Introduction

Only during the last decade have check-lists (e.g. Jennings 1981, Stagg 1985, 1987), notes and papers (e.g. Green 1984, Stagg 1984a, 1984b, Gasperetti & Gasperetti 1981, Gallagher 1986, Symens 1988a, 1988b, Palfrey 1988), and books (e.g. Bundy et al. 1989) appeared about the avifauna of Saudi Arabia. As a result of the establishment of the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD), we hope that a better picture of the distribution and status of birds will gradually emerge.

Except for the checklist of Stagg (1985) and some unpublished reports by P. Symens of NCWCD, we could find no other works specifically on the birds of southwest Saudi Arabia. Lees-Smith (1986) analyzed the composition of the avifauna of south-western Arabia (including Saudi Arabia and Yemen), whilst that of North Yemen has been studied by Cornwallis & Porter (1982), Phillips (1982) and Brooks et al. (1987) (also see papers in Sandgrouse volume 9).

The Red Sea coastal plains of Saudi Arabia, known as the Tihamah, extend as a narrow belt from Khalij Al Aqabah to the northern border of Yemen. There is a transitional zone between the plains and the high escarpment mountains of Hejaz and Asir. The plains are very narrow in the north but widen to a varying extent in the south, with a maximum width of 40 km near Jizan. The low foothills of the escarpment which fringe the plain can be considered as a distinct physiographic sub-region, the hilly Tihamah.

During studies on the highly endangered Arabian Bustard Ardeotis arabs from 1987 to 1992, the first two authors travelled extensively in the Tihamah coastal plains, mainly between Jeddah and Jizan, and made notes on all species of birds. Since most visits were in winter, we have few data on spring and autumn migration, or on summer breeders. Brief summer visits were made by the second author, with a concentration of observations near Kiyad, 20 km from Al Quz (Fig. 1), referred to as “our study area”. Observations made during the course of other fieldwork by the third author help to clarify the status of certain species. The sequence of species follows the order of Hollom et al. (1988).
Observations

With the exception of very common species such as Black Kite or House Sparrow, we noted details each time a species was seen. The following scale of abundance was used:

- A = Abundant. Easily found in suitable habitat
- C = Common. Usually found on each visit in suitable habitat
- U = Uncommon. Found after search
- LC = Locally common
- R = Rare. Less than 10 sightings
- I = Indeterminate status
- ? = Identity not fully confirmed or status unknown

For abundant and common birds, dates and site names are generally not given, except when present at important or less known waterbodies (e.g. Wadi Alahssahbah) and in exceptionally large congregations. See Figure 1 for area map.

Systematic list

**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* C

**PINK-BACKED PELICAN** *Pelecanus rufescens* C
- Seen in small groups (5-10) all over the Red Sea coast, the Farasan Islands and many inland waterbodies (e.g. Malaki Dam, Wadi Alahssahbah, Wadi Hali). Stagg (1985) reported that it is only a summer visitor but we found it in all winter months or whenever we visited the coast. Jennings et al. (1982) discovered a breeding colony on islets off the coast near Qunfidhah and Al Lith. Other colonies are known in the Farasan Islands.

**BROWN BOOBY** *Sula leucogaster* C
- Fairly common, breeding on outer islands. Seen sitting on piers and rocky outcrops near sea shore (e.g. Al Qunfidhah 5 January 1992). Six birds continuously followed the ferry from Jizan to the Farasan Islands for titbits 10 February 1992.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo* U
- About 60 roosting on tree stumps in Malaki Dam 8 February 1992.

**BRITTEN** *Botaurus stellaris* U
- Perhaps reasonably common in suitable localities but its secretive nature makes it difficult to locate. Two sightings, both from Typhlas-fringed watercourse in Wadi Alahssahbah 8 March 1989 and 6 January 1992.

**WHITE PELICAN** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* R
- Erratic winter visitor, perhaps becoming less frequent on the Tihamah. Six fishing in the sea near At-Tarfa 28 October 1987 and one on Malaki Dam 8 February 1992. Stagg (1985) found it to be common in the Muhayil area of Wadi Hali, but we did not see many in our area probably due to lack of large waterbodies. Meinertzhagen (1954) reported it to be common on both sides of the Red Sea in winter and Cornwallis & Porter (1982) saw one over Bajil. Brooks et al. (1987) failed to record any during OSME Expedition in North Yemen.

**NIGHT HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax* U
- Three records: heard coming in to water at night near Wadi Rim 8 January 1990; one adult and one immature in Al Kuffayrah December 1991; seven roosting among *Tamarix* in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 9 February 1992.

Figure 1. Map of the Tihamah coastal plain.
Species such as Black Kite or House Sparrow, were seen. The following scale of abundance
found in suitable habitat

rarely found on each visit in suitable habitat
and after search

confirmed or status unknown

less known waterbodies (e.g. Wadi Alahssahbah)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Porter (1982) saw one over Bajil; Brooks et al. (1987) failed to record any during OSME
Expedition in North Yemen.

PINK-BACKED PELICAN Pelicanus rufescens C Seen in small groups (5-10) all
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BITTERN Botaurus stellaris U Perhaps
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December 1991; seven roosting among
Tamarix in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 9

Figure 1. Map of the Tihamah coastal plains of Saudi Arabia.
GREEN-BACKED HERON Butorides striatus C Apparently common in suitable wetlands but difficult to see due to secretive nature. One on the coast near Al Birk 8 January 1990 and one on the Farasan Islands 11 January 1992.

SQUACCO HERON Ardeola ralloides C Numerous around Malaki Dam area 24-25 October 1987 and 8-9 February 1992 and a minimum of three in Wadi Alahssahbah 6 January 1992. Stagg (1985) reported it to be mainly an autumn migrant but our records indicate that many birds spend the whole winter in the Tihamah.

CATTLE EGRET Bubulcus ibis A Ubiquitous, with flocks of 50-80 on rubbish dumps around villages.


GREY HERON Ardea cinerea C Apparantly common in suitable waterbodies, sometimes within 100 m of human habitation (e.g. Wadi Humwan). Invariably nests near water. One nest seen on Doum Palm in Wadi Dahaban 13 March 1989. Two nests side by side on a rocky ledge overlooking a recently dried up pool in Wadi Qurnayn 2 January 1992. One nest was probably old and collapsed, while the other appeared new, with side entrance and a large roof. An old nest was found on a ledge in Al Kufferah, again over a permanent pool. A pair of Hamerkop was seen near the nest December 1991 but on three occasions a pair of Barn Owl was flushed from it. From 1 January 1992, the same pair of Hamerkop was seen building a new nest, about 200 m from the old one. One bird was on the nest continuously while the other collected nest material.


WHITE STORK Ciconia ciconia U Regular winter visitor, generally unmolested by hunters, hence quite tame. Seventeen, one with broken leg, on rubbish dump near Abu Arish 26 October 1987. Up to 100 birds present in the standing crop of Sorghum. Due to good rains, water from the dam inundated nearby crop fields. According to local residents, this bird does substantial damage to maize. Stagg (1985) found it to be a rare winter visitor and present only in the extreme southwest of the Tihamah of Saudi Arabia, but we found nearly 350 at a good feeding site.

