Our inaugural tour to Iran was as successful as we could have hoped. Iran is home of some of the greatest specialities of the Middle East but for political reasons, has been largely neglected by birdwatchers for several years now, despite it being a perfectly safe country to visit. During the whole trip we did not find any problems and found the people friendly and curious to see a group of foreign visitors coming to see their avian jewels. We all were impressed by the great infrastructure of this little-known country. An itinerary based on our previous exploratory trips delivered all the main targets smoothly. We started in the Sistan basin, in far eastern Baluchistan, being the first tour company to visit this little-known corner of Iran, home of the Sistan Scrub Sparrow. We continued our trip south, where Sind Woodpecker, See-see Partridge, Hume’s Whitethroat, Sombre Tit, Plain Leaf Warbler, Upcher’s Warbler and Hume’s Wheatear were the highlights of this leg of the trip. The Mesopotamian region, on the Iraqi border, was full of birds, with mega views of the Endangered Basra Reed Warbler along with Hypocolius, ‘Mesopotamian Crow’, Dead Sea Sparrow and Ménétries’s Warbler. Back in the north, the spectacular Elbruz Mountains was a treat, with Caspian Tit, Caspian Snowcock, Green Warbler, Asian Crimson-winged Finch, Finsch’s Wheatear and White-throated Robin stealing the show. A brief foray to the Caspian coastline for the rare Black-headed Penduline-tit preceded our adventure into the Dasht-e Kavir, where we were treated to incredible views of several Pleske’s Ground Jay along with Crowned Sandgrouse, Persian
Wheat ear, Grey-necked Bunting and tons of migrants in the pockets of vegetation in the middle of the desert. We recorded 260 species of birds and eight species of mammals.

We all met in the capital of Iran, Tehran, after several of us had pre-tour cultural extensions to the beautiful cities of Shiraz and Isfahan. Our cosmopolitan group enjoyed the first taste of Persian cuisine, largely involving salad and kebabs, as would often be the way! We have been planning our inaugural tour of Iran for several years now, and decided to do away with the 'standard circuit' and start in the heart of Baluchistan province, near the border with Pakistan, where just a handful of birders have ventured in the past thirty years or so. The gardens of the airport hosted several Lesser Whitethroat, a single Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, plenty of Common Myna, Laughing Dove and White-cheeked Bulbul. On the way to the Sistan basin we got stuck in a checkpoint where the officers were astonished by the presence of tourists in the area. After some time and some efficient dealing by our local operator, we got on the road again. Eventually we reached Zabol, one of the remotest corners of this amazing country, a thumb into the Afghanistan border when looking at a map. Eager for some birding, we headed straight out after lunch to some nearby wetlands in the search of one of the highlights of the trip, the Sistan Scrub Sparrow. This poorly known bird, seen by a tiny number of people and only found in the Sistan basin, that covers a small area either side of the border, was found by Carlos in 2014, when the Sistan Wetlands were completely flooded. Unfortunately, a terrible drought dried the wetlands in the past couple of years, and despite visiting areas we found it in both 2014 and 2016 we found nothing but empty nests, adding to the allure of the species! Sykes's Warbler was extremely common, allowing excellent views meanwhile hordes of migrating European Bee-eaters and Lesser Whitethroats where everywhere. We decided to go back to the area the next morning and make some further exploration after checking potential areas using satellite imagery – the wonders of the internet!

![Sistan Scrub Sparrow © Werner Müller, and Plain Leaf Warbler](image)

So, there we were from dawn, at our hoped-for spot with very good-looking habitat, excitement grew, as we found distant flocks of ‘sparrows’ in flight, then, just when the heat started to soar, there in front of us was a beautiful male of Sistan Scrub Sparrow inspecting some former nests, and eventually was joined by a female. This male was not yet in full breeding plumage but even with that we all noticed the differences of this lemon-hued taxon with Dead Sea Sparrow, with which is often erroneously lumped. During the rest of the morning we connected with more singles and a couple of small groups of this poorly known taxon, soaking in as many views as we could, knowing we were the first bird tour to visit this region and see this wonderful bird. Despite all the efforts we only managed to get some distant record shots but in the other hand, we got excellent sound recordings.

