

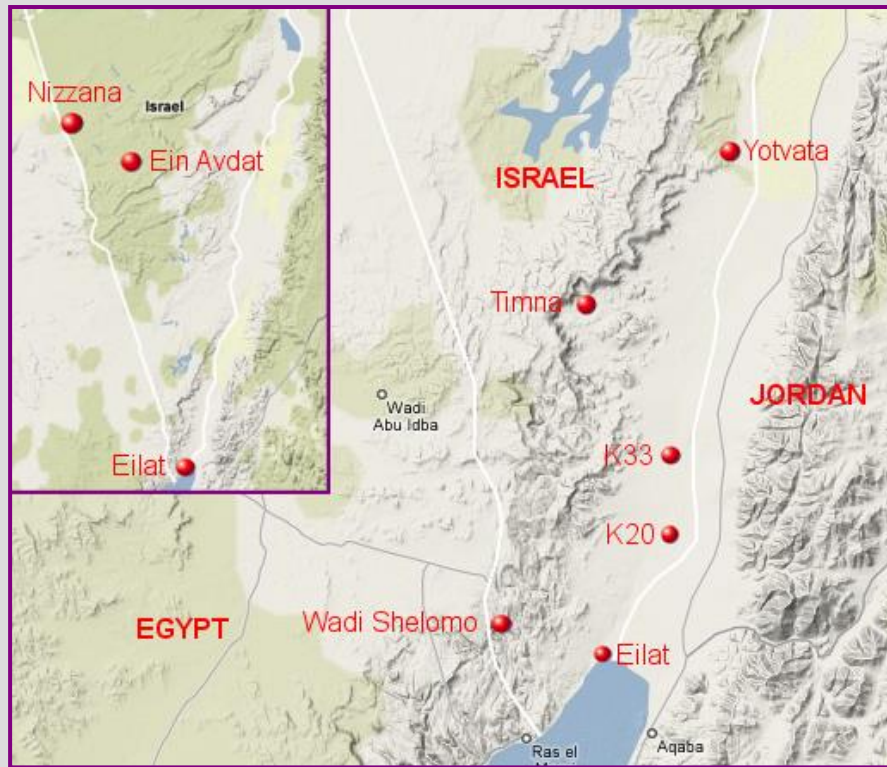
Eilat



Israel



25th to 30th March, 1998



24th	Eilat saltpans & Date Plantation North Beach Date Palm Plantation Pumping Station & Cemetery	06:00-10:15 10:15-11:40 12:00-14:10 15:15-19:30
25th	Eilat Parks Greenhouse area, Eilat Sewage works, reeds, & North Reservoirs North Beach	06:15-09:25 10:15-12:05 14:30-18:00 18:15-19:00
26th	K33 Yotvata Timna	06:20-10:00 10:20-15:00 16:00-18:00
27th	K33 Wadi Metalin / Shelomo Yotvata Eilat area North Sewage Ponds	06:15-07:30 10:15-11:45 13:30-14:30 15:15-16:30 17:00-18:30
28th	Nizzana Ein Avdat Gorge & area	07:00-11:00 13:00-16:30
29th	North Beach Eilat Mountains Wadi Shelomo Eilat Yotvata	06:50-07:15 08:20-09:00 09:30-12:25 14:00-16:00 16:30-18:40
30th	Yotvata North Reservoir area	06:40-10:15 11:30-13:00

EILAT, ISRAEL

25th to 30th March, 1998

Introduction

The week's birding was based at the Topaz Hotel in Eilat - chosen because it was the cheapest (yet more than adequate, with a comfortable large studio for the three of us, including air conditioning and TV). For those not wanting to find Kibbutz accommodation outside of the area, being based in Eilat was more than adequate - there are many good sites within half an hours drive. For those who don't want to drive, the Eilat resort area can be walked, and there are plenty of different bird rich habitats. A car is a much better idea - we booked ours as part of the package in England. All inclusive cover is a must - we were broken into at Nizzana (the cassette radio was the target), although this is the exception rather than the rule. The roads are generally good, with petrol stations reasonably regular. Food isn't too cheap - we found the shawama and felafel the best buy, although there is a very good restaurant at the Yotvata holiday village. Water is a must - 1½ litres cost £1, but the tap water to refill can be safely taken.



