tizi-N-Tichka pass we descended through increasingly arid landscapes to Ouarzazate, gateway to the desert proper. All day long an astonishing number of Renault 4s driven by young French volunteers passed us on their way to Marrakech having brought aid to remote Moroccan schools. From Ouarzazate we still had nearly two hours driving to our next hotel, spotting our first White-crowned Wheatears on the way.

## Day 3

Saturday 28th February

### Tagdilt Plain am, Gorges de Dades pm

Early birders found a pair of Red-rumped Wheatears and some Thekla Larks, as well as 30 Hummingbird Hawk-moths sunning themselves on one of the hotel's exterior walls.

After breakfast we had only a short distance to reach the stony Tagdilt Plain. This vast, desert plateau backed by the barren, snow-flecked Jebel Sahro (part of the Sahara) is characterized by an abundance of stones and sparse sand. It is the preferred habitat of the locally distributed Red-rumped Wheatear, which has a symbiotic relationship with the cute looking Fat Sand Rat. This burrowing rodent, a favourite prey of the Long-legged Buzzard, provides nest sites for the wheatear which in turn warns the rat of any predators it sees from its perch atop a shrubby Remt (*Hammada scoparia*). Here we also admired our first Desert Wheatears, watched a pair of Temminck's Larks building their nest, and looked under small boulders for beetles, lizards and scorpions.

Mohammed had noticed that some of the Berber shepherds were from his own mountain village. Outside their inconspicuous seasonal caves, dug into the ground, we were served tea as Mohammed explained how the young adults and pre-school children would live as nomads in the desert tending their sheep and goats, while the rest of the family stayed in the High Atlas valleys. Education, which is free in Morocco, is compulsory up to the age of 16. Suitably refreshed we thanked Mohammed's friends for their hospitality and carried on birding. An unfamiliar, discordant song led us to our first Desert Grey Shrike, a handsome bird rather like a pale Great Grey Shrike with a little more white in the wing. Four small, restless larks took us a while to confirm their identification as unseasonal Skylarks, whereas the much more approachable Thekla Larks were fast becoming familiar.

We had lunch in Boulmane, overlooking the Dades Valley and under the canopy shade of a sun-drenched balcony restaurant. We then embarked on the scenic 25-kilometre drive to the top of the gorge. There was much to see on the way with fabulous Kasbahs and Ksours lining the valley, neatly irrigated fields of wheat and lucerne, date palms and orchards in blossom, and some amazing rock formations which demanded a photo stop. The wild Rock Doves hurtling through the narrow mouth at the head of the towering Gorge de Dades were a far cry from their Trafalgar Square relations. A pair of Black Wheatears and a smart, male Tristram's Warbler were also seen as we made the snaking one kilometre descent on foot, the best way to appreciate the spectacular scenery.

## Day 4

## Sunday 1st March

### Boulmane, Trimaroudine, Tinejdad and Erfoud

Today we had a leisurely departure with optional birding around the hotel before and after breakfast when a Blue Rock Thrush was found in the garden. Our first stop was on the outskirts of Trimaroudine, about an hour into the journey. A walk in the desert proved most productive with fine views of many species of larks and wheatears (including our first Desert Larks) and a pair of Trumpeter Finches. Best of all, we made the surprising discovery of a pair of Lanner Falcons, mating beside their cliff-top eyrie.

We enjoyed a quick coffee in Tinerhir while picnic makings were bought, then on to Tinejdad for lunch in the shaded garden of Hamid Meskine, 'King of Juice'.

Despite the warmth there was no heat haze to interfere with our birding and after lunch we made several stops in sandy desert finding our first Bar-tailed Larks, Fulvous Babblers and Spectacled Warblers before arriving at our next hotel on the outskirts of Erfoud.

