

## **TRIP REPORT FOR KUWAIT: 16 – 29 MARCH 2000**

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### **BACKGROUND & COSTS**

Old friends (Amanda and Alan) had moved out to Kuwait (2-year contract and living in Salwa) the previous year. I decided to take advantage of this and the fact that British Airways were offering a £150 discount on flights to the Middle East as part of a New Year offer. The reduced price (excluding £49 travel/medical insurance) came to £361.10. This also included connecting return flights from Newcastle to Heathrow. For visitors to Kuwait it is essential to have contacts based there, in order to sponsor your Visa. The basic cost of a Visa (obtainable in the UK) is £35 but can cost as much as £70 depending on the notice given. Hosts (and some Hotels) in Kuwait can also arrange a Visa for you (as in my case). The flight from Heathrow to Kuwait takes between six and seven hours, and combined with the time difference of 3 hours, for some reason takes two to three days to fully recover from (not just me).

Due to having contacts in Kuwait and being aware that taxis are relatively cheap I had decided beforehand not to hire a vehicle. The diary below shows that, in my case, I had made the right decision. Having said that, if you do not have contacts and wish to travel into the desert, then a four-wheel drive cross-country type vehicle is essential (cost approx. 22KD (£45) per day). Driving around the city area is very challenging (by western standards) and accidents can be very costly (especially if you are at fault and someone else is injured).

### **KUWAIT BIRDING PICTURE**

In advance, I reviewed the various literature – copies of the latest Collins Field Guide (Mullarney et al) and Birds of the Middle east and North Africa (Hollom et al) were on my bookshelf and were sufficient for daily use in the field. The latest Field Guide to the Birds of the Middle East (Porter et al) is also recommended, though I didn't have access to a copy. There is extremely little published on Kuwait directly (to be rectified through a 10 year report being produced, fairly soon) and the situation for some species changes annually, the result of which was that I had several surprises during the trip.

I also contacted OSME in advance for any possible birding contacts in Kuwait and Andrew Grieve gave me the email address of Dr Peter Cowan ([desertlark@hotmail.com](mailto:desertlark@hotmail.com)). Whilst there I also had several days out with Thomas Spencer ([button@kems.net](mailto:button@kems.net)). Peter and Thomas form two thirds of the Kuwait Ornithological Rarities Committee (KORC) and I am extremely grateful to both for their hospitality, their company and general guidance throughout my trip. Whilst visiting birders remain rare in Kuwait both Peter and Thomas are willing to help other visiting birders in the future, subject to other routine constraints. In addition, any records are greatly welcome by any one of Peter, Thomas or Charles Pilcher ([charles@hsc.kuniv.edu.kw](mailto:charles@hsc.kuniv.edu.kw)), KORC's Bird Recorder and who maintains The Kuwait record.

### **KUWAITI BASICS**

I arrived on a Thursday, the first day of the usual weekend; in this case, a long weekend due to a public holiday. The temperature was in the region of 30-35C throughout and strong protective sun-creams were essential at all times. Shorts are not really acceptable and shirts must be kept on at all times in public areas (unless in the confines of hotel swimming pools etc). It is also recommended that you carry some form of identification at all times.

Everyone is basically very friendly. The local Kuwaitis are very inquisitive and will stop and enquire what you are doing (with bins and scopes etc) and are not threatening in any way. Often they will stop and offer you a lift – on my last day a traffic police sergeant offered to take me birdwatching to the Al Wafra (farms) area for the afternoon but impending flights forced me to decline.

The low paid workforce is made up on many Asian races, all of whom are also very friendly and reliable – taxi drivers can be totally relied upon to pick you up anywhere and are rarely late. During the trip I met people from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Egypt and the Philippines, all of whom were extremely friendly.

## DIARY & HIGHLIGHTS

**17 March:** First full day and a drive, with my hosts, around Kuwait city. Interesting species included several sightings of Palm Dove, White-cheeked Bulbul, Common Mynah and on the coast Black-necked Grebes, Slender-billed Gulls, Cormorants, Western Reef Herons and Caspian Tern. An Egyptian Nightjar (south of Souq Sharq) flying over the beach was a big surprise. A brief visit to the mudflats at Sulaibikhat Bay (west of city) revealed 2,000+ Greater Flamingo's, 3 Crab Plovers, a variety of waders, terns and gulls, both Pied and Black-eared Wheatears and 4 adult Armenian Gulls.

**18 March:** Full day out with Peter Cowan. The morning was spent checking the shore at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), where Peter works, adjoining the Sulaibikhat Bay. Good numbers of waders were present, which also included Little Stint (80+), Greenshank (7) and Terek Sandpiper. Migrant passerines were also evident e.g. Tree Pipits and *Flava* wagtails. The afternoon was spent at KISR's Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station, some 30km southwest of the city. The station is a fenced off section of the desert thus denying grazing animals the chance to destroy the habitat and thereby encourage the natural vegetation to take hold. Inside the desert animal facility building, Peter showed me some locally "recovered" birds and animals which included a Steppe Eagle (broken wing), a female See See Partridge, several Spiny-tailed Lizards ("Dhubbs"), Long-eared Hedgehogs and Sand-boa Snakes. Visiting birdwatchers are welcome here (by arrangement with Peter).