Currency in Israel is the Shequel, and it is best to take dollar travellers cheques, although Sterling is also accepted. Exchange booths are cheapest (common in Eilat) since no commission is charged.

Security forces are evident all the time, although this presented no problem at all. Checkpoints are dotted around the area, but we weren't stopped. The main hold-up is back at the airport on departure - massive queues build up due to the security screening - a pain but comforting. Our flight was direct to Ovda airport, which is a small military airport 50 minutes from Eilat. Flights to Eilat are via Tel Aviv (sometimes with an aeroplane change, since it is very small).

Timing and weather

The date was chosen to coincide with early migrants and late winter visitors. However, there doesn't seem to be an ideal time, since birds are moving through all the time, and individual winter stragglers and vagrants also occur. Even in March the days can be very hot, with cooler extremes during the night and on days with a strong wind. It even rains sometimes! Our visit followed an unusually cold spell, with north winds on arrival. This resulted in a sudden surge in migration, with thousands of raptors and passerines passing through early in the week.

Clocks go forward mid March in Israel, which meant that first light was around 6:30, and last light around 7:00. Occasional mosquitoes were heard (and dispatched), but weren't a problem. Birding can be done throughout the day, although early morning is best for desert birds, early and mid morning generally for raptor passage.

Information

There is plenty available before leaving home - Gosney's guide is portable and useful, although some of the sites now have minor changes, Steve Whitehouse has a good selection of reports, and the Internet is worth checking for latest information. When in Eilat, up to the minute gen is essential for specialities. The Information Centre is average for this purpose. It's much better to chat with other (of the many) birders that you meet - the North Beach at dawn and before dusk is the best place to do this.

For reference, Johnsson and MacMillan (Middle East edition) cover most problems, but an extra such as Hollom (Birds of the Middle East and North Africa) is useful for unexpected species. Half reasonable maps are available with car hire and from the hotels, but it is better to buy one (Sanford sell a very good yet pricey relief map of the north and south of Israel).

English is widely spoken, and Hebrew road signs are usually followed by an English version.

SITES VISITED

Eilat area

The resort of Eilat isn't vast, and is surrounded by good bird habitats. Street maps are available from the hotels, and are useful for finding some of the sites. If a choice of hotel is given, ones near the North Beach are slightly better, being nearer the best birds. However, any small patch of bushes can hold migrants, such as the strip of trees and bushes on the North-west edge of the airport runway, only a stone's throw from the shops **1**.