The another highlight of the morning was a showy Upcher’s Warbler that gave us every sort of views, almost side-by-side with Sykes’s Warbler. Black Francolin was very common by voice and leaving the place, a pair showed well, feeding trackside. After Zabol, we headed south again on the way to Bandar Abbas. On the way, a rocky outcrop delivered a delightful pair of Hume’s Wheatear, a Persian Gulf near-endemic, and a tricky bird to find. Both individuals showed well, with the male singing from a phone post. The rest of the drive was largely birdless, with a few exceptions like the first Brown-necked Ravens and also our first Pale Crag Martins nesting in the Police Station, during another checkpoint stop, mainly because of a strong sandstorm that the region is famous for. We arrived to the town of Bam in time to have dinner and take a good rest after the bumpy ride.

The next morning, we started in the beautiful Makran Mountains, where a Hume’s Whitethroat was singing its heart out, several Syrian Woodpeckers provided every sort of view and the Eastern Rock Nuthatches gave us nice scope views. In another spot, a very well behaved teeny-tiny Plain Leaf Warbler posed for us as much we wanted and in the last place, several Red-fronted Serins were feeding on grass close-by. We had great views of
the *africana* subspecies of the Common Nightingale, very pale in appearance and vocally a little different than the birds most of us are used to from home. We continued our way south toward the Perisan Gulf, tasting the first birding of the region during short stops along the drive, with species like Purple Sunbird, Green Bee-eater and Indian Roller starting to appear. We reached Minab at the last hour of the day and a short visit to the nearby mudflats delivered several Sand Larks and a fine selection of water-birds, including some Great Thick-knee.

![Birds](image)

**Sind Woodpecker and Hypocolius**

A major target for most of us lay ahead the following morning, heading further south towards Jask until we reached some palm and Tamarisk gardens, where a pair of Sind Woodpecker were waiting for us. Both male and female gave us great views in the very first light of the morning – this species is largely restricted to Pakistan and Afghanistan, both countries not particularly high on the birders wish list of places to visit making a visit to Iran essential if one is keen in an attempt to complete the Picidae. We moved on to another garden where we had a number of migrating Black-headed Buntings, a couple of Spotted Owlets and a Shikra. The last stop of the morning, along the mangrove shoreline, gave us great views at close range of a Saunder’s Tern, a regional speciality, showing perfectly the wide extension of black in the outer primaries and the tiny, triangular forecrown patch. More confiding Sand Larks were feeding close along with a few singing Clamorous Reed Warbler and a surprise, an Intermediate Egret, a species rarely recorded in Iran, though undoubtedly overlooked. We enjoyed the Baluchi hospitality during the lunchtime, with a feast of lamb in a carpet-decorated living room, where we chilled during the hottest hours of the day. After that we drove back to Minab, with a couple of promising stops along the coast that failed to deliver anything of particular note! Our last morning in the Baluchistan we visited the Geno Protected Area, to the north of Bandar Abbas. The very first bird of the morning was the much-wanted See-see Partridge, which showed perfectly in the Swarovski ‘scope. Lately we realized that the birds were coming to drink in a little pond close to our position. On the way up we picked up several Bay-backed Shrikes, more Hume’s Wheatear, Striolated Bunting, a single Variable Wheatear and a brief Pale Rockfinch in a drinking pool. We spent our last hour in the Bandar Abbas mudflats, where we enjoyed a fine selection of waders and terns in the heat of the day. By then it was time to take a flight to the Mesopotamian region, in southeast Iran, to Ahvaz, straddling the Iraqi border.

