

Oman “A trip with a pleasant bonus”

This is a small report from a special short trip to Oman to see Sooty Falcon, one of the view regular species of the Arabian peninsula which I” needed” and are hard to combine with spring or winter visits.



Jouanin's Petrel has nothing to do with Bulwer's Petrel as many people say, it is a totally different bird, in action as in lookings, by Jens Eriksen

Itinerary:

The sites mentioned are described in the book Birdwatchingguide to Oman by Sergeant and Eriksen

02-09 Night flight to Muscat from Frankfurt. Side numbers mentioned with the bird records, Latin name only used when interesting.

03-09 Arrived at Muscat airport with a two hour delay (technical problem) and picked up by Hanne and Jens Eriksen. After some refreshments at there house (my stay for three nights) we went to the offshore island of Ras As Sawadi (2.1) with birding stops along the way near that place and birded the rest of the day.

04-09 In the early morning we made a four hour Pelagic to the Daymaniyat Islands (an hour north of Muscat, not mentioned in the book see <http://itouchmap.com/?c=mu&UF=-786721&UN=-1133088&DG=ISLS>) and in the afternoon we birded the backside of Al Qurm Park in Muscat (1.2) .

05-09 We birded the whole day at Liwa (2.4), Shinas (2.5) and Sun Farms (2.2) ,about a three hour drive north of Muscat

06-09 An early morning pelagic out of Muscat (Mutrah harbour) of about three hours during this we visited Al Fahl Island. In the afternoon we visited another part of Al Qurm Park and later that night I flew home arriving in the early morning of the next day at Frankfurt.

The Oman birding site link: <http://www.birdsoman.com/update.HTM>

Legenda:

*AAAA = New species

AAAA = A good species for myself or for the trip.

The Bird list

001 LITTLE GREBE - About 19 birds seen at 1.2

002 JOUANIN'S PETREL – *bulweria fallax*

06-09 20 ex. seen very well at the pelagic, close to the boat. Big, fregatbird like petrels with a large bill always held downwards in flight. See also: <http://www.youtube.com/user/maxberlijn#p/a/u/0/gbEBqxyUh88>



003 PERSIAN SHEARWATER – *puffinus persicus*

A total of 7 seen on both pelagics, one little flock of five.



A nice swimming flock of Persian Shear's near the boat.

004 WILSON'S STORMPETREL – *oceanites oceanicus*

04-09 2 ex. during the pelagic

06-09 100+ seen during the pelagic, in little flocks, also swimming. Many birds were in molt



One of the Wilson's by Jens Eriksen, note the wing and body molt

***005 SWINHOE'S STORM PETREL – OCEANODROMA MONORHIS**

06-09 4 ex, seen quite well mixed in with the Wilson's. A quite large long winged all dark (dark chocolate) stormpetrel, with relatively long wings (compared to the Wilson's they were with). The rump was as dark as the birds where. One bird showed a slight pale upper wing bar, but not very obvious. The forehead was steep and the bill was quite good to see. The birds had the strange habit to fly away from us after we find them (opposite the Wilson's who stayed around). They flew away quite direct low above the water in a straight flight.





The third Swinhoe's we saw on that day was the best and made one round before it got away. What a bonus bird!!

006 BROWN BOOBY – sula leucogaster

06-09 1 ad. at Al Fahl Island.