## Day 5

## Monday 2nd March

### Dawn to dusk in the Desert

Today we had an early departure in four big comfortable jeeps and witnessed the sun rising over the desert dunes. At first light a solitary Brown-necked Raven flew overhead as we studied the tracks of a Fennec Fox, however the song of a Desert Warbler - the first of many desert-loving birds this day - drew us away. After we'd all had excellent views of the Desert Warbler proclaiming its territory we moved on to meet up with Mubarak, our Nomad guide. Mubarak led us to deeper into the desert to where we could see both Houbara Bustard and Egyptian Nightjar, and without binoculars he expertly pointed them out to us! In truth, we would have had very little chance of seeing these two without such local knowledge. With its eyes firmly closed and its soft, intricately buff-spotted plumage an exact copy of the stones that were scattered around it, we could not possibly have found the Egyptian Nightjar by ourselves. Now that we knew what to look for, John was all for trying, however we were hungry and in need of coffee; any more nightjars would have to wait.

As a sumptuous breakfast table was being set we chanced upon a highly mobile flock of Thick-billed Larks, saw another Lanner Falcon and spotted our first Ruddy Shelducks in a flooded depression. An Isabelline Wheatear, quite unexpected this far west, was the first of four for the day. Breakfast in the desert was fantastic and, our batteries fully recharged, enabled us to fully appreciate this beautiful, peaceful environment and its exciting birdlife. In quick succession we studied at close quarters a mixed flock of Pin-tailed and Spotted Sandgrouse, Bar-tailed, Short-toed and Lesser Short-toed, Hoopoe and Thick-billed Larks, Cream-coloured Courser, a pair of Desert (*elegans*) Grey Shrikes and a beautiful pair of Desert Sparrows. The latter took some searching for, until a thrilling drive over soft, undulating sand took us to a remote family of Nomads, and a stunning addition to an outstanding list of Saharan species.

Before breaking for lunch we enjoyed a leisurely stroll through a carefully irrigated oasis beneath Morocco's highest sand dune, the spectacularly orange Erg Chebi. At the nearby Nomad depot in Merzouga a Berber family provided delicious 'pizzas' and mint tea to supplement our usual picnic before demonstrating some beautiful Berber carpets made by the womenfolk of Southern Moroccan tribes, two of which were wrapped up to come

home with us - carpets that is, not women. On Sjri Dayet, a large transient lake recently replenished by February's rain, we found lots of water birds including many species that were new for us such as Garganey, Gadwall and the rare Ferruginous Duck. All too soon the sun was going down and our amazing day in the Sahara was coming to an end. Back in Erfoud we thanked our brilliant team of driver-navigators, tipped the desert sand out of our boots and got ready for dinner.

## Day 6

Tuesday 3rd March

### Erfoud to Ouarzazate via the Tizi-n-Tiniffit Pass

One species the desert nomads could not help us find yesterday was Pharaoh Eagle Owl so our first destination was to an eagle owl site near Rissani that Chris knew from earlier trips ... if only he could remember where. Despite a couple of wrong turns we soon found ourselves entering a serene amphitheatre of high cliffs and shifting sand where the sanctity was broken only by a distant fossil hunter's intermittent 'tap-tapping'. After a while we found the owl asleep in a crevice and were able to train our telescopes on its big, sleepy face. Not once did it open its eyes, just as it should be. High fives and whispered delight then back on the road, our long journey west having barely begun.

With the desert so much in flower it wasn't long before we just had to get out for a closer look at the myriad of asphodels, brooms, broomrapes, charlocks, poppies and sandworts. We made a short stop in Alnif where Mervyn snapped up an expertly prepared Trilobite for the knock down price of 100 Dirhams (about 10 Euros) then a longer stop for lunch among riverside trees near Tazzarene. This is where we got to see our first Moussier's Redstart of the trip, a superb male, together with Barbary Partridge and a few migrant warblers and water birds.

On reaching the swollen waters of the River Draa we stopped again to purchase baskets of dates, and taking the opportunity to have a close look at the long bills of Maghreb Larks, a recent split from Crested Lark. Then it was up and over the moonscape of the Anti Atlas Mountains via Tizi-n-Tiniffit pass and down into Ouarzazate.