The Mesopotamian region was once a huge wetland basin, but has long since been drained because of the large hydrological projects throughout the Euphrates and Tigris river basins, the damage of the reedbeds and the heavy pollution in the water. We had a day and a morning to visit several areas of interest, including pockets of marsh that still remain amongst the arable farmland. Each marsh, no matter how small contained birds. A number of White-tailed Lapwings were very territorial, while a few Little Bittern skimmed over the reedbeds, and a female of Pallid Harrier flushed a flock of House Sparrows from a nearby reedbed. Several Pied Kingfishers were perched on the wires and after this, we heard the distinctive call of our main target, the Endangered Basra Reed Warbler, it only took a few seconds for us all have great views of this specialty of the region, including its exceedingly long primary projection compared to the short-winged Clamorous that also breeds here, and long narrow bill and neck that separate them from the Great Reed Warblers that migrate through here. It’s status as Endangered is due to habitat loss of this nearly Mesopotamian breeder, otherwise only seen on migration in Kuwait, Qatar or occasionally seen on its wintering grounds in East Africa. In a couple of hours, we only heard this single bird, along with other warblers such as Common Reed, Barred and Sedge. Another sought after specialties was the Iraq Babbler, here pleasantly common and inquisitive. Most of the birds were already in the middle of the breeding season, despite it only being mid-April, as temperatures here were already in its mid-30s! Moving to another place we located a ‘Mesopotamian Crow’ perched in a roadside tree, allowing excellent views of this distinctive pied subspecies of the Hooded Crow. A short stop along a stream well covered by Tamarisk delivered our first Hypocolius, this beautiful waxwing-like bird still breeds here in good numbers.
Ibex stood perilously at the top of a slope and after cross the high pass, into the greenest part of the country. A short stop at 2900m delivered a small and tame group of Mesopotamian Spiny Lizards, a distinctive Mesopotamian endemism. In the surroundings, a number of Hypocolius were feeding in Berberis berries and even the regional-endemic Mesopotamian Spiny Lizard, a much wanted species for Richard, also made an appearance – though struggling to be anywhere close to the highlight of the day! In the afternoon we visited another small reserve where a couple of Ménétrier’s Warblers were difficult to see as they weren’t yet performing their song-flight displays. We had very little new for us but after some effort, we located two Egyptian Nightjars on their daytime roost, what joy, as it gave us an earlier than expected finish to the day! On the way back to the hotel, we stopped by another small wetland where a number of Pygmy Cormorants were coming to roost.

Our last morning in the southwest of Iran we visited the Shagedan wetlands, a still vast expanse of Phragmites and pools. Mesopotamian Crows were conspicuous and tame and a large number of terns, including Caspian, Common, Little, Gull-billed, Whiskered and striking White-winged were literally everywhere. Smart White-tailed Lapwings were again present, along good numbers of commoner waders. Several Marble Duck gave us flight views only and a fine selection of migrants was all over the place, including Woodchat, Turkestan and Daurian Shrikes, Whinchat, the samamisicus race of Eurasian Redstart, Great Reed Warbler and Willow Warbler. In the afternoon we took a short flight back to Tehran, ready for our trip into the hills.

The drive through the Elbruz Mountains is extremely scenic, at the beginning in the rocky and arid southern slope and after cross the high pass, into the greenest part of the country. A short stop at 2900m delivered a pair of Saker, a fine group of White-winged Snowfinch and several Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush. Snow in the upper sections took us by complete surprise, so we turned back in search of warmer places. A stop in a cosy coffee shop was required (any excuse for a coffee!) to warm ourselves after the snowstorm and we enjoyed a fine selection of Persian sweets. Next to the coffee shop, a distinctive European flavour greeted us; Tree Pipits were displaying and Eurasian Redstarts and Whinchats were singing their hearts out. We reached the affluent town of Kelardasht by the lunchtime and after another treat, we were craving for some good birds so we headed to a beautiful Beech forest above the town. Once inside the beech forest, heavy rain and fog greeted us – what a day for the weather! However, after literally two minutes, a beautiful male of Caspian Tit performed few meters away as long as we wanted. This Hycranian forest specialist is mainly found in the Elbruz, with a tiny population in the corner of Azerbaijan, with a song distinct from the similar-looking Sombre Tit. The Beech contained a predominately Eurasian selection, such as like Chaffinch, Coal, Great and Blue Tits, Blackbird, Song and Mistle Thrushes, Water Pipit and even Eurasian Robin – all great birds for the Asian list! Weather conditions didn’t improve and with the tit under the belt and regarding the favourable weather forecast for the next two days, we went back to the hotel for an early non-alcoholic celebration.