SPONDBILL, Platalea leucorodia C More than 50 sightings. Seen in small parties all over the Red Sea coast and in any suitable inland wetland. More than 35 in a flock at Malaki Dam 8 February 1992.


SHELDUCK Tadorna tadorna U Regular winter visitor to the Tihamah. Three on the coast near Saedeha 31 December 1991, and 21 loafing on bare, salt flats (al-bahha) 7 km from Amq 7 February 1992. Up to 50 estimated in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992, seen on every part of the reservoir.


GLOSSY IBIS Plegadis falcinellus C Frequent in all sorts of waterbodies (e.g. Makkah waste water river, Alahssahbah and Hali) but 200-400 in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 January 1992 feeding on the standing crop of Sorghum. Due to good rains, water from the dam inundated nearby crop fields. According to local residents, this bird does substantial damage to maize. Stagg (1985) found it to be a rare winter visitor and present only in the extreme southwest of the Tihamah of Saudi Arabia, but we found nearly 350 at a good feeding site.
sightings, although probably more common than these indicate. One immature in Wadi Alahssahbah 6 January 1992 and another in Wadi Qurnayn 7 January 1992.

**PURPLE HERON** Ardea purpurea U Ten in mangroves near Amq 2 September 1992. Breeding has been recorded on the Farasan Islands (Jennings 1988).

**GOLIATH HERON** Ardea goliath U One in

**HAMEKOP** Scopus umbretta C More than 50 sightings. Likely to be found in all suitable permanent or semi-permanent water bodies, sometimes within 100 m of human habitation (e.g. Wadi Humwan). Invariably nests near water. One nest seen on Doum Palm in Wadi Dahaban 13 March 1989. Two nests side by side on a rocky ledge overlooking a recently dried up pool in Wadi Qurnayn 2 January 1992. One nest was probably old and collapsed, while the other appeared new, with side entrance and a large roof. An old nest was found on a ledge in Al Kufferah, again over a permanent pool. A pair of Hamerkop was seen near the nest December 1991 but on three occasions a pair of Barn Owl was flushed from it. From 1 January 1992, the same pair of Hamerkop was seen building a new nest, about 200 m from the old one. One bird was on the nest continuously while the other collected nest material.

**BLACK STORK** Ciconia nigra R Uncommon but regular winter visitor to the Tihamah. Generally single or in twos and threes. Eleven birds sitting on a hillock near Al Lith 15 October 1989. Three, with five Spoonbills and some waders, in a watercourse in Wadi Rim 8 January 1990. Singles seen in Wadi Ilyab, about 30 km from the coast, between Al Lith and Al Wasqah 29 November 1991.

**WHITE STORK** Ciconia ciconia U Regular winter visitor, generally unmolested by hunters, hence quite tame. Seventeen, one with broken leg, on rubbish dump near Abu Arish 26 October 1987. Up to 100 at the same site on 8 February 1992. Next day, at 1230h, up to 300 flew from the rubbish dump and started soaring over Malaki Dam, about 10 km away.

**GLOSSY IBIS** Plegadis falcinellus C Frequent in all sorts of water bodies (e.g. Makkah waste water river, Alahssahbah and Jizan) but 200-400 in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 January 1992 feeding on the standing crop of Sorghum. Due to good rains, water from the dam had inundated nearby crop fields. According to local residents, this bird does substantial damage to maize. Stagg (1985) found it to be a rare winter visitor and present only in the extreme southwest of the Tihamah of Saudi Arabia, but we found nearly 350 at a good feeding site.

**SPOONBILL** Platalea leucorodia C More than 50 sightings. Seen in small parties all over the Red Sea coast and in any suitable inland wetland. More than 35 in a flock at Malaki Dam 8 February 1992.

**GREATER FLAMINGO** Phoenicopterus ruber C More than 200 sightings on the coast of the Red Sea and also around the Farasan Islands. In Jizan, feeding on coastal close to human habitation 25 October 1987 and about 200 in three flocks 26 November 1988.


**SHELDUCK** Tadorna tadorna C Regular winter visitor to the Tihamah. Three on the coast near Saeedha 31 December 1991, and 21 loafing on bare, salt flats (shikha) 7 km from Amq 7 February 1992. Up to 50 estimated in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992; seen on every part of the reservoir.

**WIGEON** Anas penelope U Seven at a stagnant pool in Wadi Dahaban 13 March 1989, 10-12 in Wadi Rim 8 January 1992 and nine in a temporary pool near Kiyad town 4 February 1992. Four pairs in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 9 February 1992, probably more as the whole area could not be surveyed.

**COMMON TEAL** Anas crecca C Fairly common in Alahssahbah 6 January 1992, 6 to 10 in Al Kufferah December 1991-January 1992, and more than 50 on Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992, perhaps many more because the whole backwater of the dam could not be surveyed.


**PINTAIL** Anas acuta C One of the most common ducks in Arabia. More than 1000 in Alahssahbah 6 January 1992, and similar numbers on Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. Small flocks on other water bodies.

**GARGANEY** Anas querquedula C Records from three sites: four birds found in all five visits to Al Kufferah between December 1991 and February 1992; one pair on a temporary pool close to Kiyad in Wadi Hali 4 February 1992; and up to ten, perhaps more, at Malaki Dam 9 February 1992.

**SHOVELER** Anas clypeata C Occurs on both fresh and brackish waters. More than 50 sightings. About 100 scattered over the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. Up to 50 coming to roost in brackish pool adjoining sea wall in Jizan 9 February 1992; many more with Greater Flamingo in shallow seawater.

**POCHARD** Aythya ferina U Irregular winter visitor. One male and two females seen five times in December 1991 and January 1992 at Al Kufferah and five at Malaki Dam 9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) recorded this species only in December and Brooks et al. (1987) recorded it in January-February in Yemen Tihamah.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** Aythya nyroca R Our only sighting was of two in Wadi Dahaban 13 March 1989. Symens (1987) saw 64 on 2 November 1987 at Malaki Dam.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE Elanus cataleus U We made two sightings of this conspicuous and easily recognized raptor, one on a telegraph wire near Wadi Shahdan 3 September 1991, and another hovering over a maize field near Malaki Dam 30 December 1991. Not reported by Stagg (1985) or Brooks et al. (1987).

BLACK KITE Milvus migrans A Most common raptor of the Tihamah. Sometimes hundreds seen on rubbish dumps (e.g. Al Guz). Roost of 150 counted on a pylon. Nests commonly seen on electricity poles. Breeding commences from the end of January.

PALLAS’S FISH EAGLE Haliaeetus leucocephalus R Uncommon winter visitor. Two sightings only, one near Malaki Dam 25 October 1987 and another near Al Fareiq village, about 3 km from coast, between Kyad and Amq 12 January 1992.


GRiffON VULTURE Gyps fulvus C Common, but perhaps declining. Fewer noticed during the winter of 1991-92 than 1989-90 in our study area near Habib Banideep. One found paralyzed two days after sprays of pesticide on 25 July 1990. The population trend of this species needs monitoring.


