

Tunisia: 3 - 10 January 2012

Here is a short report of a birding and nature observation trip, which I did along with 6 other people. The trip took place in some areas of central Tunisia, from 3 to 10 January 2012.

Trip leader was Andrea Corso.

Our flights have been Roma – Tunis (Tunisair) plus Tunis – Djerba (Sevenair), and the opposite way for the return.

We had two “regular” rented cars, not 4x4, and we moved from Djerba and Tozeur, towards the west border. We slept in various places, mainly small nice hotels, in Djerba, Douz, Matmata and so on.

We enjoyed the trip very much, from the birding and naturalistic point of view, but also for the nice people we met, so that we had no trouble in birding and shooting pics everywhere.

We not only saw very interesting birds, but also we found some very nice mammals, invertebrates and reptiles, the latter usually under the stones... anyway the list is here at the bottom. Birding wise, in the inland areas we did not find very great numbers, especially for the desert species. It seems that this winter, or maybe even the previous breeding season, had some unusual features, maybe more rain than the usual, so that birds were more widespread distributed.

Most interesting birds have been:

Marbled Ducks, Ferruginous Ducks, Long-legged Buzzards, Bonelli's Eagles, Lanners, Barbary Partridges, Slender-billed Gulls, Caspian Terns, Laughing Doves, Pharaoh Eagle Owl, Short-eared Owl, Little Swifts, Bar-tailed Larks, Desert Larks, Greater Hoopoe Larks, Thekla Larks, Temminck's Larks, Richard's Pipit, Red-throated Pipits, African Reed Warblers, Tristram's Warblers, Moussier's Redstarts, White-crowned Black Wheatears, Black Wheatears, Maghreb Wheatears, Red-rumped Wheatears, Desert Wheatears, Southern / Desert Grey Shrikes, Brown-necked Ravens, Trumpeter Finches.

Pictures:

[Picasa birds gallery](#) with my pictures (Panasonic Lumix FZ28) plus other shoots kindly given by Massimo Pettavino (Canon EOS 5D mark II plus Canon 100/400, except Lanner and Short-eared Owl, in digiscoping with Panasonic DMC-TZ20).

[Facebook gallery](#) of pics by Marnix Vandegehuchte.

[Picasa gallery](#) some of my landscapes gallery.

Here is the list of birds I have seen. Note that some other 10-12 species have been contacted by other members of the group, but not by me. Anyway, those birds I missed did not include any north African species.

1. Little Grebe | *Tachybaptus ruficollis* | some in El Kantara (Djerba); some in Douz and in a golf course pond in Tozeur
2. Great Crested Grebe | *Podiceps cristatus* | some in Djerba
3. Eared Grebe | *Podiceps nigricollis* | some in El Kantara (Djerba)
4. Northern Gannet | *Morus bassanus* | 3+ at the sea in Djerba
5. Grey Heron | *Ardea cinerea* | some seen in wet areas
6. Great Egret | *Ardea alba* | common in Djerba coasts; some in Douz
7. Little Egret | *Egretta garzetta* | common in Djerba coasts; some at Douz
8. Cattle Egret | *Bubulcus ibis* | 1 in Tozeur
9. Eurasian Spoonbill | *Platalea leucorodia* | some in Djerba coasts
10. Greater Flamingo | *Phoenicopterus roseus* | common in Djerba coasts
11. Common Shelduck | *Tadorna tadorna* | some in Djerba coasts and at Douz
12. Wigeon | *Anas penelope* | some in El Kantara (Djerba) and at Ghidma Pools
13. Gadwall | *Anas strepera* | 1 at Ghidma Pools
14. Eurasian Teal | *Anas crecca* | some at Ghidma Pools
15. Northern Shoveler | *Anas clypeata* | some in Djerba and at Douz and in a golf course pond in Tozeur
16. Marbled Duck | *Marmaronetta angustirostris* | 100+ at Douz
17. Ferruginous Duck | *Aythya nyroca* | some in El Kantara (Djerba); 1 in a golf course pond in Tozeur
18. Western Marsh Harrier | *Circus aeruginosus* | some in Djerba and inland areas
19. Long-legged Buzzard | *Buteo rufinus cirtensis* | couple in Tojuane; 1 1st.w. in Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
20. Bonelli's Eagle | *Aquila fasciata* | 1 at Tojuane, 1 at Ksar Hadada
21. Eurasian Kestrel | *Falco tinnunculus* | a few in various locations
22. Lanner | *Falco biarmicus erlangeri* | couple in Tojuane
23. Barbary Partridge | *Alectoris barbara* | some near in Matmata
24. Common Crane | *Grus grus* | some in Djerba
25. Common Moorhen | *Gallinula chloropus* | 2-3 in a golf course pond in Tozeur
26. Eurasian Coot | *Fulica atra* | common in Djerba, some at Douz
27. Eurasian Oystercatcher | *Haematopus ostralegus* | some at Jarba Ajim (west Djerba)
28. Grey Plover | *Pluvialis squatarola* | some in Djerba coasts