A visit above the tree-line was needed for our next two birds the following morning. At dawn we were positioned in a spectacular, deep valley, surrounded by snow-capped peaks in search of Caspian Snowcock. Some Persian Ibex stood perilously at the top of the cliffs, a few pairs of Alpine Chough flew over and we scoped a gorgeous
male Ring Ouzel. Eventually, thanks to some excellent spotting by Sonia, we all had great views of the cock, feeding, and much to our surprise, started displaying, pumping his tail up-and-down in true snowcock fashion, probably because the presence of a female. ‘Caucasian’ Dunnock was also noted, a mooted split here with its different song to Eurasian birds, several Rock Bunting were feeding in a meadow, a few Western Rock Nuthatch and a Golden Eagle was flying high above the crags. Inspecting another valley, we quickly located a pair of Radde’s Accentor, very showy as usual. We also spent some time with the Common Chiffchaffs, noticing the differences in voice and plumage of this local subspecies, with big and dark birds closely resembling Mountain Chiffchaff in plumage but not in song or call. In the afternoon we went back to the forest, where we again had several great encounters with Caspian Tit, Green, Great Spotted and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, Eurasian Siskin, Common Buzzard and a gorgeous Green Warbler.

_Caspian Tit and Black-headed Penduline-tit_

This cold weather appeared to have delayed some of the summering migrants, noting the lack of wheatear action in the still cold weather. Our second morning here was another start in the fog, so we decided to head down to the Caspian Sea ‘coast’ earlier, our first Black-eared Wheatears of the trip were found and once at the coast, a nearby forest patch delivered a number of migrants including several smart Red-breasted Flycatchers along with Hawfinch and Eurasian Golden Oriole. After lunch, we visited a small marsh among the rice fields that has been retained here for the sole purpose of hunting, a travesty but at the same time is one of just a handful of known sites left for the Black-headed Penduline-tit, one of the most desired birds of the whole tour. Though this Central Asia speciality is said to be common, especially in Kazakhstan and its IUCN threat status is Least Concern, the ugly truth is that this species is facing serious problems due the habitat loss and in our recce of the region, we found very few ponds with the conditions that this species requires, surely a much higher threat category is required. So, we were delighted to find two nests and at least three birds. However, quite a lot of willow trees had been cut recently, which is not a good omen, with few spots remaining here for the bird. We enjoyed brilliant views for more than two hours, feeding in the reedbeds and in the flowers of the Willows. We were surprised by the low number of aquatic birds but in fact, all these wetlands are under severe hunting pressure so we barely found anything but a mega Spotted Crake on its way to north, giving us views for as long as we wanted. On the way to the hotel, passing through a number of ponds and lagoons we didn’t see much to mention apart from Cetti’s Warbler and a skittish Savi’s Warbler was probably the highlight of the late afternoon.

The final leg of the tour took us to the final corner of the country, towards the northeast, and Touran Wildlife Refuge. This massive reserve, in the heart of the Dash-e Kavir, is well known for be the home of the last Asian Cheetahs. For this reason, this reserve is one of the best protected in the whole country. The drive to Touran passes through a great variety of habitats in the Eastern Elbruz mountains. A pair of Finsch’s Wheatear was feeding by the roadside – an important bird for some of us - and in a juniper-covered hill we had Ortolan and Grey-necked Buntings almost side-by-side, Chukar, Pied Wheatear, Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Woodlark for some, and a few Rock Sparrows. We arrived to our rustic though charming homestay at the edge of the reserve, situated in a fertile valley in the base of dry, dominating hills. In the heat of the day, just in time to enjoy another Persian lunch before heading out in the search of the most famous bird of Iran, Pleske’s Ground Jay, found only in the Great Salt Desert. Usually, finding the ground jay involves a very long drive all morning and/or afternoon, so was a delight to find a pair after driving just a couple of kilometres. They were actively calling each other from the top of the bushes, and actively coming towards us, producing outstanding views in good light. Once we were satisfied, we moved on to spotting more desert specialities such as Streaked Scrub Warbler, Asian Desert Warbler for some, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Greater Short-toed Lark and Steppe Grey
Shrike. We also added quite a few of skittish Goitered Gazelles and Asian Wild Ass to our mammal list, all of them typically wary.