SHORT-TOED EAGLE Circaetus gallicus C More than 50 sightings during the course of the winter. Stagg (1985) reported that it is primarily a spring and autumn migrant, with substantial numbers passing in October, but added that it is regular in some areas although not seen in December. We have seen this bird more than 20 times in December in our study area, some individuals staying in the same area for many weeks. In one day in January 1992 we counted three eagles in a 10 km drive.

BATELEUR Terathopius ecaudatus U Four sightings, including a pair in Wadi Rim. Brooks et al. (1987) found five individuals at four sites in Yemen Tihamah.

MARSH HARRIER Circus aeruginosus U Distribution restricted due to absence of suitable marshland in the Tihamah. However, regularly seen in winter in the backwaters of Malaki Dam and Wadi Alahassaibah. One immature female in the sabkha on Farasan Kabir 11 February 1992.


PALLID HARRIER Circus macrourus U Four sightings at four sites: one male in Wadi Al Lith 5 March 1989; one in Sabr Hali 12 March 1989; one 26 January 1990, and a male and female 29 January in Wadi Hamwan; one male flying over sabkha near Saeedha 31 December 1991.

DARK CHANTING GOSHAWK Melierax metabates C A common raptor of the Tihamah. Occasionally caught by local people in a mistaken belief that it is a ‘falcon’ which can bring them a good price. On 30 January 1990 one bird with a small prey item (bird) was chased by two Steppe Eagles. It released the prey, which flew away apparently unharmed. Both eagles tried to catch the bird but it escaped in a small bush.


BUZZARD Buteo buteo C One definitely identified near Malaki Dam 24 October 1991. According to Brooks et al. (1987), No Yemen is an important flyway for this species in autumn. Between 14 October and 25 December 1985 they recorded 862 over near the Tihamah foothills.


TAWNY AND STEPPE EAGLE Aquila rapax and A. nipalensis A Individuals of these species were not differentiated in earlier surveys. The former is a scarce breeder resident and the latter a common migrant winter visitor to all areas. They are the most common Aquila species in the Tihamah. To fifteen frequently seen around garbage dumps where sheep/goat carcasses are left by local shepherds.

IMPERIAL EAGLE Aquila heliaca Perhaps common during autumn and spring migration but less than five sightings. Two at different locations in Kufferah 2 February 1992, one scavenging with Brown-necked Raven and Black Kite on a goat carcass. This species was not reported by Stagg (1985) from the Tihamah plains.

VERREAUX’S EAGLE Aquila verreauxii A pair seen in Wadi Qarnayn 28 December 1991. Rock Hyrax Procavia capensis, its major prey (Steyn 1982), locally abundant. Perhaps breeds in the area although we could not locate the nest. Regular breeding record in Wadi Turabah (Eichacker 1990), about 300 km north of Qarnayn.
ORT-TOED EAGLE  *Circetus gallicus*  More than 50 sightings during the course of the winter. Stagg (1985) reported that it is mainly a spring and autumn migrant, with substantial numbers passing in winter, but added that it is regular in some areas although not seen in December. We have seen this bird more than 20 times in summer in our study area, some individuals staying in the same area for several weeks. In one day in January 1992 we counted three eagles in a 10 km drive.


**BUZZARD  *Buteo buteo*  C ** One definitely identified near Malaki Dam 24 October 1987. According to Brooks et al. (1987), North Yemen is an important flyway for this species in autumn. Between 14 October and 3 December 1985 they recorded 852 over or near the Tihamah foothills.


**TAWNY AND STEPPE EAGLE  *Aquila rapax* and *A. nipalensis*  ** An individual of these species was not differentiated in our surveys. The former is a scarce breeding resident and the latter a common migrant winter visitor to all areas. They are the most common *Aquila* species in the Tihamah. Ten to fifteen frequently seen around garbage dumps where sheep/goat carcasses are often left by local shepherds.

**IMPERIAL EAGLE  *Aquila heliaca*  U  ** Perhaps the most sought-after bird by falconers. Large numbers over the coast and seen on every trip to sea. Nest found on an easily approached cliff ledge on Farasan Kabir 12 February 1992; neither egg nor chick was seen. A bird that had been sitting on the nest called and circled during its inspection.

**KESTREL  *Falco tinnunculus*  C  ** The most common falcon on the Tihamah. More than 100 sightings during winter months. Seen every day, sometimes 3-4 in a 10 km transect drive.


**SOOTY FALCON  *Falco concolor*  U  ** Two records, one on Farasan Kabir 10 October 1990 and one on the coast near Al Lith September 1990. Gaucher et al. (1988) found three active nests and two old nests on a small island about 0.5 km from the mainland near Al Lith.

**LANNER  *Falco biarmicus*  C  ** Perhaps the most common large falcon on the Tihamah, and possibly also breeds. Single birds were recorded on five occasions during winter. One in Al Hussaini area of Farasan Kabir about 500 m from sea 12 February 1992.

**SAKER  *Falco cherrug*  C  ** The most sought-after bird by falconers. Large numbers caught near coast during autumn migration. Trapping banned on the Farasan Islands but still practised on the mainland. The birds are taken to markets in Riyadh and Jeddah.

BARBARY FALCON Falco peregrinoides C
Generally found in wadis near water. On 15 December 1989 one came flying just above the ground from about a kilometre to attack a party of 11 Cream-coloured Coursers. The coursers crouched and remained motionless for more than 30 minutes, whilst the falcon was in the vicinity.

ARABIAN RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE Alectoris melanaeoptera U A pair near the escarpment between Al Baha and Al Mikhwah 1 September 1991.


COMMON QUAIL Coturnix coturnix C Becomes more common once maize and millet grains start ripening by mid January. Regularly flushed, sometimes three or four together, from crop fields. Presence elsewhere much dependent on local rainfall. From 28 January to 6 February 1992, after good rains, regularly flushed from a wadi in our study area.

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL Numida meleagris C Locally common in Wadi Juwa, near Yemen border. Historic persecution by local people. Reported to be increasing since NCWCD prohibited egg collection in 1987. Expanding into nearby areas. Ten seen resting under bridge at 11.00 h 26 July 1991 at the entrance of Wadi Juwa. Fifty-four seen in one morning on 26 July 1991 and 30 located in 12 km drive 8 February 1992. Six foraging 150 m from a busy school!

MOORHEN Gallinula chloropus U Seen in all reed-covered waterbodies such as Alahssahbah 8 March 1989 and 8 January 1992 and Malaki Dam 9 February 1992. Very wary due to hunting pressure.


COMMON CRANE Grus grus U Fairly regular winter visitor. One in flight over a stream north of Wadi Al Lith 7 March 1989. Hundreds of tracks of cranes (possibly this species) in open sandy area at Al Habira 12 March 1989; the flock had possibly stopped for a rest during migration. For 10 days in January 1992, four cranes, including a juvenile, were seen foraging near a recently abandoned bedouin camp in Sabr Hali (c. 10 km from Al Habira) near Wadi Hali. The birds were feeding on spilt barley grains (livestock feed). Calling was heard near Wadi Iyyab 26 November 1991 and 6 km north of Amq 31 December 1991. On two consecutive days 80 - 100 were counted in the backwaters of Malaki Dam February 1992.

DEMOISELLE CRANE Anthropoides virgo U According to Jennings (1981) it is a common migrant on the Red Sea and Northern Hejaz. We saw one on Makkah waste water river 26 September 1990.