## Day 7

Wednesday 4th March

### Ouarzazate, Aoulouz Gorge and Taroudant

Our first birding was a return visit to a barrage where a good variety of waders and wildfowl included Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Ruff, Ruddy Shelduck and more Ferruginous Ducks. Also of interest here was an Osprey and a flighty Red-throated Pipit. Shortly before reaching Oued Ihiri we made our last walk in the desert in search of Desert Larks as not everyone had caught up with this species: mission accomplished amidst more wonderful desert flora.

Before lunch we enjoyed a refreshing glass of Saffron infused tea and a walk amongst the orchards of the quaintly named village of Tinfat. Here we listened to and watched Hoopoes calling from blossom trees and had cracking views of Moussier's Redstart, African Chaffinch and Great Spotted Woodpecker, whilst Andy also saw two Spanish Sparrows and Mervyn a Western Orphean Warbler. After lunch and some purchases of Saffron we stopped at the Aoulouz Gorge to look for raptors, finding breeding Kestrels, Peregrines and one or two migrating Short-toed Eagles. By now we were well out of the desert and into the fertile Souss valley, which is

dominated by open Argan forest frequently under-sown with cereals; the region is famous for its much-prized Argan oil. Before reaching Taroudant we had two more stops. At the first, Dave discovered a family of recently fledged Fulvous Babblers being fed big, fat beetles by their attentive parents. At the second, we paid a small, speeding fine - naturally, mildly disputed - and got to see two Black-winged Kites in the process. After another long and eventful day it was great to sit down to a delicious dinner with a cold beer or a glass of wine.

## Day 8

Thursday 5th March

### Taroudant, Tamri, Agadir

Some of us opted for a more leisurely morning and a look at the souk, while others visited a nearby patch of uncultivated land, 'Murphy's Meadow'. There's nothing terribly rare here but as most of the Souss valley is under cultivation it offers sanctuary to a variety of birds which this morning included Stone Curlew, Spectacled and Subalpine Warblers, Black-crowned Tchagra, Tawny Pipit and two pairs of Black-winged Kites.

From Taroudant's inner city walls we next travelled west to Tamri which is an hour's drive north of Agadir, on the mighty Atlantic coast. After another tasty tagine (with Barbary Falcon and Red-rumped Swallow on the side) we set off in earnest on the quest to find one of the world's rarest birds, the Northern Bald Ibis (not to be confused with a similar species of Southern Africa). Tamri is where most groups look for Bald Ibis and though our first few efforts drew blanks, with a little help from a conscientious Bald Ibis guardian we eventually saw a total of 21 birds in flight, six of which settled on the ground at remarkably close range; they are not afraid of man, not even birdwatchers.

Well pleased (and somewhat relieved) we then visited the shingle bank that encloses Tamri (estuary) Lagoon. This is a favourite roosting site for gulls and terns and here amongst a plethora of Lesser Black-backed and Yellow-legged Gulls we found good numbers of the much rarer Audouin's Gull, including an adult bearing the (white) ring number: AP6L. There were several colour-ring-bearing gulls here, one of which, a Lesser Black-backed Gull, Carl was able to trace back to its birthplace on a Norwegian island (indicating it was of the southern Scandinavian race, *intermedius*). After dinner Carl even showed us a picture of the bird being ringed as a fledgling - the wonders of modern technology.

## Day 9

Friday 6th March

### Agadir and Souss-Massa National Park

Approaching Massa we stopped to watch a beautiful male Marsh Harrier. While doing so, we spotted a cryptically camouflaged Stone Curlew at its daytime roost, typically motionless. A small flock of Black-bellied Sandgrouse flew over calling, with them a solitary Spotted Sandgrouse. Parties of migrating Short-toed Larks passed us while male Lesser Short-toed Larks took to the air in cheerful song. Little Owls seemed to be plentiful with five birds quickly spotted, sitting on rock walls. Such a promising start to the day was deserving of a little celebration.