With the pressure off, we were able to spend time in more varied habitats the next morning. Visiting another spot, particularly good for sandgrouse, as several groups of Crowned Sandgrouse, totalling some 40 birds, landed in a nearby flat area meanwhile small numbers of Black-bellied Sandgrouse flew overhead. Heading to some hill and only interrupted by few Bar-tailed Larks feeding close to the track, we bumped into yet more ground-jays before arriving at a beautiful garden full of migrants, with hundreds of Red-breasted Flycatcher, Green Warblers and Common Rosefinches, along with a delightful pair of Eurasian Hobby nesting in a Walnut tree. Once in the mountains, the stony areas held Chukar, Variable and Persian Wheatears and Long-legged Buzzard meanwhile another spot had a pair of smart Grey-necked Bunting. Moving down, a garden held several Rosy Starlings, that were new for the trip, before we headed out of Touran and moved west a couple of hours towards Tehran for the night.

**Green Warbler and Pleske’s Ground Jay**

One final morning left of the tour, and still one important bird to find. Visiting the eastern section of the Elbruz mountains, an area we discovered on our scouting some years back was predictably full of birds again. First we connected with several Goldfinches of the *caniceps* subspecies, sometimes treated as separated species, ‘Eastern’ or ‘Grey-headed’ Goldfinch. Pied, Isabelline and Northern Wheatears were everywhere and suddenly, a group of birds passed in front of the car, calling our attention. They turned out to be our main target, Asian Crimson-winged Finch, which we enjoyed as much we wanted at close range, the morning light catching that crimson just perfectly. In another valley, a pair of Golden Eagles were making the courtship right above us, with an incredible sort of games and loops. Smart White-throated Robins, of the monotypic genus *Irania*, were singing from the top of the rocks and a perky Eastern Orphean Warbler gave us a good show after some hide-and-seek. Then that was it, we called it a morning and spent the rest of the day driving back to Tehran. One final, kebab-filled dinner with a final non-alcoholic toast to our Persian success!

**Bird-of-the-tour:**

1. Black-headed Penduline-tit
2. Pleske’s Ground Jay
3. Sind Woodpecker
4. Crowned Sandgrouse
5. Egyptian Nightjar

For information regarding our tours to Iran please click [here](http://example.com). Alternatively, please contact us via e-mail or phone +44 1332 516254 regarding organising a custom tour to Iran.
Plain Leaf Warbler and Eastern Rock Nuthatch

Afghan Babbler and Mesopotamian Crow

Dead Sea Sparrow and Green Warbler
Collared Pratincole and Radde’s Accentor

Spotted Flycatcher and Hume’s Whitethroat

Afghan Pika and White-throated Robin
Black-headed Penduline-tit and Rufous-tailed Bush-Robin

Common Chiffchaff and Red-fronted Serin © Werner Müller

Sand Lark and Purple Sunbird © Werner Müller
Eurasian Redstart and Iraq Babbler © Werner Müller

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin and Hypocolius © Werner Müller

Crowned Sandgrouse and See-see Partridge © Werner Müller
Systematic List

**ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae**
- Mallard: *Anas platyrhynchos*
- Marbled Duck: *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

**GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae**
- Caspian Snowcock: *Tetraogallus caspius*
- Chukar Partridge: *Alectoris chukar*
- Black Francolin: *Francolinus francolinus*
- Grey Francolin: *Francolinus pondicerianus*  
  - heard only
- Common Pheasant: *Phasianus colchicus*

**PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae**
- Little Grebe: *Tachybaptus ruficollis iraquensis*

**PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae**
- Eurasian Bittern: *Botaurus stellaris*
- Little Bittern: *Ixobrychus minutus*
- Black-crowned Night Heron: *Nycticorax nycticorax*
- Squacco Heron: *Ardeola ralloides*
- Indian Pond Heron: *Ardeola grayii*
- Western Cattle Egret: *Bubulcus ibis*
- Grey Heron: *Ardea cinerea*
- Purple Heron: *Ardea purpurea*
- Great Egret: *Ardea alba*
- Little Egret: *Egretta garzetta*
- Western Reef Heron: *Egretta gularis*
- Intermediate Egret: *Ardea Intermedia*

**SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae**
- Pygmy Cormorant: *Microcarbo pygmeus*
- Great Cormorant: *Phalacrocorax carbo*

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae**
- Osprey: *Pandion haliaetus*