007 CORMORANT - 06-09 2 ex. in the afternoon at 1.2

008 NIGHT HERON – A total of 40 birds seen at 1.2

009 STRIATED HERON – A total of 10 birds seen on most days, one bird with a chick at Al Fahl Island.

010 INDIAN POND HERON – ardeola grayi

06-09 3 ex, one in summer plumage at 1.2 at an abandoned pond

011 WESTERN CATTLE EGRET – 50+ spread over the trip, mainly at 2.2

012 WESTERN REEF HERON – About 150 birds seen along the coast also in small flocks, most where of the dark form.

013 LITTLE EGRET – About 10 birds seen spread over the days, mostly on fresh water.

014 GREAT WHITE EGRET – 06-09 1 ex. seen at 1.2. (river mouth from the bridge from the boulevard)

015 GREY HERON – Seen daily in low numbers

016 PURPLE HERON – A total of 3 seen during my stay, all immatures.

017 GLOSSY IBIS – 5 ex. at 2.2

018 EURASIAN SPOONBILL – A total of 7 seen at two locations, all immatures

019 GREATER FLAMINGO – 2 adults at 2.5

020 GARGANEY – 20 ex. seen at 1.2., mixed with Shovelers all in eclips plumage.

021 NORTHERN SHOVELER – 10 ex. with the Garganey at 1.2

***022 SOOTY FALCON – FALCO CONCOLOR**

A total of 28 birds seen all on offshore islands during my visit. With eight on 2.1, twelve on Daymaniyat Islands and eight again on Al Fahl Island. One immature with pink underparts was seen. The birds hunted in pairs and one was seen with a passerine in its talon's. They called often. See also:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/maxberlijn#p/a/u/1/-hW0XK3KGU0>



This bird was photographed on the first day by Jens Eriksen

023 GREY FRANCOLIN – Common throughout the trip in family flocks.

024 BAILLON'S CRAKE – *porzana pusilla*

06-09 1 ex seen in flight (a lot of brown “lines” on the upperparts and dark below) at 1.2.

025 MOORHEN – About 10 birds seen at different localities

026 EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER – About 60 birds seen at several coastal localities.

027 BLACK-WINGED STILT – Common at fresh water sides.

028 CRAB PLOVER – *dromas ardeola*

03-09 2 ex. at 2.1 and 05-09 8 ex. all on the beach with a few immatures.



A good start these tow Crab Plovers

029 CREAM-COULED COURSER – *cursorius cursor*

05-09 2 seen very well at 2.2

030 COLLARED PRATINCOLE – 25 in total spread over 2.2 all in winter/immature plumage

031 LITTLE RINGED PLOVER – Quite common mostly at 2.2

032 RINGED PLOVER – 2 ex. at 2.2

033 KENTISH PLOVER – 2 ex at 2.4

034 LESSER SAND PLOVER – *charadrius atrifrons* ssp: *pamirensis*

Commonly seen during the trip, some still in nice breeding plumage. Some in winter plumage are tricky to separate from Greater when they are alone and not comparable with other waders.



One of the summer plumaged birds, note the unmarked flanks

035 GREATER SANDPLOVER – 1 ex. in winter plumage at 2.4

036 CASPIAN PLOVER – *charadrius asiaticus*

05-09 3 ex, two adults in non breeding plumage and one immature (based on breast band color) at 2.2 seen very well at the little ponds and one on a dry area of the farm



The immature bird

037 PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER – 3 moulting adults at 2.2

038 RED-WATTLED PLOVER – Common with many immatures seen daily at many habitats

039 SANDERLING – Quite common along the coast.

040 LITTLE STINT – The commonest wader mainly at the freshwater places.

041 TEMMINCK'S STINT – Quite common mainly at 2.2, in winter plumage but also some immatures.

042 CURLEW SANDPIPER – 3 ex, at 2.5 and 2.2

043 DUNLIN – A total of 10 seen at 2.5. and 2.2

044 BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER – A total of 25 seen at several locations, all but one juvenile birds (still fresh), the adult was moulting into winter plumage.



A Broad-Billed still in immature plumage

045 RUFF – Quite commonly seen at the freshwater places

046 COMMON SNIPE – 3 ex. seen spread over the trip

047 PINTAIL SNIPE – *gallinago stenura*

06-09 1 ex. seen in flight at 1.2, no white trailing edge in flight.

048 BLACK-TAILED GODWIT – 1 ex. at 2.2.

049 BAR-TAILED GODWIT – 3 ex. at 2.4 and 2.5.

050 WHIMBREL – Quite common along the coast in small (calling) flocks.

051 CURLEW – A total 5 bird seen spread over the trip.
052 COMMON REDSHANK – 10 birds seen in suitable habitat's, often young birds
053 MARSH SANDPIPER – 20 birds seen spread over the trip.
054 GREENSHANK – 10 ex. at coastal habitats
055 GREEN SANDPIPER – Common throughout the trip
054 WOOD SANDPIPER – Quite common throughout the trip.
055 TEREK SANDPIPER – 25 seen spread over the days' with many at 2.5.
056 COMMON SANDPIPER – Common throughout the trip
057 TURNSTONE – Quite common throughout
058 RED-NECKED PHALAROPE – Very common on sea, in large flocks with adults and many birds in juvenile plumage, often noisy.
059 ARCTIC SKUA – 4 ex. in total seen on the pelagics and along the coast, hunting the tern flocks.
060 SOOTY GULL – The common gull along the coast, also chicks and full grown juveniles seen.
061 SLENDER-BILLED GULL – About 50 birds seen in small flocks mixed in with the terns.