Being Friday, most shops were closed but eventually we found a cake shop that was open. Or should it be 'crake' shop, for across the road was a small pond at the back of which Little and Baillon's Crakes kept popping into view. A Black-crowned Tchagra could be heard, if not seen. We searched upriver for Plain Martins, often

following small hirundines in the air but each time they turned out to be Sand Martins. One reason, perhaps, why we didn't find this species was the apparent popularity of their normally preferred sites with boys looking to swim in the river. At one river crossing we were just scoping a Kingfisher when Andy spotted a male Little Bittern climbing up the reeds. At another, we watched one of Massa's recently discovered (resident) African Reed Warblers. It was in full song and its short wings - on account that it doesn't migrate - were evident through a telescope. We also saw our first Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, and Blue-headed Wagtail, and heard another Black-crowned Tchagra before commencing our gentle walk through the village of Sidi Binzaren to picnic in the Souss-Massa National Park. At the invitation of one of the young villagers we all got to see a Tchagra very well through a telescope.

Over lunch good birds kept being spotted including some roosting Night Herons by Dave, who also spotted a Montague's Harrier as we gave the Plain Martins one last go before returning to our hotel. After an hour to relax and freshen up most of us then headed to Oued Souss where we waited until dusk for Stone Curlews and Red-necked Nightjars to stir. We saw one of the former and heard several more but could only hear the nightjar.

## Day 10

Saturday 7th March

Agadir, Oued Souss, London

A few opted for a lie-in and a relaxing morning but most of us headed back to Oued Souss where we walked all the way out to the edge of the Atlantic. There seemed to be some raptor migration today with a trickle of Marsh Harriers and an Osprey which caught a fish. Spoonbills, Night Herons and a North African Cormorant passed overhead and new species included Great White Egret, Slender-billed Gull (colour-ringed: white '7HT'), Dunlin, Grey Plover, Ringed Plover and Avocet.

After a cold beer by the pool we checked out and headed up the coast a few miles for a long lunch, a fitting end to a whirlwind holiday. Then it was off to the airport where we thanked Mohammed and our expert drivers, Said and Abdul, and departed on schedule. Thanks for your kindness and observations, and hope to see you all again sometime.

## The Desert in Bloom

By Sara Crichton

We had travelled with Naturetrek to see the birds, some of them very rare. This we did, but nature often produces the unexpected and we were also privileged to witness an amazing abundance and variety of wild flowers. Our leader, Chris Murphy, who had led 14 previous tours to Morocco, had never seen such a display.

Not only did we see the stony desert in bloom, there were flowers to be enjoyed everywhere in the countryside, from the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, to the great desert dunes of Merzouga to the coastal region of Agadir. Just prior to our visit there had been a considerable amount of rain in the desert, even a fall of snow on the stony hamada east of Boulmane du Dades. As well as on the lofty peaks of the High Atlas there was also snow on the lower Jebel Sarhro range to the south. Near Rissani, where last year there was only sand, a great lake had recently appeared, already discovered by masses of migratory birds. With perfect timing the weather had changed. For us it was ten days of sunshine and blue skies, and not a drop of rain!

Flowers that predominated included the dainty white Moroccan Asphodel, tall spikes of Mignonette that turned complete hillsides cream, and bright yellow Charlock that flowered wherever there was occasionally cultivated land. Most were very difficult to identify, not least the many varieties of yellow flowers and shrubs. As we travelled alongside the Atlantic it was lovely to see swathes of blue Limonium (Stative) by the roadside. While searching for the rare Bald Ibis north of Agadir, we encountered poppies galore, a smaller version of the familiar field poppy. At every “bird stop”, new flowers awaited our discovery.

Birds, flowers, spectacular scenery, wonderful weather and good company all combined to make a very special holiday. See the list of flowers at the end of the report

## Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!