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae**
- Black-winged Kite: *Elanus caeruleus vociferus*
- European Honey Buzzard: *Pernis apivorus*
- Bearded Vulture: *Gypaetus barbatus*
- Short-toed Snake Eagle: *Circaetus gallicus*
- Greater Spotted Eagle: *Clanga clanga*
- Steppe Eagle: *Aquila nipalensis*
- Golden Eagle: *Aquila chrysaetos*
- Shikra: *Accipiter badius*
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk: *Accipiter nisus*
- Western Marsh Harrier: *Circus aeruginosus*
- Pallid Harrier: *Circus macrourus*
- Long-legged Buzzard: *Buteo rufinus*
- Common Buzzard: *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

**GRUIFORMES: Rallidae**
- Spotted Crake: *Porzana porzana*
- Grey-headed Swamphen: *Porphyrio poliocephalus*  
  - heard only
- Common Moorhen: *Gallinula chloropus*
- Eurasian Coot: *Fulica atra*
CHARADRIIFORMES: Burhinidae
Eurasian Thick-knee  *Burhinus oedicnemus*
Great Thick-knee  *Esacus curvirostris*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Haematopodidae
Eurasian Oystercatcher  *Haematopus ostralegus*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae
Black-winged Stilt  *Himantopus himantopus*
Pied Avocet  *Recurvirostra avosetta*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae
Red-wattled Lapwing  *Vanellus indicus*
White-tailed Lapwing  *Vannellus leucurus*
Grey Plover  *Pluvialis squatarola*
Common Ringed Plover  *Charadrius hiaticula*
Little Ringed Plover  *Charadrius dubius*
Kentish Plover  *Charadrius alexandrinus*
Lesser Sand Plover  *Charadrius mongolus*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae
Common Snipe  *Gallinago gallinago*
Black-tailed Godwit  *Limosa limosa*
Bar-tailed Godwit  *Limosa lapponica*
Whimbrel  *Numenius phaeopus*
Eurasian Curlew  *Numenius arquata*
Common Redshank  *Tringa totanus*
Marsh Sandpiper  *Tringa stagnatilis*
Common Greenshank  *Tringa ochropus*
Wood Sandpiper  *Tringa glareola*
Terek Sandpiper  *Xenus cinereus*
Common Sandpiper  *Actitis hypoleucos*
Ruddy Turnstone  *Arenaria interpres*
Sanderling  *Calidris alba*
Little Stint  *Calidris minuta*
Temminck's Stint  *Calidris temminckii*
Curlew Sandpiper  *Calidris ferruginea*
Dunlin  *Calidris alpina*
Ruff  *Philomachus pugnax*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Glareolidae
Collared Pratincole  *Glareola pratincola*

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae
Slender-billed Gull  *Chroicocephalus genei*
Black-headed Gull  *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Lesser Black-backed Gull  *Larus fuscus heuglinii*
Gull-billed Tern  *Gelochelidon nilotica*
Caspian Tern  *Hydroprogne caspia*
Greater Crested Tern  *Thalasseus bergii*
Lesser Crested Tern  *Thalasseus bengalensis*
Sandwich Tern  *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
Little Tern  *Sternula albifrons*
Saunders's Tern  *Sternula sandersi*
Common Tern  *Sterna hirundo*
Whiskered Tern  *Chlidonias hybridus*
White-winged Tern  *Chlidonias leucopterus*
PTEROCLIFORMES: Pteroclidae
- Black-bellied Sandgrouse, *Pterocles orientalis*
- Crowned Sandgrouse, *Pterocles coronatus*

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae
- Rock Dove, *Columba livia*
- Stock Dove, *Columba oenas*
- Common Woodpigeon, *Columba palumbus*
- European Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia turtur*
- Eurasian Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*
- Laughing Dove, *Spilopelia senegalensis*

CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae
- Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae
- Little Owl, *Athene noctua bactriana*
- Spotted Owlet, *Athene brama*

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae
- Egyptian Nightjar, *Caprimulgus aegyptius*

APODIFORMES: Apodidae
- Alpine Swift, *Tachymarptis melba*
- Common Swift, *Apus apus*
- Pallid Swift, *Apus pallidus*
- Little Swift, *Apus affinis*

CORACIIFORMES: Coraciidae
- Indian Roller, *Coracias benghalensis*
- European Roller, *Coracias garrulus*