062 STEPPE GULL – *larus barabensis*

A total of 25+ birds seen in small flocks, immatures and adults. The adults looked quite straightforward but we paid not much attention to large white-headed gulls.

063 GULL-BILLED TERN – About 10 birds seen in the tern flocks all in winter plumage.
064 SWIFT TERN – The second most common “white” tern seen on the beaches and islands, also some very young immatures where seen in a colony on the 5th, (late breeder), most birds lost there breeding plumage.
065 LESSER CRESTED TERN – The commonest “white” tern seen in large flocks along the coast., almost all where in non breeding plumage
066 SANDWICH TERN- About 50 birds seen mixed in with the other large terns.
067 COMMON TERN – About 400 birds seen at 2.4. most off them in non breeding plumage.
068 WHITE-CHEEKED TERN – The commonest small tern along the coast, some still on the island breeding colonies with many immatures. Rump colour is the easiest ID feature. Immatures seem have a weak Roseate Tern pattern on the mantle.

069 BRIDLED TERN – Common on the sea and we visited a few big colonies on the islands still rather busy with birds. Many juveniles seen and no small chicks anymore.

070 SAUNDERS'S TERN – *sterna saundersi*

05-09 30 ex. all in winter plumage at 2.4. Grey rump and when perched very black primaries is a good ID feature.

071 WHISKERED TERN – 06-09 10 birds at 1.2

072 WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN – 05-09 70 birds seen at 2.2, and 1 bird 2.4, adults and immatures

073 COMMON NODDY – *ANOUS STOLIDUS

04-09 17 birds in a Bridled Tern colony seen very well and very close, with a quite broad bill base and reddish “mouth”. Some birds where sunbathing with stretched out wings. There tong's where hold in a typical triangular way. See also: <http://www.youtube.com/user/maxberlijn#p/a/u/0/daaNia-W8iE>



They where very tame..

074 CHESNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE – 05-09 100 ex. in small flocks at the dry area's of the farm
075 ROCK DOVE – Quite A few, “wild looking” birds where seen.

076 COLLARED DOVE – Very common at the farms and some in the cities.

077 TURTLE DOVE - 5 birds seen at 2.2.

---- **RING-NECKED PARAKEET** – Quite common in Muscat, seems to be introduced

078 WHITE-COLORED KINGFISHER – *halcyon chloris ssp: kalbaensis*

05-09 1 ex. sitting quite high up in tree in the mangrove's at 2.4



This was the only view we got of the Kalbaensis

079 COMMON KINGFISHER – A total of 6 birds seen spread over the trip.

080 LITTLE GREEN BEEATER – About 15 birds seen in small groups spread over the trip.

081 BLUE-CHEEKED BEEATER – About 90 birds seen with many immatures, mainly at 2.2 where they were showing very well, also the adults were freshly moulted.



A fresh immature Blue-cheeked very common at Sun Farms

082 EUROPEAN ROLLER – 04-09, 1 ex. sitting in a tree at 1.2.

083 INDIAN ROLLER – Quite common throughout.

084 BLACK-CROWNED FINCH LARK – 05-09 A little flock of 20 birds (more males than females at the dry habitats of 2.2 where nice.