## Species Lists

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March									
			26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>		2				3		2		
2	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>							1	3h		
3	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>					20	10	14	2	2	
4	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>							4			
5	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>						2			8	
6	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>					3					
7	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>					1					
8	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>					18					
9	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>					30					
10	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>					21		6			
11	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					2				2	
12	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>					6	4	4			
13	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>					50	2	1			
14	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	4	10	1		2	34	100		1	
15	Northern Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>							21			
16	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>									14	
17	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>									28	24
18	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>									1	
19	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>									7	15
20	Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		100	20	100			6		20	
21	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>										2
22	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>						4	4	14	10	6
23	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>						7	6	11	6	
24	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>								6		
25	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>						132	20	6	6	10
	North African Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus</i>								1	1	
26	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>							1			1
27	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>							2	5		
28	Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>		2					1	1		

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March									
			26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1									
30	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		3					1			
31	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		1								
32	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>				1	1	2	1	2	3	4
33	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>									1	
34	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	250	7						3		
35	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>		1					1			
36	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		4	1	3		2	6	20	15	6
37	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>				2	1					
38	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>							1	2		
39	Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>								2	1	1
40	Houbara Bustard	<i>Chlamydotis undulata</i>					1					
41	Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>									2	
42	Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>									2	
43	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>									20	
44	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>					12	400	400	20	6	
45	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>		1								
46	Eurasian Stone-Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>								2	7	1
47	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>									2	4
48	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>									10	10
49	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>										5
50	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>										9
51	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>										13
52	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>					6	6	4			
53	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>					2	3	6			
54	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>									1	
55	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>									1	12
56	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>								1	1	
57	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>									2	10
58	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>				1		1	1	4	10	4
59	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			1			1	2			
60	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>						3	1		3	

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March									
			26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
61	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>							1		1	
62	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					20		10			2
63	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>										2
64	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>							2			10
65	Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>					12					
66	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>										1
67	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>									20	20
68	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>									1	4
69	Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus audouinii</i>								60		1
70	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus melanocephalus</i>									12	40
71	Western Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis michahellis</i>								500	100	500
72	Western Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>								1000	1000	500
	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus intermedius</i>								1		
73	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>								2	11	70
74	Spotted Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles senegallus</i>					3	h			1	
75	Black-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>									4	
76	Pin-tailed Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>					10					
77	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	20	22	30		10	6	4	4	✓
78	Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	10	30	21				2	1	3	
79	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	6	6	2	20	10	26	20	10	10	
80	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>			2		4	2	1	1	12	
81	Pharaoh Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo ascalaphus</i>						1				
82	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>									5	
83	Red-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>									h	
84	Egyptian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus aegyptius</i>					1					
85	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>							100		40	
86	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	100	50	5					40	150	10
87	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	6	6						1		
88	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>									1	
89	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>					1	1	8		3	
90	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		2					2			
91	Levaillant's Woodpecker	<i>Picus vaillantii</i>		2					h			

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March										
			26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
92	Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>									2	8	
93	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis algenensis</i>								22	12		
	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis elegans</i>			1	2	2	3					
94	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>									2		1
95	Moroccan Magpie	<i>Pica pica mauritanica</i>		20					2	12	28	10	
96	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>		100									
97	Brown-necked Raven	<i>Corvus ruficollis</i>					2	9					
98	'North African' Raven	<i>Corvus corax tingitanus</i>		3						4			
99	Atlas Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater atlas</i>		6									
100	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		6					6	1	1		
101	African Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes teneriffae</i>		8	2								
102	Greater Hoopoe-Lark	<i>Alaemon alaudipes</i>					14						
103	Thick-billed Lark	<i>Ramphocoris clotbey</i>					33						
104	Bar-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes cinctura</i>				4	6						
105	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>				6			6				
106	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>					16					30	
107	Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>			2		6					10	
108	Maghreb Lark	<i>Galerida macrorhyncha</i>					2	12	8				
109	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>		6	20	6			20	40	20	10	
110	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			4								
111	Temminck's Lark	<i>Eremophila bilopha</i>			18	6							
112	Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	p	p	p	p		p	p			p	
113	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>					1					3	
114	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	6	100	3	2	3		12	12	50		
115	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		10	10	2		2	1				
116	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>			2					2			
117	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>								3			
118	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		1	1							8	
119	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>										1	
120	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	2	8	6	4	12	40	10	2	2		
121	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>							1		10		
122	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		2					1		20	6	