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae
- White-throated Kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis*
- Common Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*
- Pied Kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis*

CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae
- Green Bee-eater, *Merops orientalis*
- Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, *Merops persicus*
- European Bee-eater, *Merops apiaster*

BUCEROTIFORMES: Upupidae
- Eurasian Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*

PICIFORMES: Picidae
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, *Dryobates minor*
- Sind Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos assimilis*
- Syrian Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos syriacus*
- Great Spotted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos major poalzemi*
- European Green Woodpecker, *Picus viridis karelini*

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae
- Lesser Kestrel, *Falco naumanni*
- Common Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*
- Eurasian Hobby, *Falco subbuteo*
- Saker Falcon, *Falco cherrug*
PSITTACIFORMES: Psittaculidae
Rose-ringed Parakeet
Psittacula krameri

PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae
Red-backed Shrike
Lanius collurio
Isabelline Shrike
Lanius isabellinus
Turkestan Shrike
Lanius phoenicuroides
Lesser Grey Shrike
Lanius minor
Southern Grey Shrike
Lanius meridionalis
Steppe Grey Shrike
Lanius pallidirostris
Bay-backed Shrike
Lanius vittatus
Woodchat Shrike
Lanius senator

PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae
Eurasian Golden Oriole
Oriolus oriolus

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae
Eurasian Jay
Garrulus glandarius
Eurasian Magpie
Pica pica
Pleske's Ground Jay
Podoces pleskei
Red-billed Chough
Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax
Alpine Chough
Pyrrhocorax graculus
House Crow
Corvus splendens
Hooded Crow
Corvus cornix
'Mesopotamian Crow'
Corvus (cornix) capellanus
Brown-necked Raven
Corvus ruficollis
Northern Raven
Corvus corax

PASSERIFORMES: Hypcoliidae
Hypocolius
Hypocolius ampelinus

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae
Coal Tit
Periparus ater
Sombre Tit
Poecile lugubris
Caspian Tit
Poecile hircanus
Eurasian Blue Tit
Cyanistes caeruleus
Great Tit
Parus major

PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae
Black-headed Penduline-tit
Remiz macronyx

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae
Desert Lark
Ammomanes deserti
Bar-tailed Lark
Ammomanes cinctura
Woodlark
Lullula arborea
Eurasian Skylark
Alauda arvensis
Crested Lark
Galerida cristata
Horned Lark
Eremophila alpestris penicillata
Greater Short-toed Lark
Calandrella brachydactyla
Sand Lark
Alaudala raiyal

PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae
White-eared Bulbul
Pyconotus leucotis