Strong winds were a problem, but the birding was excellent. Migrant passerines were everywhere and double figures of Southern Grey Shrike, Isabelline Shrike (*ph.*), Woodchat Shrikes, Tawny Pipits Redstarts, Chiffchaffs were counted in a small area. Wheatears were all over (four species) plus Rock Thrush, 4 Blue Rock Thrush, 2 Rufous Bushchats, 6 Hoopoes and 3 Quail. Birds of prey were also recorded, including 4 Pallid Harriers, 2 Steppe Eagles, a male Montagu's Harrier and a male Marsh Harrier. A superb male Black-crowned Finch Lark was one of the highlights of the trip, and a Nightjar passed in front of the car headlights.

**19 March:** Meeting at the Salmiya Sultan Centre (exceptionally good supermarket chain) allowed Peter and I to stock up on drinks and food for a long day in the northwest desert. Our route took us along the Jahra/Al Salmy road and then north at the signpost showing Abraq Firing Range. The day was spent touring the desert, up to the demilitarised zone (DMZ) (between Kuwait and Iraq), then east and back south, in to the city (GPS equipment needed after dark and compass strongly recommended). For me, highlights included six Bar-tailed Desert Larks, 18 Hoopoe Larks and 1,300+ Short-toed Larks (moving north in small groups) throughout the day. Pallid, Marsh and Montagu's Harriers were all seen. *Flava* wagtails continually follow the Camel herds and several *feldegg* were seen. 40+ Dhubbs were also counted. Ten Steppe Eagles were found roosting on the ground at the end of the day. There was a light breeze and a temperature of 32C, though it seemed hotter.

**20 March:** Contact was made with Thomas Spencer (through Peter) on a weeks school holiday, and with Thomas's nephew Nick (short birding visit from the UK), the three of us travelled north from the city, for

the day. A stop along the Jal Az Zor ridge area provided the country's only breeding pair of Brown-necked Ravens, a fly over Pale Rock Sparrow, Blue Rock Thrush and a male Menetries's Warbler. A left over oil spill "attracted" a Wood Sandpiper with 3 wintering Corn Buntings nearby. Travelling north in to the desert produced good numbers of Wheatears including Black-eared, Isabelline, Desert, Northern, and Pied (plus a *vittata* bird). Larks were also present and 5 Lesser Short-toed, 1 Sky and 7 Bimaculated were found. A juvenile Long-legged Buzzard gave superb views. A small wooded area (Wadi Al Riman) of no more than 20 trees was checked. Unfortunately, this area is used by local Kuwaitis for shooting migrant birds and the carnage was incredible. Seen alive were typical birds to date e.g. Isabelline and Southern Grey Shrike, and Pallid Harrier with a dark-phase Booted Eagle added to the list, however, the list of casualties was beyond belief (19 species – which included *Grey Heron*, *Purple Heron*, *Night Heron*, *Western Reef Heron*, *Steppe Buzzard* (4), *ringtail Harrier*, *White-tailed Plover*, *Gull-billed Tern*, *Collared Pratincole*, *Hoopoe* (16), *Blue-cheeked Bee-eater* (5), *Bimaculated Lark* (7), *Crested Lark*, *Isabelline Wheatear* (2), *Northern Wheatear* (7), *Swallow*, *Chiffchaff*, *Southern Grey Shrike* and *Woodchat Shrike* plus a few other unidentifiable species). Just outside this area were 6 Lesser Kestrels hunting, though possibly being baited from the actions of a worker in the area, as one freshly shot bird was also found.

En route back to the city, a stop at Jahra Pools revealed that the fence once erected to protect the area was now torn down in many places and shooting was freely taking place. Four Great White Egrets were visible out on the mudflats, and small numbers of waders were present on the "reserve" e.g. 6 Marsh Sandpiper, 6 Ruff, 1 Green Sandpiper. A Bluethroat and a female Menetries Warbler were seen, though the star birds were 7 Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters giving great views.

**21 March:** A day on my own and a short taxi ride down to the roadside pools at Sabah al Salem (junction of Fahaheel Expressway (Route 30) and the 6<sup>th</sup> Ring Road). This site included a large wet area surrounded by a large expanse of short scrub, with a small but deeper pool at the southern end bordered by encroaching reeds. On the eastern side of the road was another small flooded area, generally surrounded by refuse/debris. The whole area is less than 0.5km from the coast and consequently the birding picture changes daily, certainly at passage times. Several more visits were made here during my stay.

Lots of waders were evident on the main pool – 100+ Little Stint, 17 Greater Sandplover, 200+ Dunlin and smaller numbers of several other species, plus 11 Slender-billed Gulls on the water. A dead migrant Quail was found. In the reedbed area Spotted Crake and Little Crake were found plus small numbers of Squacco Heron and Bluethroat and migrant Isabelline and Woodchat Shrikes. A long walk back to the apartment produced several Palm Doves, Desert Wheatear, Rose-ringed Parakeet and Caspian Tern offshore.