29. Common Ringed Plover | *Charadrius hiaticula* | common in Djerba coasts
30. Little Ringed Plover | *Charadrius dubius* | 1-2 in Douz
31. Kentish Plover | *Charadrius alexandrinus* | common in Djerba coasts ; about 30 at Ghidma Pools
32. Common Snipe | *Gallinago gallinago* | 1-2 in Douz; some at Ghidma Pools
33. Eurasian Curlew | *Numenius arquata* | common in Djerba coasts
34. Spotted Redshank | *Tringa erythropus* | some in Djerba coasts; 2 in Douz
35. Common Redshank | *Tringa totanus* | some in Djerba coasts
36. Marsh Sandpiper | *Tringa stagnatilis* | 1 in El Kantara (Djerba)
37. Common Greenshank | *Tringa nebularia* | some on coasts and wet areas in Djerba
38. Green Sandpiper | *Tringa ochropus* | 2-3 in Douz
39. Wood Sandpiper | *Tringa glareola* | 2 in Douz
40. Common Sandpiper | *Actitis hypoleucos* | some in Djerba
41. Ruddy Turnstone | *Arenaria interpres* | some in Djerba coasts
42. Sanderling | *Calidris alba* | common in Djerba coasts
43. Little Stint | *Calidris minuta* | 2 at Ghidma Pools
44. Curlew Sandpiper | *Calidris ferruginea* | some in Djerba coasts
45. Dunlin | *Calidris alpina* | common in Djerba coasts
46. Black-headed Gull | *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* | common in Djerba coasts
47. Slender-billed Gull | *Chroicocephalus genei* | common in Djerba coasts
48. Lesser Black-backed Gull | *Larus fuscus* | common in Djerba coasts
49. Yellow-legged Gull | *Larus michahellis* | common in Djerba coasts
50. Mediterranean Gull | *Larus melanocephalus* | common in Djerba coasts
51. Caspian Tern | *Sterna caspia* | common in Djerba coasts
52. Sandwich Tern | *Sterna sandvicensis* | common in Djerba coasts
53. Rock Dove | *Columba livia* | some in rocky areas
54. Eurasian Collared Dove | *Streptopelia decaocto* | common in towns
55. Laughing Dove | *Streptopelia senegalensis* | common in towns, palm plantations etc.
56. Pharaoh Eagle Owl | *Bubo ascalaphus* | 1 seen far near Douirat
57. Little Owl | *Athene noctua sahare* | a few in different inland places
58. Short-eared Owl | *Asio flammeus* | 1 in Jarba Ajim (west Djerba)
59. Little Swift | *Apus affinis* | 4-5 in Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
60. Hoopoe | *Upupa epops* | 1 in Douz
61. Bar-tailed Lark | *Ammomanes cincturus* | 2-3 in Bir Soltane; 1 near in Beni Keddache
62. Desert Lark | *Ammomanes deserti* | some in Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
63. Greater Hoopoe Lark | *Alaemon alaudipes* | 2-3 in Bir Soltane (in 2 different days); 1 near Beni Keddache
64. Crested Lark | *Galerida cristata* | very common
65. Thekla Lark | *Galerida theklae* | very common
66. Skylark | *Alauda arvensis* | some in Djerba
67. Temminck's Lark | *Eremophila bilopha* | group in Bir Soltane (in 2 different days); dozens between Bir Soltane and Ksar Tarcine
68. Rock Martin | *Hirundo fuligula* | group in Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