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March									
			26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
123	Fulvous Babbler	<i>Turdoides fulva</i>				4		2	7	12		
124	African Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>									1	
125	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		4			4		4	2	5	
126	Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>					1					
127	African Desert Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserti</i>								1		
128	Tristram's Warbler	<i>Sylvia deserticola</i>		3	1							
129	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>				2	3	2	2	4		
130	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>		2							4	6
131	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>		4			1	1	2	4	10	4
132	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>		8								
133	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	100	40					2	10	100	10
134	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	40	12	4	2	10	10	20	6	20	2
135	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		7								
136	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		1								
137	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		2	5	3		1	1		2	
138	Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>						1	2		6	
139	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		1	1		1				30	2
140	Red-rumped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe moesta</i>			5	4			2			
141	Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>					4					
142	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>				1						1
143	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>									1	
144	Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>			10	6	1		3			
145	White-crowned Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucopyga</i>		3		30	6	60	18			
146	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>		3	4	1		4	12	1		
147	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>				3		1	5	2		
148	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p
149	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>							2	1		
150	Desert Sparrow	<i>Passer simplex</i>					2					
151	Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>									6	
	Spanish Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava iberiae</i>					1		1		2	
152	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		1	1			2	1		1	
153	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	2	3	4	2	3	3	6	40	500	1

	Common name	Scientific name	February/March									
			26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Moroccan Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba subpersonata</i>			3			1	3	1		
154	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>								1		
155	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		6			10		2			1
156	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>									h	
157	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>							1			
158	Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		1								
	'North African' Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs africana</i>		20	2				14		2	
159	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>				4	2	2				
160	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		1					30	10	6	4
161	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		2	20	6		10	20			
162	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>		1								
163	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		1				2	10		2	
164	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	p	p	2	3		16	20	2	20	6
165	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		6	1				4	1	1	
166	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>		3					2			
167	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>		2					h		2	
168	House Bunting	<i>Emberiza sahari</i>	p	p	p	p		p	p	p	p	
169	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>									1	

## Mammals

Fat Sand Rat

Fennec Fox

Barbary Ground Squirrel

Cape Hare

Brown Rat

## Butterflies &amp; Moths

Small White

Large White

Dappled White

Brimstone

Clouded Yellow

Swallowtail

Scarce Swallowtail

Comma

Painted Lady

Small Copper

African Grass Jewel

Red Admiral

Wall Brown

Moroccan Orange-tip

Spotted Fritillary

Hummingbird Hawk-moth

## Other Taxa

Stripe-necked Terrapin

Green Toad

Marsh Frog

Yellow Scorpion

## Plants – kindly supplied by client Sara Crichton

The flowers are listed on the first day they were seen. Many were seen numerous times but some only once or twice. Photographs of all the flowers listed were studied on my computer and the books used in an attempt to identify them were: Mediterranean Wild Flowers and Alpine Flowers of Britain and Europe both by Marjorie Blamey and Christopher Grey-Wilson. As I have no book specifically covering flowers in Morocco, or North Africa, many flowers remain unidentified. The numerous different yellow flowers were particularly difficult to identify.

### Day 2

Friday 27th February

Seen at the two stops we made in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains.

Moroccan Asphodel (identified by Mohammed, white dainty flowers from strong upright stems, thousands seen throughout the trip, on every day except day in the desert).

Deep purple/black flower (unidentified, unusual distinctive plant, mostly in bud, small tubular flowers in groups, pale green leaves, stems and leaves hairy, low growing).

Greater Periwinkle

Orchid (unidentified, purple flowers, no spots).

Salvia (probably Wild Clary).

Cladanthus family? (Bright yellow flower, orange/brown centre but leaves more like Corn Marigold).

White flower (unidentified, small low growing single flower from the ground, 6 pointed petals with pale blue random lines, tendril leaves, seen only on rocky hillside on day 2).