**22 March:** A full day out with Thomas and Nick started at Sabah al Salem. Some 8 Rose-ringed Parakeets were seen plus Spotted Redshank (scarce), and small numbers of Ruff, Marsh Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper and Greenshank. Kentish Plovers were seen with chicks. The reedy area produced 5 Penduline Tits and brief views of singing Graceful Warblers. Migrant passerines today included Red-throated Pipits, female Rock Thrush, *feldegg* and *lutea* wagtails, Black-eared Wheatears, 2 more Pale Rock Sparrows and the first *isabellinus* Isabelline Shrikes of the trip. Another area of wasteground (c2km to the south) produced 8 Pale Rock Sparrows, 3 Red-throated Pipits and Desert, Northern, Pied and Isabelline Wheatears.

A market garden at Abu Halifa (no apparent problems with entry) is often good for migrants, though things were quiet. Some 15 Tree Pipits, 3 Redstarts, 5 Song Thrushes, Lesser Whitethroat and Upchers Warbler were found. 3 Cattle Egrets were also present. Moving on to Fahaheel for Great Black-headed Gull (c.100 here in early March) saw us find only one distant 2<sup>nd</sup> summer bird. Coastal birds here included 15 Black-necked Grebes, 20+ Slender-billed Gulls, Western Reef Heron and Caspian Tern.

**23 March:** A Kuwait Natural History Group trip was taken down to Mina Az Zawr (Ras az Zawr), a Saudi Arabian Texaco Inc establishment on the south east coast. The local birder here, Mark Chichester (an American), had been regularly seeing Common Babbler in the residential grounds. I travelled with Peter. Unfortunately, very strong winds made conditions unsuitable for seeking out passerines and as a result we were unlucky with the main quarry. A few Pallid Harriers were noted en route. Immediately offshore from the site, a small sandbank held good numbers of gulls and terns including 3 Great Black-headed Gulls (2 adults coming into summer plumage and a first winter), 6 Swift Terns, 4 Caspian Terns and 4 Gull-billed Terns. 16 Cormorants (*sinensis*) were present but unfortunately Socotra does not arrive in the region until late May and other more interesting terns (Bridled etc) do not appear until April. Interesting passerines here were Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, male Blue Rock Thrush and small numbers of Redstart, Lesser Whitethroat, Isabelline Shrike (*ph.*), Tawny Pipits and Hoopoe. A search of scrub surrounding the golf course eventually turned up a Desert Warbler.

A brief visit to the mudflats near Kihran saw 6 Western Reef Herons (2 dark), 3 Terek Sandpipers, 12 Grey Plovers, Greater Sandplover, 2 female Pallid Harriers, a flock of 50 Lesser Short-toed Larks in the dunes and tremendous views of another Desert Warbler.

**24 March:** Took the day off to visit the Friday bird market. The weather was overcast with a sandstorm over the city throughout, turning to rain in the evening. Other birdwatchers had gone to the Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station with Peter, and amongst other things turned up 2 Namaqua Doves, White-throated Robin, Barred Warbler, 3 Orphean Warblers and Trumpeter Finch (11<sup>th</sup> national record)!

I visited the bird market with my host Alan and I could see why Alan's wife, Amanda, did not want to attend. Amongst the most shocking were cages of Kestrels (Common and Lesser) tightly packed together (most dying), 5 tail-less Bearded Tits, small groups of Shelducks, 2 juvenile Mute Swans, Greylag Goose, 2 pairs of Wigeon, male Teal and Bimaculated Larks singing from cages. I estimated that about 50% of the caged birds were made up imported birds from Australasia such as Budgerigars, whereas the rest looked "locally" collected and not in good condition. I watched an old woman actually buy a Kestrel and then have it wrapped up in a brown paper bag for taking home in.

**25 March:** On my own and a long mornings birding at Sabah al Salem (following overnight rains). I started at the reedy pool area first and was greeted by 13 roosting Squacco Herons, 2 Spotted Crakes, a Snipe, 2 Red-rumped Swallows and a party of 24 Penduline Tits. Typical migrants from earlier were present plus both races of Isabelline Shrike, Graceful and Menetries's Warblers, and a Marsh Harrier. A walk across the dry area to the main pool produced 10 Pied Wheatears, 5 male Desert Wheatears, 2 Isabelline Wheatears, 3 Great Grey Shrikes and a stunning Desert Warbler amongst other things. Counts of waders on the main pool produced 2 Black-winged Stilt, 20 Greater Sandpipers, 109 Little Stint, 28 Kentish Plovers, 2 Curlew Sandpipers, 11 Dunlin, 10 Ruff, 3 Greenshank, 49 Redshank, 2 Marsh Sandpipers, Sanderling and Little Ringed Plover.

After crossing over on to the eastern side of the main carriageway, the rough ground here yielded an array of wheatears and shrikes plus 2 Rufous Bushchats and a Water Pipit on a lawned patch of ground. 16 European Bee-eaters gave good views and in roadside bushes I found a female Masked Shrike and an Upchers Warbler. The taxi (pre-booked) arrived at the Burger King pick up point, spot on time at 12 noon. (Cheeseburger, chips and coke here cost 1.25KD, about £2.50 sterling).