69. Common House Martin | *Delichon urbica* | 1 in Douz
70. White Wagtail | *Motacilla alba* | some seen at various sites
71. Richard's Pipit | *Anthus richardi* | 1 in El Kantara (Djerba)
72. Meadow Pipit | *Anthus pratensis* | some in Djerba and Tojuane
73. Red-throated Pipit | *Anthus cervinus* | some NE of El Kantara (Djerba), near the sea
74. Water Pipit | *Anthus spinoletta* | some in Djerba coasts
75. Blue Rock Thrush | *Monticola solitarius* | 2 in Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
76. African Reed Warbler | *Acrocephalus baeticatus* | various at ponds in Douz and Tozeur
77. Common Chiffchaff | *Phylloscopus collybita* | very common everywhere
78. Sardinian Warbler | *Sylvia melanocephala* | common in various inland sites
79. Tristram's Warbler | *Sylvia deserticola* | 2 in Bir Soltane; 2-3 in Douz
80. European Robin | *Erithacus rubecula* | common in various inland sites
81. Black Redstart | *Phoenicurus ochruros* | some at various sites
82. Moussier's Redstart | *Phoenicurus moussieri* | Single birds in various inland sites
83. European Stonechat | *Saxicola rubicola* | some in palm plantations, wet areas etc.
84. White-crowned Black Wheatear | *Oenanthe leucopyga* | 2-3 in Guermessa; 1 in Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
85. Black Wheatear | *Oenanthe leucura* | various at Matmata and other sites (towns or rocky areas)
86. Maghreb Wheatear | *Oenanthe halophila* | 1 in Bir Soltane; 1 in Guermessa; 1 near Beni Keddache
87. Red-rumped Wheatear | *Oenanthe moesta* | 1 at Pipeline road (Matmata – Douz); couple at Pipeline road (Douz – Bir Soltane); couple near Beni Keddache
88. Desert Wheatear | *Oenanthe deserti* | some in various inland sites (mostly males)
89. Southern / Desert Grey Shrike | *Lanius meridionalis elegans* | common
90. Brown-necked Raven | *Corvus ruficollis* | some at Matmata
91. Common Raven | *Corvus corax* | some both in Djerba and inland areas
92. Spotless Starling | *Sturnus unicolor* | Djerba
93. House Bunting | *Emberiza striolata* | common in towns, at inland sites
94. European Greenfinch | *Carduelis chloris* | group in Tojuane
95. European Serin | *Serinus serinus* | some at Matmata
96. Trumpeter Finch | *Rhodopechys githaginea* | some at Matmata and Sidi Bouhlel (Tozeur)
97. House Sparrow | *Passer domesticus* | common

98. Spanish Sparrow | *Passer hispaniolensis* | common
99. Rock Sparrow | *Petronia petronia* | some at Matmata

Reptiles and amphibians (list by Andrea Corso):

- *Tarentola fascicularis wolgangi*
- *Tropicolotes tripolitanus*
- *Stenodactylus petrii*
- *Tarentola mauretanica / fascicularis*
- *Uromastyx acanthinura*
- *Acanthodactylus* sp.
- *Mesalina* sp. juv.
- *Chalcides ocellatus*
- *Sphenops boulengeri*
- *Cerastes cerastes*
- *Rhagerhis molensis*
- *Bufo boulengeri*

Mammals (list by Andrea Corso):

Canis aureus
Vulpes vulpes
Vulpes zerda (dead)
Felis silvestris lybica
Ctenodactylus vali
Sis scrofa
Pipistrellus kuhlii