HOUBARA Chlamydotis undulata R Fairly regular winter visitor in very small numbers. Birds or tracks seen each winter. Requires complete protection in the country. Precise locations are not given for security reasons.

ARABIAN BUSTARD Arabotis arabs R Extremely rare; population declining every year (Shobrak & Rahmani 1991). Still heavily persecuted. Needs urgent protection on the whole Tihamah. Five individuals seen in the winter of 1989-90 in our study area near Hali but none in the winter of 1991-92 (Rahmani & Shobrak 1992). We have also recorded bustards near Ad Darb and Al Lith.

OYSTERCATCHER Haematopus ostralegus C Not uncommon on coast. Generally solitary or in small groups. Regularly sighted in winter near Al Birk, Saeedha, Dahaban, Al Qunsfidah and Amq.

BLACK-WINGED STILT Himantopus himantopus C Frequently seen in all types of waterbodies, even temporary pools formed after localized rains. A pair nesting near a temporary pool 7 km from Al Qunsfidah 4 May 1990.


CRABPLOVER Dromas avocatus C Common resident (Stagg 1985), sighted on all visits to the Red Sea coast.


CREAM-COLOURED COURSER Cursorius cursor C Common in groups of 5-10 during winter. Roosts regularly among stony lava areas. They appear to be nomadic in our study area. For example, between 28 November 1991 and 14 January 1992 we made more than 11 sightings but, when we resumed studies 28 January, none were seen before we departed 14 February 1992.


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**BLACK-WINGED STILT** Himantopus himantopus C Frequently seen in all types of waterbodies, even temporary pools formed after localized rains. A pair nesting near a temporary pool 7 km from Al Qunfidhah 4 May 1990.


**CRAB PLOVER** Dromas ardeola C Common resident (Stagg 1985), sighted on all visits to the Red Sea coast.

**STONE CURLEW** Burhinus oedicnemus C More than 50 sightings. A flock of 100 seen roosting on a plateau near Qarnayn 28 December 1991.


**CREAM-COLOURED COURSER** Cursorius cursor C Common in groups of 5-10 during winter. Roosts regularly among stony lava areas. They appear to be nomadic in our study area. For example, between 28 November 1991 and 14 January 1992 we made more than 11 sightings but, when we resumed studies 28 January, none were seen before we departed 14 February 1992.


**RINGED PLOVER** Charadrius hiaticula C More common on coast, but a few seen inland also (e.g. Al Kufferah 23 December 1991). Stagg (1985) found it to be particularly common in winter. He saw flocks of more than 50 throughout November at wetlands in the highlands of Kamis Mushayt.

**KENTISH PLOVER** Charadrius alexandrinus C Very common in sabkha. Flocks of up to 50, many resting beside Suaeda bushes on Farasan Islands 10 February 1992.

**LESSER SAND PLOVER** Charadrius mongolus C Winter visitor. All 20 sightings on the coast. Four foraging in sabkha near Amq 7 February 1992.

**GREATER SAND PLOVER** Charadrius leschenaultii R One, with Lesser Sand Plovers, on the coast near Al Birk 8 January 1990 and another near Dahaban 9 January 1990. Stagg (1985) found it to be very common on the coast throughout the year.

**GREY PLOVER** Pluvialis squatarola C Common in small numbers on the coast in winter. More than 50 sightings.

**SPUR-WINGED PLOVER** Hulaetus sparverius C More than 50 sightings. From 19 - 25 December 1991 up to 40 seen under Acacia trees within Kiyad town. Stagg (1985) found it to be rare but we found it to be fairly common all over the Tihama near watercourses. Cornwallis & Porter (1982) saw up to 10 together in the Hodeidah area in the Yemen Tihama and Brooks et al. (1987) considered it to breed there; breeding is also suspected on certain parts of the Saudi Arabian Tihama.

**WHITE-TAILED LAPWING** Vanellus leucurus U Uncommon due to lack of marshlands. Three in Wadi Alahsahbah 6 January 1992, but perhaps could be many more because the whole length of this long wadi was not surveyed. Up to seven in a small part of inundated crop fields on Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. Brooks et al. (1987) recorded it mostly on flooded areas of cultivation on the Yemen Tihama.
LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* C Very common on the coast, less so on inland waters. Seen with Temminck's Stint and other smaller waders.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii* C Less common than the Little Stint.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* C Fairly common on most parts of the coast. Numerous on Farasan Kabir, with Durlin, stints and Turnstone 11 February 1992.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* C? In winter generally found on coasts but we saw 10-15 on the backwaters of Malaki Dam 25 October 1987. Stagg (1985) also recorded it inland over protracted periods.

RUFI*Philomachus pugnax* U Apparently a common winter visitor. The earliest record is 4 September 1991 near Amq. Hundreds in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) considered it a common passage migrant but scarce winter visitor. We suspect that it winters on the Tihamah in suitable habitats such as Malaki Dam.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocryptes minimus* U Restricted mainly due to lack of suitable habitat. One definitely seen on a marshy area on Malaki backwaters 8 February 1992.

SNIP*Gallinago gallinago* U Probably more common than the previous species. Also found at non-marshy sites, such as Al Kufferah where one or two always seen during December 1991 and January 1992. Other records from Wadi Alahssahbah 6 January 1992 and Malaki backwaters 8-9 February 1992.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* A Locally abundant. Seen both inland and on the coast. Up to 30 in a loose flock on the coast between Amq and Al Birk 7 February 1992. More than 350 feeding on *Sorghum*, with Glossy Ibis, in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) reported that it winters in small numbers, and Brooks et al. (1987) also found it to be a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant on the coast and inland waters of Yemen.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* C Common winter visitor on the coast.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus* C Common everywhere on the coast, especially near Jeddah, Al Birk and on the Farasan Islands. More than 50 sightings, mainly of single birds. Frequently chased off by Curlew.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata* C Very common all along the coast. Highly territorial, frequently seen chasing each other and displacing Whimbrel.

RED SHANK *Tringa totanus* C Very common winter visitor to all sorts of waterbodies, but especially common on the coast. More than 100 sightings. Sometimes seen in temporary rainwater pools in the middle of the desert.

MARSH SANDPIPER *Tringa stagnatilis* C Common by freshwater in winter, generally in twos or threes. More than 50 sightings. Likely to occur at any running stream or pool. More than 10 seen in Malaki backwaters 8 February 1992.

GREEN SHANK *Tringa nebularia* C Common on both fresh water and at the coast. More than 100 sightings.


COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos* C More seen at coast than fresh water. Common and widespread winter visitor. More than 50 sightings.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres* C Very common on the mainland coast and on Farasan Kabir. Very common in winter on Jeddah sea coast near Corniche, possibly attracted to food left by picnickers.

SOOTY GULL *Larus hemprichii* A Abundant along the coast, especially near fishing villages. Noisy,confiding and bold, often coming to within 1 m of people. Hundreds at the garbage dump of Al Birk.

WHITE-EYED GULL *Larus ichthyaetus* C Common but less than the Sooty Gull in the Al Birk area where there were more than 600 Sooty Gulls and about 150 White-eyed Gulls 8 January 1990.


BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* A Common winter visitor to all sorts of waters, but mostly on sea shores. Seventy sitting on damp ground near a small pool of water, 1 km from Amq 29 December 1991. Two groups (114 and 150+) roosting near a lagoon in Jizan 9 February 1992. Abundant on Farasan Kabir 10 February 1992. Stagg (1985) noticed that, with the increase in inland waters, there is a noticeable movement away from the coast and a tendency for sedentarv winter occupation of favoured inland haunts.


LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* C A common winter visitor all along
scarce winter visitor and passage migrant on the coast and inland waters of Yemen.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT Limosa lapponica C Common winter visitor on the coast.

WHIMBREL Numenius phaeopus C Common everywhere on the coast, especially near Jeddah, Al Birk and on the Farasan Islands. More than 50 sightings, mainly of single birds. Frequently chased off by Curlew.

CURLEW Numenius arquata C Very common all along the coast. Highly territorial, frequently seen chasing each other and displacing Whimbrel.

REDSHANK Tringa totanus C Very common winter visitor to all sorts of waterbodies, but especially common on the coast. More than 100 sightings. Sometimes seen in temporary rainwater pools in the middle of the desert.

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TURNSTONE Arenaria interpres C Very common on the mainland coast and on Farasan Kabir. Very common in winter on Jeddah sea coast near Corniche, possibly attracted to food left by picnickers.

SOOTY GULL Larus hemprichii A Abundant along the coast, especially near fishing villages. Noisy, confiding and bold, often coming to within 1 m of people. Hundreds at the garbage dump of Al Birk.

WHITE-EYED GULL Larus maculipennis C Common but less so than the Sooty Gull in the Al Birk area where there were more than 600 Sooty Gulls and about 150 White-eyed Gulls 8 January 1990.


BLACK-HEADED GULL Larus ridibundus A Common winter visitor to all sorts of waters, but mostly on sea shores. Seventy sitting on damp ground near a small pool of water, 1 km from Amq 29 December 1991. Two groups (114 and 150+) roosting near a lagoon in Jizan 9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) noticed that, with the increase in inland waters, there is a noticeable movement away from the coast and a tendency for sedentary winter occupation of favoured inland haunts.


LESSEN BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus fuscus C A common winter visitor all along the coast. Bold and tame. Many followed ferry between Jizan and Farasan Islands 10 February 1992.

GULL-BILLED TERN Gelochelidon nilotica U Mainly seen on fresh waters, such as Malaki backwaters where five 9 February 1992.

CASPIAN TERN Sterna caspia C Fairly common on the coast, uncommon inland. Resident, augmented by migrants in winter. Recorded in January, February, July, October and December.


LESSE CRESTED TERN Sterna bengalensis C Very common on the coast but none seen at inland waters.

BROWN NODDY Anous stolidus C 100 flying together near Amq 31 July 1991.

LICHENSTEIN'S SANDGROUSE Pterocles lichtensteini U Generally seen in pairs or small parties of 5-6 individuals, maximum nine. Seven out of 12 sightings were of pairs. A pair with two juveniles in Wadi Aramram 17 March 1989. Stagg (1985) found it to be a breeding resident in the foothill region only. We regularly saw this species in the wadis of Sabr Hal near Kiyad, about 10 km from the hills, and suspect that it breeds on the Tihamah coastal plains.

CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE Pterocles exustus A The most common sandgrouse of the Tihamah. More than 100 sightings, generally in flocks of 10 to 50 individuals. Tracks of two chicks with parents, and one nest with three eggs and male incubating at 17.45 h 10 March 1989. Roost found on bare lava in Sabr Hal area. Flocks coming from all directions to roost at 17.07 h 2 January 1990. Remained at roost even after sunrise. Go to water around 09.00 h (e.g. Wadi Alahssahbab and Al Kufferah).

ROCK DOVE Columba livia C Common near mountains.
AFRICAN COLLARED DOVE Streptopelia roseogrisea A. Abundant around settlements, feeding on fallen barley grains around shepherds' houses. Perhaps increasing due to spread of cultivation and subsidized barley. On 14 March 1989, flocks of 40 to 100


TURTLE DOVE Streptopelia turtur U One sighting only between Wadi Rim and Wadi Jandalah 2 November 1987.


NAMAQUA DOVE Oena capensis C Found throughout the Tihamah plains.

Yellow-Bellied Green Pigeon Treron melanocephalus U Perhaps uncommon on the Tihamah due to scarcity of fruiting trees. Only four sightings, all in dense, leafy trees. Common in Wadi Juwa; a pair seen on top of Salsaloo and another bird collecting nest material from a fallen Dobe tree 8 February 1992. Nest was in a dense Ziziphus spinacia-christi.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET Psittacula krameri U Two sightings: seven near Wadi Fatima in an orchard 3 March 1989, and one near Al Lith 5 March 1989. Certainly escapes but now reported to be well established and breeding in the wild.

JACOBIN CUCKOO Clamator jacobinus U One of typical type 29 July 1991 in Wadi Juwa.

GREY-SPECKLED CUCKOO Clamator glandarius U A single record on 2 February 1990 from our study area. According to Jennings (1981) it is an uncommon migrant in the western region, but possibly breeding as summer visitor in the Asir and Hejaz. Stagg (1985) mentioned a single record from the foothills of Wadi Haswa in early August.

WHITE-BROWED COUCAL Centropus superciliosus LC Common in Wadi Juwa and Wadi Dehan. In 12 km drive in Wadi Juwa 8 February 1992 we saw/heard four birds and on the same day birds were heard/seen in four different spots around Malaki Dam. Prefers dense vegetation. Frequently heard in Tamarix and Prosopis thickets.

BARN OWL Tyto alba U A pair was flushed from a Hamerkop's nest in Al Kuffarah on three occasions January-February 1992. One bird in Wadi Qarnayn 2 February 1992. All birds were of the white-breasted race.


GREY-HEADED KINGFISHER Merops albuscens C7 Often flushed from Panicum clumps in wadis. Five times flushed from the same spot in December and January. Seen from November to February in our study area. Stagg (1985) considered it a summer visitor, breeding in the lowland areas of the region. Meierzhagen (1954) found it resident on the Red Sea coast, Ash (quoted by Cornwallis & Porter 1982) recorded it in Yemen Tihamah in December, and Beaman & Madge (1980) in April. We think that it winters in small numbers on the Tihamah.

EGYPTIAN NIGHTJAR Caprimulgus aegyptius U One found crushed on vehicle track in our study area 26 December 1991.

ALPINE SWIFT Apus melba C Rather erratic occurrence, sometimes seen for three or four days in the study area, flying over crop fields in loose flocks of 30-40 birds, then disappearing for a week or fortnight.


LITTLE SWIFT Apus affinis C Found around settlements in many parts of the Tihamah. Stagg (1985) found it to be a localized breeding resident throughout the region but most numerous in the highlands of Asir.


LITTLE GREEN BEE-EATER Merops orientalis C The most common bee-eater, seen in all months. Only cyanophrys subspecies noted. Generally found near wadis, but move into deserts following the rains. Large numbers congregate when migratory dragonflies are passing. Nest-hole excavation noted 21 December 1991.

BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER Merops superciliosus U Uncommon. Three sightings: one in Habib Banideep 10 March 1989, one near I jaz 20 March 1989 and one in a large
GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO  *Clamator glandarius*  U  A single record on 2 February 1990 from our study area. According to Jennings (1981) it is an uncommon migrant in the western region, but possibly breeding as summer visitor in the Asir and Hejaz. Stagg (1985) mentioned a single record from the foothills of Wadi Hawa in early August.

WHITE-BROWED COUCAL *Centropus superciliosus* LC  Common in Wadi Juwa and Wadi Dehan. In 12 km drive in Wadi Juwa 8 February 1992 we saw/heard four birds and on the same day birds were heard/seen in four different spots around Malaki Dam. Prefers dense vegetation. Frequently heard in Tamarix and *Prosopis* thickets.

BARN OWL  *Tyto alba*  U  A pair was flushed from a Hamerkop’s nest in Al Kufferah on three occasions January-February 1992. One bird in Wadi Qarnayn 2 February 1992. All birds were of the white-breasted race.


NUBIAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus nubicus* C? Often flushed from *Panicum* clumps in wadis. Five times flushed from the same spot in December and January. Seen from November to February in our study area. Stagg (1985) considered it a summer visitor, breeding in the lowland areas of the region. Meinertzhagen (1954) found it resident on the Red Sea coast, Ash (quoted by Cornwallis & Porter 1982) recorded it in Yemen Tihamah in December, and Beaman & Madge (1980) in April. We think that it winters in small numbers on the Tihamah.

EGYPTIAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus aegyptius* U? One found crushed on vehicle tracks in our study area 26 December 1991.

ALPINE SWIFT  *Apus melba*  C  Rather erratic occurrence, sometimes seen for three or four days in the study area, flying over crop fields in loose flocks of 30-40 birds, then disappearing for a week or fortnight.


LITTLE SWIFT  *Apus affinis*  C  Found around settlements in many parts of the Tihamah. Stagg (1985) found it to be a localized breeding resident throughout the region but most numerous in the highlands of Asir.


LITTLE GREEN BEE-EATER  *Merops orientalis*  C  The most common bee-eater, seen in all months. Only *cyanophrys* subspecies noted. Generally found near wadis, but move into deserts following the rains. Large numbers congregate when migratory dragonflies are passing. Nest hole excavation noted 21 December 1991.

BLUE-CHEEKED BEE-EATER  *Merops superciliosus*  U  Uncommon. Three sightings: one in Habib Banideep 10 March 1989, one near lizan 20 March 1989 and one in a large maize field near Al Guz 8 January 1992. Stagg (1985) found it to be a spring passage migrant, often in very large numbers, but our sightings suggest overwintering. Brooks et al. (1987) thought that a few individuals of the nominate East African race may winter in southwest Arabia.


ABYSSINIAN ROLLER  *Coracias abyssinicus*  C  Very common in cultivated areas of the Tihamah. Between Kyad and Hali (3 km) five or six seen on telegraph lines December - February 1992.

HOOPOE  *Upupa epops*  C  More than 50 sightings. Display calls heard and birds seen chasing each other in January. Mating seen 7 March 1989. Although resident, there are some local movements. Generally found in vegetated wadis.


ARABIAN WOODPECKER  *Dendrocopos dorae*  U  Uncommon on the plains. Only one confirmed record from a small wadi near Wadi Run among *Aacia* 1 November 1987. Small circular holes, possibly made by this species, seen in many dead and living Doum Palms in Wadi Rim 1989. Mainly a highland species.
SINGING BUSH LARK *Mirafra castillans*

U Five to ten singing near crop fields near Malaki Dam 9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) did not record this species, but Brooks et al. (1987) had 131 records from the eastern Tihamah of Yemen, generally from agricultural fields. Most were singing males. Cornwallis & Porter (1982) also found many in crop fields.

BLACK-CROWNED FINCH LARK *Eremopterix nigriceps* A Most common resident lark of the Tihamah. Moves in large numbers with the rains. Display noticed from January onwards, depending on rainfall pattern. After winter rains and greening of ground cover, large flocks of up to 100 individuals. Chicks found in our study area on 18 May 1990. Seen on the Farasan Islands 10-11 February 1992.

DESSERT LARK *Ammonites deserti* U Six in gravel area near Ad Darb 2 November 1987 and one on a rocky hillock in a wadi near Sabt Al Jarah 8 January 1992.

HOOPOE LARK *Alauda alavis* U A bird typical of very dry regions. On the Tihamah present only in extremely arid and desolate areas e.g. Al Lith. Fairly common near Ad Darb 2 November 1989. Active in the hottest part of the day. Present on the Farasan Islands, where it appears to be darker than inland of the Asir mountains, with more streaks on the breast than shown in Holom et al. (1988).


LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandra rufescens* U A flock of 100-150 in Al-Lith 5 March 1989 foraging on a bare area near bedouin camps with some spilled water present. Many unidentified larks on passage were possibly this species and/or Short-toed Larks *C. brachydactyla*. Stagg (1985) found a sustained passage southwards past Amq for two days in March.

CRESTED LARK *Galera cristata* C Common throughout the Tihamah especially in cultivated areas but rarely found in very dry areas. Not seen in Banideep area during October - November but they appeared with the rains and the start of cultivation in December, at first in small numbers but by the end of January they were common in most fields. Always found in Saeedha area where there are some permanent crop fields.


SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica* C Irregular sightings in winter. Six flying east 6 February 1992 in our study area. On 11 February 1992 on Farasan 15 flying just above ground near six Egyptian Vultures feeding on a donkey carcass.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Hirundo daurica* C Ten to 12 near Ad Darb 18 March 1989 and 12-15 flying over open fields near Malaki Dam 9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) found them mainly in the Asir highlands but Brooks et al. (1987) found them both present on the Yemen coast and in the highlands.

TAWNY PIPIT *Anthus campestris* A Very common in open sandy areas, especially where *Dipterygium* and *Heliotropium* were growing.

LONG-BILLED PIPIT *Anthus similis* C Common, with similar habitat preference to the Tawny Pipit.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* U Prefers edges of water so distribution restricted in the Tihamah but found wherever suitable damp areas present, e.g. irrigated fields. Mainly *feldegg* subspecies observed. Up to 20 in a stream in Sablal 2 March 1989; also recorded at Al Lith and Alahssahbah in the same month.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* C Common winter visitor. In our study area 25-30 foraging in a dry *Sorghum* field on insects disturbed by farmers 11 January 1990.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba* C More than 50 records. Likely to be seen in all suitable habitats in the Tihamah. One on the Farasan Islands 11 February 1992.

YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL *Pycnonotus xanthopygos* A Very common throughout the Tihamah and generally seen in pairs. Up to 15 noticed around fruiting *Salvadora* and *Capparis* bushes. One pair on the Farasan Islands 10 February 1992.

GREYHYPocolius *Hypocolius hypocolius* U In our study area about 30 in one flock sitting and calling on top of tall (<3 m) *Euphorbia* bushes 18 December 1991. The area had >50 *Euphorbia* bushes but practically no ground cover. All flew off south together.