**26 March:** I spent a full day, on my own, on a return boat trip to Failaka Island, in the hope of connecting with any seabirds of note. The ferry travels from Salmiya Port (leaving times depend on tides) – go through a small barrier and security into the port area. The cost is 2.5KD and exact money is recommended. You will also need to take a passport for identification on arrival at Failaka Island (journey

time about 1.5 hours) Due to lack of change at the “booking office” I offered to pay for another daily traveller (a Bangladeshi called Waheed), which turned out to be a good move. Waheed was an agricultural scientist who was making his monthly visit to check a small plantation. On arrival, we toured the plantation (15 minutes) after which we had the free use of a vehicle and Waheed gladly acted as tour guide – showing me the “sights” of the island.

Birding en route didn't produce any big surprises. Species included about 30 Black-necked Grebes, 3 Arctic Skuas, a Swift Tern, 9 Lesser Crested Terns, many gulls, and migrant Pallid Swifts, Pallid Harrier and Kestrel. On arrival at Failaka 2 Collared Pratincoles and 2 Crag Martins were overhead. The plantation yielded a few Tree Pipits and Chiffchaffs. The island has not been reoccupied since the war and the built up areas are still in a state of ruin, many bullet-ridden. Typical migrant mainland species were apparent, though the first surprise was 45+ Steppe Buzzards passing through. A stop at a coastal point saw 26 Grey Herons on the shore, and a small selection of waders (Marsh Sandpiper, Redshank and Sandplover sp.) and 14 Gull-billed Terns moving north. Blue-cheeked (4) and European Bee-eaters were noted and a Purple Heron flushed from a tiny reedbed. In the same area were a few trees and again evidence of shooting, with a superb male Pallid Harrier the unfortunate victim.

Following tea with the Egyptian head gardener at the plantation, the return journey left at 14.45hrs prompt (after about 3 hours on the island). More Arctic Skuas, Lesser Crested Terns and Gull-billed Terns were noted, plus a flock of 10 Squacco Herons passing north. Slender-billed Gulls were common in coastal areas (plus smaller numbers of Black-headed and Yellow-legged), however, Lesser Black-backed type gulls are also present and I saw potential *fuscus*, *intermedius* and *graellsii* type birds (see classified list). Back at Salmiya Port and Waheed kindly obtained change and repaid my 2.5KD (despite my protestations).

**27 March:** A mornings birding in the Sabah al Salem area, on the eastern side of the main carriageway, produced the 4 Isabelline (*ph.*), 2 Woodchat and a Southern Grey Shrike. Tree Pipits were passing through, as were 2 Red-rumped Swallows, 2 Crag Martins and a Blue-cheeked Bee-eater. An Egyptian Nightjar was found dead on the roadside, and amongst the adjacent bushes I found a male Semi-collared Flycatcher. The main pool area held 81 Little Stint, 82 Dunlin, 24 Marsh Sandpiper, 17 Ruff, 2 Greenshank, 78 Redshank, 39 Sanderling, 19 Greater Sandplover, 3 Ringed Plover, 4 Black-winged Stilt and a Curlew Sandpiper (plus breeding Kentish Plovers). 17 Slender-billed Gulls were on the water and 6 Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters passed through.

Out in the afternoon with Thomas, and we relocated the Egyptian Nightjar and Semi-collared Flycatcher. A look round the market garden at Abu Halifa produced small numbers of hirundines and 32+ Collared Pratincoles passing north. 2 Squacco Herons and 5 Cattle Egrets were present along with 16 Tree Pipits and 12+ *flava* wagtails. A return visit to the reedy pool at Sabah al Salem added 16 more Collared Pratincoles passing north, 4 Spotted Crakes and 5 Little Crakes, Wood, Green, Marsh and Common Sandpipers, 4 Red-throated Pipits and 6 Penduline Tits. A female Marsh Harrier passed north and another Egyptian Nightjar flew in the dark around the traffic lights.

**28 March:** A morning taxi ride to the city shopping area produced 7 Steppe Buzzards and a Black Kite over the Expressway. Thomas again picked me up in the afternoon and we went off to the University of Kuwait campus looking for reported breeding Indian House Crows but we were unsuccessful in locating the exact site. We then birded the Sulaibikhat Bay area, to the west of the city. Thomas had seen Smyrna Kingfisher along the shore here a few days earlier but we could only find Kingfisher. Along the bay we made several stops and looked at the waders. Totals were pretty good – 1,400 Greater Flamingo, 20 Crab Plover, 54 Avocet, 63 Marsh Sandpiper, 94 Terek Sandpiper, 250+ each of summer plumaged Bar-tailed Godwits and Grey Plovers, 400 Curlew, 300+ Slender-billed Gulls, 25+ Gull-billed and 1 Caspian Tern, a Spotted Crake and northerly passage of Red-rumped Swallows (18) and *flava* wagtails (27). A *hueglini*

type gull stood out on the flats amongst the 500+ mixed gull flock.