Hoop Petticoat Narcissus (yellow very pretty flower, plant of mountain pastures, seen only on day 2).

### Day 3

Saturday 28th February

At hotel

Cut-Leaved Dame's Violet.

On the stony desert plains.

Yellow flower, (almost certainly Rest-Harrow family, low growing, spreading habit).

White flowers in clusters (Candytuft family? low growing, spreading habit).

Yellow flower (unidentified, small flowers, four petals, bright, low growing, very pretty, seen only once).

Pale mauve flowers in clusters (unidentified but very distinctive leaves similar to Goat's Rue and the vetch family, low growing, spreading habit).

Golden or Yellow Alyssum (or same family, bright yellow flowers in clusters, short plant).

Bush (unidentified, small yellow flowers, 10 petals, pale green spiky stems, some flowers seen in seed later on looking like small dandelion clocks, we saw many of these bushes).

Spring Vetch.

Pink Oxalis.

Bush (unidentified, small yellow flowers, compact, lime green narrow leaves).

Rosemary.

Almond trees in flower near the water.

## Day 4

Sunday 1st March

On the plains and beside the roads.

Bush (unidentified, distinctive blue/grey spiky bush with small mauve flowers, 4 petals, many seen in following days, some large bushes).

Bush (unidentified, small yellow flowers, 10 petals, pale green spiky stems, some flowers seen in seed later on in the trip looking like small dandelion clocks, we saw many of these bushes).

Blue flower with white centre (unidentified, 4 petals, long stems, single flowers widely separated).

Spurge (low growing, compact, grey/green pointed leaves, very small flowers).

Yellow flower (daisy family? small round yellow flowers, like little pompoms, single flower on each stem).

Pheasant's Eye.

Yellow flower (Toadflax family, grey/green leaves, low growing in stony soil).

Yellow flower (4 petals, very bright pretty flower, grey/green leaves, very low growing, very pretty, only seen in one place on day 4).

Corn Mignonette (medium height, small white/cream flowers up a long stem).

White flower (unidentified, 4 petals, small, low spreading).

Yellow flower (Marigold family? small flowers, multi petals, low growing, hairy stem).

White flower (daisy family? multi petals, centre purple with cream surround, very pretty).

White flower with yellow centre (unidentified, small, 5 petals, sepals between petals, low spreading).

Narrow-Leaved Bugloss (blue/mauve flowers).

Spurge (bright yellow small flowers, long bright green arching stems).

Star of Bethlehem (or similar, white flowers had green stripes inside the petals not outside as described in the flower book).

Figwort family (tiny flowers, red/brown tip to petals).

Broomrape (shiny yellow flowers, parasitic plant).

## Day 5

Monday 2nd March

In the desert

White Mustard (flowers pale yellow, growing where probably ground had been cultivated, seen in the small oasis we walked through).

Yellow Chamomile (or very similar).

Corn Marigold (or very similar).

## Day 6

Tuesday 3rd March

Walk in the valley looking for owls in the cliffs.

Pink small cupped flower (unidentified, pale green bulbous leaves, branched stems, low growing).

Mauve small open flower (unidentified, 5 petals, green centre, low growing in the sand).

Green/white tiny flowers (unidentified, flowers in small clusters at top of stems, heart shaped leaves, succulent plant, hairy stems and leaves).

Yellow flower (daisy family? small round flower similar, so same family as flower described on day 4 but this plant formed a neat mound, stems of flowers much shorter, growing in the sand).



### Stop for the flowers.

Charlock (almost certain of identification, bright yellow flowers in clusters, medium tall plant classed as a widespread weed and grows on land that has previously been cultivated. The plant we saw covering many fields which had been seen earlier but not studied closely).

Mignonette (cream/white multi flowers up a tall strong stem, thousands seen at edge of fields, by roadsides and up hills turning the latter white in the distance).

Hawksbeard family (bright yellow flower).

### Picnic lunch stop.

Yellow flower (similar Reichardia family, medium height plant, heart shaped large toothed leaves).