RUFOUS BUSH ROBIN *Cerotrichas galacteus* U Only two records from the coastal plains, Wadi Rim 17 March 1989 and Habib Banideep 20 April 1989. Recorded on all of four days spent in Abha (altitude 2,000 m) August 1991.

BLACK BUSH ROBIN *Cerotrichas podobe* C Common throughout the Tihamah near thickets, vegetated wadis and bushes in the study area. One pair building a nest 17 July 1991. On the Farasan Islands one bird among *Salvadora* bushes in an abandoned farm in Al Hussaini area 2 February 1992. Most birds were paired even during winter.

BLACKSTART *Cercomela melanura* A Very common throughout the Tihamah. More than 100 sightings. Most records from vegetated wadis and foothills, not found in open areas.

toed Larks *Calcarius brachydactyla*. Stagg (1985) found a sustained passage southwards past Amq for two days in March.

**CRESTED LARK** *Charadrius cristatus* C
*Common throughout the Tihamah especially in cultivated areas but rarely found in very dry areas. Not seen in Banideep area during October - November but they appeared with the rains and the start of cultivation in December, at first in small numbers but by the end of January they were common in most fields. Always found in Sae'edha area where there are some permanent crop fields.*

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia* U
*On migration 13 March 1989 in Wadi Dehan. Not recorded by Stagg (1985).*

**SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica* C
*Irregular sightings in winter. Six flying east 6 February 1992 in our study area. On 11 February 1992 on Farasan 15 flying just above ground near six Egyptian Vultures feeding on a donkey carcass.*

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** *Hirundo daurica* U
*Ten to 12 near Ad Darb 18 March 1989 and 12-15 flying over open fields near Malaki Dam 9 February 1992. Stagg (1985) found them mainly in the Asir highlands but Brooks et al. (1987) found them both present on the Yemen coast and in the highlands.*

**TAWNY PIPIT** *Anthus campestris* C
*Very common in open sandy areas, especially where *Dipertigium* and *Heliotropium* were growing.*

**LONG-BILLED PIPIT** *Anthus simillimus* C
*Common, with similar habitat preference to the Tawny Pipit.*

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava* U
*Prefers edges of water so distribution restricted in the Tihamah but found wherever suitable damp areas present, e.g. irrigated fields. Mainly *fleegy* subspecies observed. Up to 20 in a stream in Sablal 2 March 1989; also recorded at Al Lith and Alahssahah in the same month.*

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea* C
*Common winter visitor. In our study area 25-30 foraging in a dry *Sorghum* field on insects disturbed by farmers 11 January 1990.*

**WHITE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba* C
*More than 50 records. Likely to be seen in all suitable habitats in the Tihamah. One on the Farasan Islands 11 February 1992.*

**YELLOW-VENTED BULBUL** *Pycnonotus xanthophygos*
*A Very common throughout the Tihamah and generally seen in pairs. Up to 15 noted around fruiting *Salsaladora* and *Capparis* bushes. One pair on the Farasan Islands 10 February 1992.*

**GREYHYPOCOLIUS** *Hypocolius ampelinus* U
*In our study area about 30 in one flock sitting and calling on top of tall (>3 m) *Euphorbia* bushes 18 December 1991. The area had >50 *Euphorbia* bushes but practically no ground cover. All flew off south together.*

**RUFIOUS BUSH ROBIN** *Cerodrrix galactotes* U
*Only two records from the coastal plains, Wadi Rim 17 March 1989 and Habib Banideep 20 April 1989. Recorded on all of four days spent in Abha (altitude 2,000 m) August 1991.*

**BLACK BUSH ROBIN** *Cerodrrix podobe* C
*Common throughout the Tihamah near thickets, vegetated wadis and bushes in the study area. One pair building a nest 17 July 1991. One in a flock of >15 noted among *Saladadora* bushes in an abandoned farm in Al Hussaini area 12 February 1992. Most birds were paired even during winter.*

**BLACKSTART** *Cercomela melanura* A
*Very common throughout the Tihamah. More than 100 sightings. Most records from vegetated wadis and foothills, not found in open areas.*

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra* U

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata* C

**ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe isabellina* C
*Seen in varying numbers throughout the winter. Three records in March in different areas.*

**RED-BREASTED WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe bottae* U
*Four records: Wadi Sabalal 2 March 1989; Wadi Hali 21 March 1989; one 5 km from Banideep September 1989 and another in our study area 14 December 1989. Not recorded by Stagg (1985), Cornwallis & Porter (1982) and Phillips (1982) from the coastal Tihamah region as this species generally lives in highlands, although our records show that some individuals may be wintering at low elevations.*

**BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe hispanica* R

**DESERT WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe deserti* C

**RED-TAILED WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe xanthopyrnna chrysopygia* U
*Two in Wadi AlLith near the foothills at 500 m 13 January 1992. According to Jennings (1981) it is an uncommon winter visitor to all areas except Asir, the Tihamah and southern Red Sea, but Stagg (1985) found it an extremely scarce winter visitor to the highlands of Asir.*

**MOURNING WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe lugens persica* U
*A highly territorial male seen 26 December 1989, foraging actively on bare, rocky hillside and frequently chasing pipits.*
SOUTH ARABIAN WHEATEAR
Oenanthe lugens lugentoides U Uncommon resident and winter migrant on the coastal plains, though common in the mountains. One in Wadi Hali 22 March 1989, another in the Al Hussaini area of the Farasan Islands.

HOODED WHEATEAR Oenanthe monacha S Six records, all in March, indicating spring passage.

WHITE-CROWNED BLACK WHEATEAR Oenanthe leucopyga S One record from Wadi Hadda Al-Sham near Al Barzah 2 March 1989.

BLUE ROCK THRUSH Monticola solitarius C Common winter visitor. Three seen in 3 km in Wadi Qarnayn 2 January 1992. Ten other records, all from hillsides with boulders.


GRACEFUL WARBLER Prinia gracilis C Fairly common in mesic wadis (e.g. Alahssahbah, Mishrif, Malaki Dam) and around cultivated fields with hedges and thickets. Males displaying above Typha beds in Wadi Alahssahbah 5 January 1992 and numerous singing males in crop fields in the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. One among thicket on Farasan Kabir 10 February 1992.

SCRUB WARBLER Scioicercia inquieta C Common among Tamarix thickets in Wadi Al Lith; many males displaying 5 March 1989. Frequently seen in wadis with low vegetation.


ARABIAN WARBLER Sylvia leucocelaena C Seven sightings, three in March, four between November and January, mostly in wooded wadis.

LESSER WHITETHROAT Sylvia curruca curruca U One Wadi Alahssahbah 8 March 1989, one in our study area 5 January 1992.


CHIFFCHAFF Phylloscopus collybita U Only confirmed record from Wadi Juwa 26 October 1987.

LESSER WHITETHROAT Sylvia curruca curruca U One Wadi Alahssahbah 8 March 1989, one in our study area 5 January 1992.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE Lanius collurio U Two records, one from Jandalah 3 November 1987, and another from our study area 20 April 1990. According to Stagg (1985) it is a spring and autumn passage migrant.