**29 March:** My last day and a long morning spent in the Sabah al Salem area – a superb last effort. Along the rough ground on the eastern side of the main carriageway a good passage of Tree Pipits (64) was taking place and the Water Pipit was on the same grassy area as earlier, with a *lutea* wagtail. 3 European Bee-eaters passed north. On the adjacent rough ground an initially rather drab pair of birds caught my eye. Closer inspection subsequently revealed them, plus one other, to be 3 male Cinereous Buntings – giving great views pecking at vegetation on the ground. 2 Quail and Stone Curlew were also flushed in the same area (obviously no-one else had been here earlier). Across the road and into the wet reedy area and a Rufous Bushchat was seen en route. The deep pool area saw 5 Spotted Crake flush into the reeds and 8 Marsh Sandpipers take off, plus various other waders. On walking through the refuse/debris I couldn't believe my eyes when a pair of Namaqua Doves popped out and landed on the ground only 5-6m in front of me. My views were cut short by a traffic policeman who wondered what on earth I was doing – I showed him my Field Guide and let him look through my scope and he appeared quite happy (indeed he offered to take me birding for the afternoon to Al Wafra (farms) but...).

Skirting around the edge of the reedbed another Rufous Bushchat was seen and Graceful Warbler was singing. Flushing from less than 3m away appeared 9 Grey Hypocolius, before diving back into a thick bushy/reedy area and refusing to come out. More waders, wheatears and shrikes were found in the area though a female Red-backed Shrike was new in. Walking across the large dry area I came across a few Tawny and Tree Pipits, 2 Black-eared Wheatears, Stonechat, Crested Larks and a male Menetries' Warbler. The main pool held nothing new though Marsh Sandpipers had increased to 40, and 9 Greater Sandpipers remained. My last cheeseburger, chips and coke at Burger King went down very well.

## CLASSIFIED LIST (c.140 species)

**Black-necked Grebe:** 5 city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>), 15+ Fahaheel (22<sup>nd</sup>), 35 Failaka pelagic (26<sup>th</sup>). Tideline corpse Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Cormorant *sinensis*:** 3 city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>), 20+ Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research area in Sulaibikhat Bay (18<sup>th</sup>), 1 Fahaheel (22<sup>nd</sup>), 16 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Squacco Heron:** Sabah al Salem area – 3 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 3 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 14 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 4 on 29<sup>th</sup>. 10 Failaka pelagic (26<sup>th</sup>) and 2 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Cattle Egret:** 1 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 3 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 5 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Western Reef Heron:** 12+ city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>), coastal sightings in Sulaibikhat Bay on 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 6 at Kihran (23<sup>rd</sup>), 2 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 9+ Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Grey Heron:** 60+ city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>), present in Sulaibikhat Bay (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Kihran (23<sup>rd</sup>), 26 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 40+ Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Purple Heron:** 1 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Greater Flamingo:** Present in Sulaibikhat Bay, with an estimated 2,000 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 1,400 on 28<sup>th</sup>. Also seen here on 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Shelduck:** 15 Sulaibikhat Bay (seen from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research) (18<sup>th</sup>), and 7 in the bay on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Wigeon:** 5 in Sulaibikhat Bay off Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Black Kite:** 1 Salmiya area (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Marsh Harrier:** Male at Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), male NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), female Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>),

imm. Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), and female Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Pallid Harrier:** 3 males & 1 female at Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 females NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), male & female NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 5 en route to Raz az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 2 females Failaka Island and one N en route, plus dead male on island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Montagu's Harrier:** male Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), male NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>) and female Jal Az Zor ridge, en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Sparrowhawk:** male Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), male & female Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), male Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), male Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), and 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Common (Steppe) Buzzard:** 2 Jal Az Zor ridge en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 48+ passing N over Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), and 7 over Salmiya area (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Long-legged Buzzard:** juvenile in NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Steppe Eagle:** 2 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 10 roosting on ground NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Booted Eagle:** 1 dark-phase over Wadi al Riman (NE desert) (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Kestrel:** 6 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Kestrel:** 8+ Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), seen daily up to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 10 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Quail:** 3 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 1 dead near roadside Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Spotted Crane:** Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 27<sup>th</sup>, and 6 (possibly 8) on 29<sup>th</sup>. 1 in stream leading in to Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Little Crane:** Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 5 (including 3 males calling from reeds) on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Moorhen:** Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 7 on 25<sup>th</sup>. 1 stream running into Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Oystercatcher:** 2 in Sulaibikhat Bay (from Jahra) (20<sup>th</sup>), N-5 at Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), and 2 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Black-winged Stilt:** Present at Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 5 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 9 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 8 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 10+ on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Avocet:** 54 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Crab Plover:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 3 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 20 on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Stone Curlew:** 1 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Collared Pratincole:** 2 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), N-32 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), N-16 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Little Ringed Plover:** 1 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 2 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Ringed Plover:** Sabah al Salem – 20+ on 21<sup>st</sup> and 3 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Kentish Plover:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 1 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 13 on 18<sup>th</sup> and present here on 28<sup>th</sup>. Sabah al Salem – 80+ on 21<sup>st</sup>, present 22<sup>nd</sup>, 30+ on 25<sup>th</sup>, present 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> (pair seen with 3 young and another with 3 eggs on 22<sup>nd</sup>; another pair with 2 young on 27<sup>th</sup>)