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae
Sand Martin
Riparia riparia
Barn Swallow
Hirundo rustica
Pale Crag Martin
Ptyonoprogne obsolata
Common House Martin
Delichon urbicum
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Passeriformes</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cettiidae</td>
<td>Red-rumped Swallow: <em>Cecropis daurica</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cetti's Warbler: <em>Cettia cetti</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scoticercidae</td>
<td>Streaked Scrub Warbler: <em>Scotocerca inquieta</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aegithalidae</td>
<td>Long-tailed Bushtit: <em>Aegithalos caudatus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>heard only</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phylloscopidae</td>
<td>Common Chiffchaff: <em>Phylloscopus collybita menzieberi</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plain Leaf Warbler: <em>Phylloscopus neglectus</em></td>
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<td>Green Warbler: <em>Phylloscopus nitidus</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Willow Warbler: <em>Phylloscopus trochilus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acrocephalidae</td>
<td>Basra Reed Warbler: <em>Acrocephalus griseldis</em></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Great Reed Warbler: <em>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Clamorous Reed Warbler: <em>Acrocephalus stentoreus</em> heard only</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eurasian Reed Warbler: <em>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sykes's Warbler: <em>Iduna rama</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Eastern Olivaceous Warbler: <em>Iduna pallida</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Upcher's Warbler: <em>Hippolais languida</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locustellidae</td>
<td>Savi's Warbler: <em>Locustella luscinoides</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cisticolidae</td>
<td>Zitting Cisticola: <em>Cisticola juncidis</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Graceful Prinia: <em>Prinia gracilis</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leiiothrichidae</td>
<td>Iraq Babbler: <em>Turdoides altirostris</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Afghan Babbler: <em>Turdoides huttoni</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sylviidae</td>
<td>Eurasian Blackcap: <em>Sylvia atricapilla</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesser Whitethroat: <em>Sylvia curruca</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hume's Whitethroat: <em>Sylvia althaea</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Orphean Warbler: <em>Sylvia crassirostris</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Barred Warbler: <em>Sylvia nisoria</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Desert Warbler: <em>Sylvia nana</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Whitethroat: <em>Sylvia communis</em></td>
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<td>Ménétriés's Warbler: <em>Sylvia mystacea</em></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Troglodytidae</td>
<td>Eurasian Wren: <em>Troglodytes troglodytes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sittidae</td>
<td>Eurasian Nuthatch: <em>Sitta europaea</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Western Rock Nuthatch: <em>Sitta neumayer</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Rock Nuthatch: <em>Sitta tephronota</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certhiidae</td>
<td>Eurasian Treecreeper: <em>Certhia familiaris</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sturnidae</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Myna</td>
<td>Acridotheres tristis</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosy Starling</td>
<td>Pastor roseus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Starling</td>
<td>Sturnus vulgaris</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ring Ouzel</th>
<th>Turdus torquatus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Blackbird</td>
<td>Turdus merula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Thrush</td>
<td>Turdus philomelos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistle Thrush</td>
<td>Turdus viscivorus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin</th>
<th>Cercotrichas galactotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Flycatcher</td>
<td>Muscicapa striata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Robin</td>
<td>Erithacus rubecula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Nightingale</td>
<td>Luscinia megarhynchos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-throated Robin</td>
<td>Irania gutturalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-breasted Flycatcher</td>
<td>Ficedula parva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Redstart</td>
<td>Phoenicurus ochruros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisicus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Redstart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush</td>
<td>Monticola saxatilis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Rock-thrush</td>
<td>Monticola solitarius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pied Bushchat</td>
<td>Saxicola caprata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whinchat</td>
<td>Saxicola rubetra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Stonechat</td>
<td>Saxicola rubicola</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe oenanthe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isabelline Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe isabellina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desert Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe deserti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-eared Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe hispanica</td>
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<td>Pied Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe pleschanka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variable Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe picata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hume's Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe albonigra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finsch's Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe finschii</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persian Wheatear</td>
<td>Oenanthe chrysopygia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae**

| White-throated Dipper    | Cinclus cinculus      |

**PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae**

| Purple Sunbird           | Cinnyris asiaticus    |

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Sparrow</th>
<th>Passer domesticus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Sparrow</td>
<td>Passer hispaniolensis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead Sea Sparrow</td>
<td>Passer moabiticus moabiticus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sistan (Afghan) Scrub Sparrow</td>
<td>Passer (moabiticus) yatii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurasian Tree Sparrow</td>
<td>Passer montanus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale Rockfinch</td>
<td>Carpospiza brachydactyla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Sparrow</td>
<td>Petronia petronia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow-throated Petronia</td>
<td>Gymnoris xanthocollis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-winged Snowfinch</td>
<td>Montifringilla nivalis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae**

| Indian Silverbill        | Euodice malabarica    |

**PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alpine Accentor</th>
<th>Prunella collaris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radde's Accentor</td>
<td>Prunella ocularis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunnock</td>
<td>Prunella modularis obscura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

Western Yellow Wagtail  
Citrine Wagtail  
Grey Wagtail  
White Wagtail  
Tawny Pipit  
Long-billed Pipit  
Tree Pipit  
Red-throated Pipit  
Water Pipit

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae

Common Chaffinch  
Eurasian Crimson-winged Finch  
Common Rosefinch  
European Greenfinch  
Common Linnet  
European Goldfinch  
Red-fronted Serin  
Eurasian Siskin

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae

Corn Bunting  
Rock Bunting  
Grey-necked Bunting  
Ortolan Bunting  
Striolated Bunting  
Black-headed Bunting

MAMMALS

Golden Jackal  
Red Fox  
Small Asian Mongoose  
Asian Wild Ass  
Goitered Gazelle  
Persian Ibex (Wild Goat)  
Afghan Pika  
European Hare

Touran Wildlife Refuge  © Werner Müller