STRAIGHT-BACKED SHRIKE Lanius vitatus S One record in April 1989. First record from the Tihamah. Other Arabian Peninsula records are from the Batinah of Oman 29 April 1979 (Gallagher & Woodcock, 1980) and from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (Richardson, 1990). Jennings (1981) mentioned an unconfirmed record from Dhahran. The first author is very familiar with this bird in India.

GREY SHRIKE Lanius excubitor A The most common shrike of the Tihamah. Prefers more open areas than the Isabelline Shrike, especially open Acacia woodlands. Hundreds of records.

MAGPIE SHRIKE Lanius meridionalis U One record from winter and six from spring. One male in Wadi Shesia, sitting inside branches of Ziziphus near a running stream in a wooded wadi.

INDIAN HOUSE CROW Corvus splendens C Now common and a great nuisance in Jeddah.

BROWN-NECKED RAVEN Corvus ruficollis C Common all over the Tihamah, especially around bedouin settlements. Frequently seen scavenging at carcasses along with vultures and kites.

AMETHYST STARLING Cinnyricinclus leucogaster U Seen only in spring and autumn on migration. First sighting of a male, repeatedly calling, in Wadi Aramram 17 March 1989. From 25 August to 1 September 1991 it was seen every day in Wadi Juwa.

ISABELLINE SHRIKE Lanius isabellinus C Frequently seen in Acacia wadis in winter. Hundreds of records from our study area.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE Lanius collurio U Two records, one from Jandalah 3 November 1987, and another from our study area 20 April 1990. According to Stagg (1985) it is a spring and autumn passage migrant.
LESSEr WHITETHROAT Sylvia curruca curruca One Wadi Alahasahah 8 March 1989, one in our study area 5 January 1992.

DESERT LESSER WHITETHROAT Sylvia curruca minor U One near Jandalah 3 November 1987.


CHIFFCHAFF Phylloscopus collybita U Only confirmed record from Wadi Juwa 26 October 1987.

Phylloscopus spp. Many Phylloscopus warblers were seen during the surveys but were not identified to species.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER Muscicapa striata U One inside a large roadside hotel near Al Muzalih hawking insects attracted to light 4 November 1987; one in Wadi Alahasahahah 8 March 1989.

ARABIAN BABBLER Turdoides squamiceps C Common in vegetated wadis and cultivated areas throughout the Tihamah. More than 100 sightings. Flock size varied from three to 12 individuals. Flocks appear to be larger in more mesic habitats e.g. Wadi Juwa and Malaki Dam area.


SHINING SUNBIRD Nectarinia laebesinica C Fairly common around flowering Capparis decidua and Aloe. Stagg (1985) stated that it is a common but localized breeder between 600-1500 m, while Brooks et al. (1987) found it to be common from 100-2,200 m. We regularly saw it in winter on Capparis in Kyad at 120 m elevation.

ORANGE-TUFTED SUNBIRD Nectarinia osa U Only two records: a pair on Acacia flowers in Wadi Sablal 2 March 1989 and another near Wadi Al Lih 6 March 1989. Common breeding resident above 1,500 m, scarce at lower levels (Stagg 1985). Brookset.

al. (1987) recorded 314 from the Tihamah foothills to the highland plateau (250-2,800 m) in Yemen.

ISABELLINE SHRIKE Lanius isabellinus C Frequently seen in Acacia wadis in winter. Hundreds of records from our study area.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE Lanius collurio U Two records, one from Jandalah 3 November 1987, and another from our study area 20 April 1990. According to Stagg (1985) it is a spring and autumn passage migrant.

BAY-BACKED SHRIKE Lanius vittatus S One record in April 1989. First record from the Tihamah. Other Arabian Peninsula records are from the Batinah of Oman 29 April 1979 (Gallagher & Woodcock, 1980) and from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (Richardson, 1990). Jennings (1981) mentioned an unconfirmed record from Dhafran. The first author is very familiar with this bird in India.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE Lanius excubitor A The most common shrike of the Tihamah. Prefers more open areas than the Isabelline Shrike, especially open Acacia woodlands. Hundreds of records.

MASKER SHRIKE Lanius nubicus U One record from winter and six from spring. One male in Wadi Shesia, sitting inside branches of Ziziphus near a running stream in a wooded wadi.

INDIAN HOUSE CROW Corvus splendens C Now common and a great nuisance in Jeddah.

BROWN-NECKED RAVEN Corvus ruficolles C Common all over the Tihamah especially around bedouin settlements. Frequently seen scavenging at carcasses along with vultures and kites.

AMETHYST STARLING Cinnyricinclus leucogaster U Seen only in spring and autumn on migration. First sighting of a male, repeatedly calling, in Wadi Aramram 17 March 1989. From 25 August to 1 September 1991 it was seen every day in Wadi Juwa.

COMMON MYNA Acridotheris tristis U One, possibly with a nest, in Makkah city on traffic light February 1989. Certainly an escape. Well established in Jeddah with the population increasing every year.

HOUSE SPARROW Passer domesticus A Common throughout the Tihamah.

ARABIAN GOLDEN SPARROW Passer cuchlorus A Abundant in all agricultural areas of the Tihamah. Moving with rains and growth of crops, especially maize and millet. Mixed species flocks of 100-300 Arabian Golden and House Sparrows seen around Habib Bandeep on ripening crops by January. Small, undisturbed, globular nest in Acacia. Sometimes one tree may have up to 10 nests. By March most males are in full breeding plumage although some males can be seen in breeding plumage by early February. It is abundant in the Yemen Tihamah (Bowdren 1987).

RUPPELL'S WEAVER Ploceus galbula A Hundreds of sightings. Abundant around cultivated fields in the Tihamah. Extremely common around the backwaters of Malaki Dam 8-9 February 1992. Mixed flocks with Arabian Golden Sparrows. Nesting depends on local conditions but may start as early as mid January. Nesting colonies invariably near water. However, may nest near crop fields after good rainfall e.g. January 1992, when males building nests on Acacia near crop fields in Habib Bandeep; no standing water for many kilometres. Nest seen on Dobera, Hyphaene thebaica, Ziziphus or any tree, not necessarily on thorny species, with a few nests even on Saltudora. Fledgling seen 8 March 1989.

AFRICAN SILVERBILL Euodice cantans C Another common small passerine of cultivated regions of the Tihamah. Most sightings around agricultural fields but often in wooded wadis feeding on seeds of Panicum and Pennisetum grasses.

HOUSE BUNTING Emberiza striolata C Fairly common in wadis and on rocky hills but less common than the next species.
CINNAMON-BREASTED ROCK BUNTING Emberiza tahapisi A Very common in suitable rocky areas, e.g. Wadi Quarmayn and Wadi Juwa. Generally seen in pairs. In Wadi Juwa and around Malaki Dam nest material being gathered 2 January 1992, and by 8-9 February 1992 all birds either singing or collecting nest material.

CRETZSCHMAR'S BUNTING Emberiza calandra R One male positively identified in Wadi Sabta 2 March 1989. Stagg (1985), Cornwallis & Porter (1982) and Brooks et al. (1987) have not reported this species from the Yemen Tihama, but Holom et al. (1988) stated that it is a rare migrant to southwest Arabia.

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A list of Birds seen in North Yemen during April Friday Ltd. Cyclostyled manuscript.


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