**Greater Sandplover:** Sabah al Salem – 20 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 20 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 19 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 9 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Sandplover spp:** 25+ Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Grey Plover:** Sulaibikhat Bay – present on 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 250+ on 28<sup>th</sup>. 1 at Raz az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 12 Khiran (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Sanderling:** Sabah al Salem – 50+ on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 39 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 11 on 29<sup>th</sup>. 3 Raz az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Little Stint:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 1 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 80+ on 18<sup>th</sup> and present on 28<sup>th</sup>. Present at Jahra on 20<sup>th</sup>. Sabah al Salem – present on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 114 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 81 on 27<sup>th</sup> and present on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Curlew Sandpiper:** Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin:** Sabah al Salem – 200+ on 21<sup>st</sup>, present on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 82 on 27<sup>th</sup> and present on 29<sup>th</sup>. Birds were from a very long-billed race and potentially confusing with Curlew Sandpiper.

**Ruff:** 6 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 6 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 12 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 21 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 12+ on 29<sup>th</sup>. 4 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Jack Snipe:** 1 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Snipe:** 1 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>). 2 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Bar-tailed Godwit:** Sulaibikhat Bay – present on 17<sup>th</sup> and 250+ on 28<sup>th</sup>. 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Curlew:** Sulaibikhat Bay – present on 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 400+ on 28<sup>th</sup>. 1 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Spotted Redshank:** 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Common Redshank:** Sulaibikhat Bay – present on 17<sup>th</sup>, 98 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 300+ on 28<sup>th</sup>. Sabah al Salem – 100+ on 21<sup>st</sup>, present on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 52 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 78 on 27<sup>th</sup> and present on 29<sup>th</sup>. 20+ Kihran (23<sup>rd</sup>). 12 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Marsh Sandpiper:** 6 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 26 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 54 on 29<sup>th</sup>. 12 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>). 63+ Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Greenshank:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 7 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>. 2 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 6 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 7 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper:** 1 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 3 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 4 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>. 1 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Wood Sandpiper:** 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Terek Sandpiper:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 1 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 94 on 28<sup>th</sup>. 3 Kihran (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Common Sandpiper:** 2 city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>). Sulaibikhat Bay – 1 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Sabah al Salem – 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 6 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>. 2 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>). 1 Salmiya Port (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Turnstone:** 1 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>).

**Arctic Skua:** 5 at sea between Salimya and Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Great Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull:** 2<sup>nd</sup> summer at Fahaheel (22<sup>nd</sup>). 2 adults and one 1<sup>st</sup> summer Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Black-headed Gull:** Present on all visits to coast (max. 100+ Fahaheel on 22<sup>nd</sup>) and Sabah al Salem (max. here 35 n 21<sup>st</sup>).

**Slender-billed Gull:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 60+ on 18<sup>th</sup> and 300+ on 28<sup>th</sup>. Sabah al Salem – 11 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 17 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 17 on 27<sup>th</sup> and present on 29<sup>th</sup>. 20+ Fahaheel (22<sup>nd</sup>). Present Ras az Zawr and 3 Kihran (23<sup>rd</sup>). 6 Salmiya Port, 40+ en route between Salmiya and Failaka Island, and 11 on Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull types:** 1 city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>). 10+ Fahaheel (22<sup>nd</sup>). 6 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>). At sea between Salmiya and Failaka Island (all adults, based on colour of upperparts) – 3 *intermedius* types, 1 *graellsii* type and 1 *fuscus* type (26<sup>th</sup>). 16+ Sulaibikhat Bay, included one *heuglini* type (long-billed, sloping forehead, dark mantle/back, contrasting wingtips and long-winged appearance) (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Armenian Gull *armenicus*:** 4 adults Sulaibikhat Bay (17<sup>th</sup>). 1 at sea between Salmiya and Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Yellow-legged Gull *cachinnans/michahellis*:** Small numbers of juveniles noted at most coastal sites, with 30+ at Fahaheel on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Precise subspecies uncertain.



**Gull-billed Tern:** Sulaibikhat Bay – 1 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 25+ on 28<sup>th</sup>. 2 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>). 14 Failaka Island and 1 en route (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Caspian Tern:** Singles on the coast on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. 4 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>). 5 at sea between Salmiya and Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Swift (Crested) Tern:** 6 on small offshore island at Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>). 1 at sea approaching Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Crested Tern:** 9 outward journey and 5 inward, 1 at sea between Salmiya and Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Sandwich Tern:** 1 city coastal area (17<sup>th</sup>), 2 Fahaheel (22<sup>nd</sup>), present at Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 12+ at sea between Salmiya and Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Feral Pigeon:** Present throughout in the city area.

**Collared Dove:** 1 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), 5 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 6 coastal area near Salwa (21<sup>st</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 3 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Palm (Laughing) Dove:** Small numbers present throughout stay in city area plus 1 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 6 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 6 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup>), 2 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>) and 4 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Namaqua Dove:** pair Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Rose-ringed (Ring-necked) Parakeet:** 1 coastal stretch near Salwa (21<sup>st</sup>) and 8 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Little Owl:** 2 Jal Az Zor ridge en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**(European) Nightjar:** 1 flew across road at Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>).