## Day 7

Wednesday 4th March

### Walk on the stony plain with a dry stream bed.

White flower (unidentified, small 5 petals, yellow centre, very low growing in stony desert, not seen on any other day).

Cut-leaved Lavender (flowers violet/blue, long spikes, aromatic).

Yellow flower (unidentified, pale yellow short petals, about 15, surrounding large darker yellow centre, low growing plant, distinctive single leaves growing from base, growing in stony ground and only seen on day 7).

Erodium (geranium family, pink/mauve small flower, 5 petals, dark centre, low growing on stony ground).

Vetch family (similar to Crown Vetch, deep pink flowers in clusters on long almost prostrate stems, only seen on day 7).

**Note:- Several species of flowers seen here and not on the earlier stony plains.**

### At the saffron lunch stop, walking through the orchard and at roadside.

Large Mediterranean Spurge (or similar, Euphorbia family).

Tuberous Hawkbit (or similar, yellow flower, petals all rayed, solitary on stems, low growing).

Hawkbit family (similar to previous Hawkbit, but dark brown narrow ring round centre).

## Day 8

Thursday 5th March

### Having left Taroudant

Limonium (Statice, blue with some white flowers, low growing, seen in large patches by the roadside).

### Walk towards the sea near village of Tamri to the north of Agadir, searching for the Bald Ibis.

White flowers (unidentified, small flower with 5 petals, yellow centre, low growing).

Bugloss family (blue flowers, low growing).

White flower (unidentified, small in clusters, 5 petals, bright yellow at base of petals, pale green leaves, low growing).

Pink flower (unidentified, 5 petals, yellow centre, very pretty, small leaves, low growing)

Pink flower (pea family? prostrate).

Mauve flower (unidentified, multi narrow petals, dark pink/mauve centre).

Poppy (smaller than our field poppy, leaves closer to the ground, numerous in sand/stony area near the sea).

Toadflax family (bright blue/mauve, white centre).

Red flower (unidentified, small flower, 6 petals, black centre, turning yellow as flower faded).

Dark Purple flower (unidentified, looking like a cross between an orchid and grape hyacinth, short fleshy stem).

Mauve flower (unidentified, looking rather like knapweed, white centre, significant brown stamens, very pretty).

Pink flower (unidentified, small, five petals, greenish/yellow centre, branched stems, low growing).

## Day 9

Friday 6th March

Walk in National Park by lagoon and reed beds near village of Massa.

For the first time there were many cactus plants on the stony hillside, none in flower.

White flower (like an ox-eye daisy but leaves different).

Ragwort family (yellow small flowers, similar to plant in England).

Viper's Bugloss family (flowers all red).

*Iris plantifolia* (probably, blue/violet flower, quite short stems).

Bird's-foot Trefoil family (did not seem to be Southern Bird's-Foot Trefoil, it was similar to the plant we have in England).

Yellow flower (unidentified, yet another small daisy type flower not seen before).

Pink flower (unidentified, 5 petals, yellow centre but different again to similar plants seen earlier).

Yellow flower (unidentified, 7 petals, brown centre, feathery leaf).

Nicotiana (yellow/lime green tubular flowers in groups, attractive plant).

Marigold (orange).

Hottentot Fig (large spectacular pink/purple flowers, yellow centre, forming a large mass, native of South Africa).

## Day 10

Saturday 7th March

**Walk at Oued Souss estuary, south of Agadir, through scrub and sand dunes to the beach**

Yellow flower (unidentified, yet another, many petals, no obvious centre, pale grey/pale green leaves).

Clumps of pink/red succulent shoots.

Not a new flower but many of the yellow broomrape growing in the sand dunes.

White flower (unidentified, 4 petals, yellow centre, very unusual succulent leaves, small plant low growing in the sand).

Trees and Shrubs noted throughout

Almond

Hibiscus

Acacia

Juniper

Argan

Orange

Bougainvillea

Oleander

Date Palm

Olive

(2 other Palms)

Plumbago

Flame Vine

Pine (probably several)

Datura

Tamarisk

Fig