085 SHORT-TOED LARK – 05-09 25 ex in one flock at 2.2

086 CRESTED LARK – About 10 birds seen spread over the trip.

087 SAND MARTIN – 05-09 3 ex, seen well at 2.2

088 AFRICAN ROCK MARTIN – About 15 seen mainly in Muscat (also sitting on the houses).

089 BARN SWALLOW – 20 birds seen on migration.

090 YELLOW WAGTAIL – 12 birds seen at two localities, all in winter like plumage, most likely *bema*

091 CITRINE WAGTAIL – About 5 juvenile birds on two locations

---- **WHITE-CHEEKED BULBUL** – Common at 1.2. and surroundings

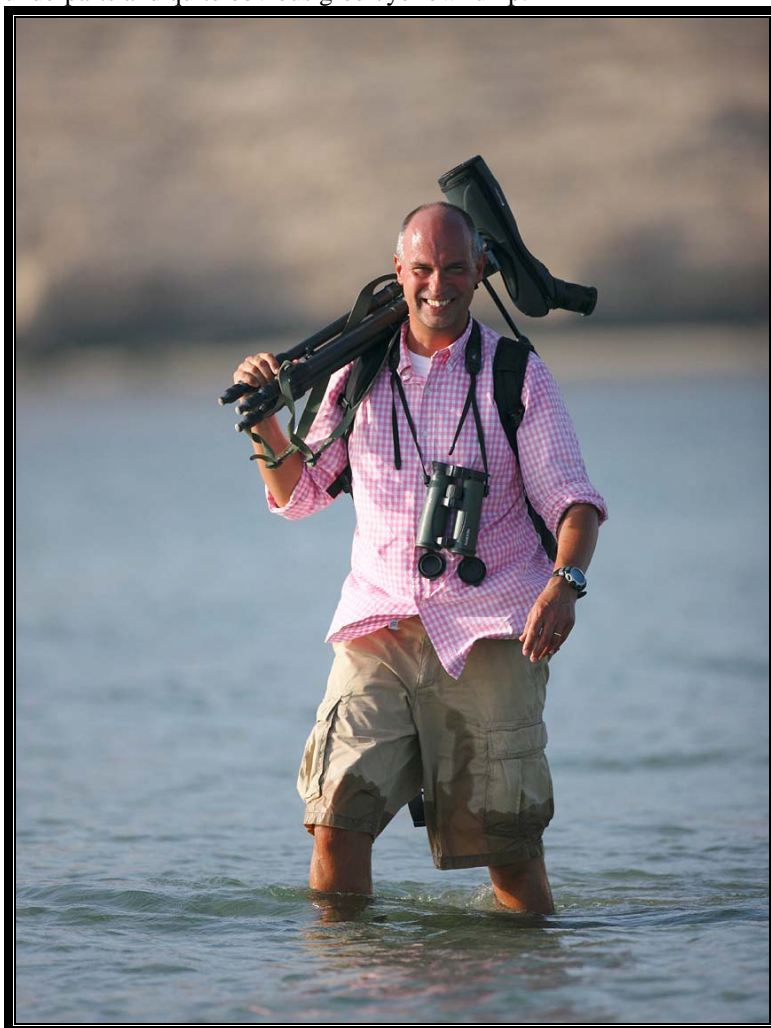
---- **RED-VENTED BULBUL** – 2 birds seen at two locations

092 YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL – 3 birds seen spread over the trip

093 ISABELLINE WHEATEAR – A total of 5 seen at 2.2

094 PIED WHEATEAR – 05-09 1 male seen well in fresh plumage at 2.2

095 HUME'S WHEATEAR – 06-09 2 ex, on the hills of Muscat city.
096 CLAMOROUS REED WARBLER – About 10 birds seen mainly moulting adults.
097 SPOTTED FLYCATCHER – 2 birds, both migrants seen during my stay.
098 ARABIAN BABBLER – 1 bird at 2.4. along the road.
099 PURPLE SUNBIRD – Common throughout the trip.
100 STEPPE GREY SHRIKE – *lanius lahtora* ssp: *pallidirostris*
 04-09 1 immature at 1.2, nice views of this very tame bird.
101 ASIAN GREY SHRIKE – *lanius lahtora*
 A total of 3 birds seen at two localities.
 ---- **HOUSE CROW** – Common throughout the trip, mainly in cities.
 ----- **COMMON MYNAH** – Very common in this part of Oman.
102 HOUSE SPARROW – Common
103 INDIAN SILVERBILL – Common in very large flocks, mostly at 2.2
 ---- **RED AVADAVAT** – 5 ex, mostly males in breeding plumage building a nest at 1.2, nice birds
104 BLACK-HEADED BUNTING – *emberiza melanocephala*
 05-09 2 immature birds at the pivots at 2.2, giving nice views, large billed without streaks on breast and underparts and quite obvious green/yellow rump.



A happy but very tired man...

-----..-----