**Egyptian Nightjar:** 1 flying over the beach just south of Souq Sharq, during the day (17<sup>th</sup>), 1 roadside victim and 1 flying around traffic lights just after dark at Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Swift:** Light conditions often affected viewing but 2 at Sabah al Salem were considered definite (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Pallid Swift:** Birds considered to be Pallids were N-2 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), N-8 at sea en route to Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), N-7 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Swift spp.:** Small passage N near Sulaibikhat Bay (17<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 6 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 3 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>) and 1 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**(European) Kingfisher:** 1 stream flowing into Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater:** 7 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 4 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>) and 7 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**European Bee-eater:** 19 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 1 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>) and 4 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Bee-eater spp:** 4 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>) and 8 Salwa (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Hoopoe:** 6 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 12+ NW desert including 5 together in same area as Hoopoe Larks (19<sup>th</sup>), 5 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>) and 1 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Black-crowned Finch Lark:** male Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>).

**Bar-tailed Desert Lark:** 5 in a small area plus 1 elsewhere, NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>).

**Hoopoe Lark:** total of 18 seen during tour of NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>).

**Bimaculated Lark:** 7 flew overhead on 3 occasions but did not land, NE desert area (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Short-toed Lark:** 3 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), large N passage in small groups (10-150) throughout the day,

total of 1,300+, NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), 35+ NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>) and 1 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Short-toed Lark:** 5 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 on wasteground 2km south of Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>) and 50+ in marshy/dune area Kihran (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Short-toed/Lesser Short-toed spp.:** 50+ dry areas on Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Crested Lark:** 2 Sulaibikhat Bay area (17<sup>th</sup>), 2 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), present Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), thereafter seen daily in low single figures at all locations except on Failaka Island.

**Sky Lark:** 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Sand Martin:** 2+ Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 13 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 10 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>) and N-1 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Crag Martin:** 2 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), N-2 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 3 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Swallow:** Seen daily from 17<sup>th</sup> in single figures, with maximum being 8 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 10+ at Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>) and 10+ Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Red-rumped Swallow:** 4 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 3 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 4 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), N-18 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>) and 4 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**House Martin:** 4 Sulaibikhat Bay (17<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 5 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 1 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 3 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Tawny Pipit:** Good numbers present in Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 3+ NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), regularly seen NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 6 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 8 Ras az zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 2-3 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup>).

**Tree Pipit:** 5 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 15 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1+ Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 7 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 11 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 16 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>) N-73 in small parties during morning, Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Red-throated Pipit:** 3 Sabah al Salem and 3 on wasteground 2km to the south (22<sup>nd</sup>), heard at Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>) and 4 giving stunning views at Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Water Pipit:** Sabah al Salem – 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

**“Yellow” Wagtail group:** sightings have been grouped into 3 types – black-headed (presumed *feldegg*), yellow headed (presumed *lutea*) and blue headed (presumed *beema*). I did not encounter a pale *beema* type at all, but the presumed dark-headed *beema* types were all similar i.e. dark bluish crowns with obvious long white superciliums (unlike the pale blue of *flava*). Sightings as follows:

*lutea*: 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>).

*beema*: 2 NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>).

*feldegg*: 1 Souq Sharq (17<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 6 NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), 4+ NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), Sabah al Salem – 2 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 4 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 4 on 25<sup>th</sup>. 3 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>). Often seen following sheep or camels herds in the desert.

Flocks of non-specifically racially identified birds included – N-2 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), 12 including some *beema* Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 18 including both *beema* and *feldegg* Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 27 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), and 23 (incl. N-14) including at least 5 *beema* and 1 *feldegg* Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Grey Wagtail:** 1 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1 Salmiya Port (26<sup>th</sup>), 3 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>) and 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**White Wagtail *alba*:** Up to 6 seen every day except 19<sup>th</sup> (NW desert), 23<sup>rd</sup> (Ras az Zawr), 24<sup>th</sup> (day off) and 28<sup>th</sup> (Sulaibikhat Bay).

**White-cheeked Bulbul:** many seen on casual city drive (17<sup>th</sup>), 2 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), many in the inhabited area of Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Grey Hypocolius:** 9 in reedy area at Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Rufous Bushchat:** 2 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>).

**Bluethroat:** 1 Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>). Sabah al Salem – 3 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Redstart:** 1 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Redstart:** Includes some obvious *samamiscus* birds. 8+ Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 4 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Stonechat:** *Variegata* and *armenica* birds passing through (exhibiting large white rumps and white patches in the wings, with restricted chestnut on breast). Female Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), many in Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), female Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 3 male/1 female Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), female Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), male Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Isabelline Wheatear:** 3 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 wasteground 2km south of Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>) and 1 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Northern Wheatear:** Large numbers Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), good numbers present in NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), reasonable numbers NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), few present on wasteground 2km south of Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), present on Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>) and 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>). Obvious decline during the trip.

**Pied Wheatear:** 2 Sulaibikhat Bay area (17<sup>th</sup>), present around Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), large numbers Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), present NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), reasonable numbers NE desert including a *vittata* bird (20<sup>th</sup>), male Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), few present on wasteground 2km south of Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), female Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 12 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), present on Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 1 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>). Similar pattern to Northern Wheatear with birds commonly seen during first few days and reducing thereafter.

**Black-eared Wheatear:** 2 Sulaibikhat Bay area (17<sup>th</sup>), 4 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), present NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), reasonable numbers NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 3 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), male Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 1 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Desert Wheatear:** 3 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 3 NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), present NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 coastal seafront Salwa (21<sup>st</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 wasteground 2km south of Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 6 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 3 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>).

**Rock Thrush:** female Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), and female Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Blue Rock Thrush:** 2 male and 2 females Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), female Jal Az Zor ridge en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), and male Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>).

**Song Thrush:** 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 5 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Graceful Warbler:** Sabah al Salem – 2+ (singing/seen) on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 (1 singing) on 25<sup>th</sup> and 1 singing on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Sedge Warbler:** singing Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Reed Warbler:** Sabah al Salem – singing on 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcher's Warbler:** 1 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Menetries's Warbler:** male Jal Az Zor ridge area (20<sup>th</sup>), female Jahra (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 5 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Desert Warbler *nana*:** 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 1 Khiran (23<sup>rd</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Lesser Whitethroat:** 1 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 1 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 3 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), Sabah al Salem

– 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Whitethroat *icterops***: 1 Jal Az Zor ridge (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 coastal trees Salwa (21<sup>st</sup>).

**Chiffchaff**: Seen everyday, even NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>) when one on a blown-up tank. Birds singing at Sabah al Salem after 21<sup>st</sup>. 13+ Abu Halifa and 10+ reedy pool area at Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Semi-collared Flycatcher**: male at Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Penduline Tit**: Sabah al Salem – 5 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 24 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 6 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Isabelline Shrike *phoenicuroides***: 15+ Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (21<sup>st</sup>), 1 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 3 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 4 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>), 3 Abu Halifa (27<sup>th</sup>), 3 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Isabelline Shrike *isabellinus***: 1 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 1 Abu Halifa (22<sup>nd</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Red-backed Shrike**: female Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Southern Grey Shrike *aucherii***: reasonable numbers in Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), several seen en route to and 2 in NW desert (19<sup>th</sup>), 1 NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 1 Ras az Zawr (23<sup>rd</sup>), 5 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), 4 Failaka Island (26<sup>th</sup>), 1 Sabah al Salem (27<sup>th</sup>).

**Woodchat Shrike**: 1 Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (18<sup>th</sup>), 10 Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station (18<sup>th</sup>), 2 Jal Az Zor ridge (20<sup>th</sup>), Sabah al Salem 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 27<sup>th</sup>, and 2 on 29<sup>th</sup>. 1 Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>).

**Masked Shrike**: female Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>).

**Brown-necked Raven**: pair at breeding site, Jal Az Zor ridge, en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>).

**Common Mynah**: several seen in suburban areas on city tour (17<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), 5 Sabah al Salem (25<sup>th</sup>), seen in built up areas near Sulaibikhat Bay (28<sup>th</sup>), 2 Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**House Sparrow**: Seen every day except 19<sup>th</sup> (NW desert) and 24<sup>th</sup> (day off). I was surprised to notice how common the species was in general and in particular around homesteads in remote grazing areas.

**Pale Rock (Hill) Sparrow**: 1 flew overhead calling (Bee-eater type call) Jal Az Zor ridge, en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), 2 similarly at Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>), and 8 also seen on the ground on wasteground 2km to the south of Sabah al Salem (22<sup>nd</sup>).

**Cinereous Bunting**: 3 males Sabah al Salem (29<sup>th</sup>).

**Corn Bunting**: 3 discarded oil-spill area en route to NE desert (20<sup>th</sup>), Sabah al Salem – 5 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 1 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Some omissions (some hoped for) which might have been expected included: **Socotra Cormorant** (too early for this part of the Gulf), **Cream Coloured Courser** (not present), **Lesser Sandplover** (unlucky), **Caspian Plover** (rare), **White-tailed Plover** (unlucky – missed one by a day at Sabah al Salem), **Broad-billed Sandpiper** (probably out in the Bay), several species of **Tern** (too early), **Smyrna Kingfisher** (unlucky – seen by others in Bay area during my stay), **Indian Roller** (too late, one had been present at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research), **Citrine Wagtail** (as White-tailed Plover), **White-throated Robin** (unlucky – seen by others at Sulaibiya Experimental Field Station during my stay), **Finsch's Wheatear** (too late by a week), **Red-tailed Wheatear** (unlucky, but probably slightly late also), **Mourning Wheatear** (as Red-tailed), **Basra Reed Warbler** (too early – due mid/late April) **Common Babbler** (weather affected viewing – missed at Ras az Zawr), **Indian House Crow** (present but couldn't find one – should have tried harder !).

Within the 2 weeks following my visit Thomas informed me that he had also found Garganey, Hobby, Caspian Plover (12<sup>th</sup> April), Turtle Dove, Roller, Willow Warbler and Ortolan Bunting.