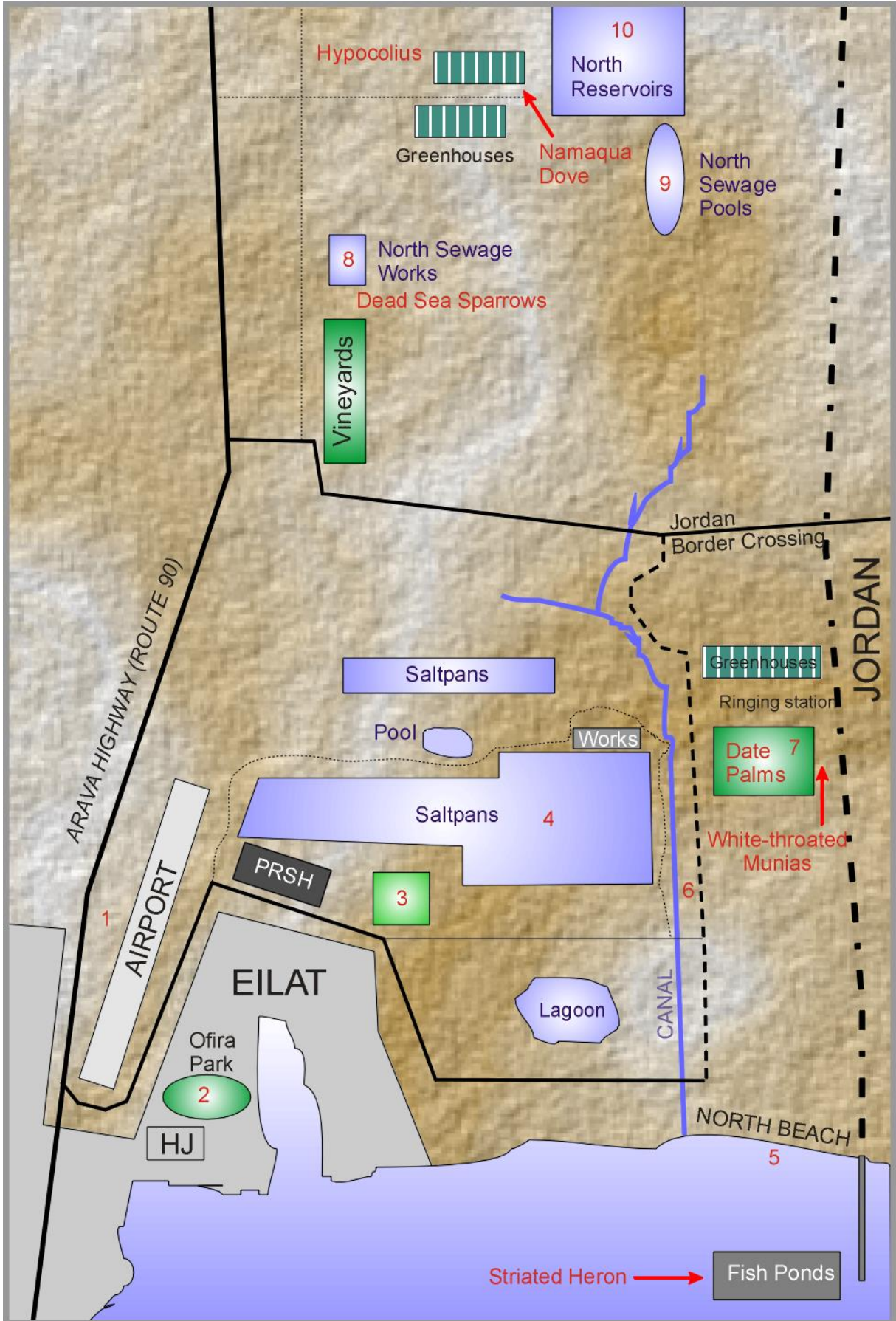
Ofira Park 2. This is a small sheltered park which is good for migrants, particularly on a morning. It is situated directly behind the Howard Johnson Neptune Hotel (*HJ*), which can easily be seen from the southern corner of the airport perimeter. On good days it can be literally crawling with birds, many of which can be approached quite closely, including our quota of Rufous Bushchat, Bluethroat, Masked Shrike, and Wryneck.

Football Fields 3. On days when there has been a good fall of migrants, these two fenced fields are worth a look for pipits and wagtails. The easiest way to locate the canal area is to find the road which runs parallel to the south-east of the airport, and turn right on to Kampen (Paradise Red Sea Hotel - PRSH - on the corner) - a road which is lined with a row of palm trees. The football fields are on the left hand side of this road, enclosed by a white fence. Entry is difficult, but we had close views of flocks of Red-throated Pipits and Wagtails.

Salt Pans 4. These are hard to miss, but have a limited number of birds. Best of the crop was Pied Kingfisher, but there were also small numbers of waders.

The North Beach 5. This is an excellent birding area, and is best early in the morning and during the last hour of daylight. The beach itself isn't a sunbather's paradise, so is left generally to the birders. The eastern end borders on to Jordan, although a lot of the birds on the Jordanian side are hidden unless flying. Offshore are some floating fish ponds, and it is these and the jetties and ropes between them that attract the birds. Various species of gull, tern, and heron are usually present, along with a Brown Booby that shows irregularly. While standing and chatting with other birders, it's worth checking the skies for raptor passage - we had spectacular numbers of Steppe Buzzard and others early in the week.

Sewage Canal Outlet 6. This runs from the beach northwards, and attracts species such as hirundines, wagtails, pipits, and various passerines. It should also be a good area



for crakes, although we didn't see any. The small bridge opposite the salt pans is now no more, although there is a road "bridge" nearer the beach. Most of the length of the canal (to the date plantation) is lined with vegetation, and the area opposite the plantation also has a small amount of reeds, so it is worth checking for warblers and skulkers such as Bluethroat. The open bank between the canal and salt pans held hundreds of Wagtails early in the week, including a few Citrine.

Date Palm Plantation 7. This can be easily seen on the opposite side of the canal to the salt pans. Although the plantation itself is supposed to be a shelter for migrants, more birds seemed to be present in the immediate surroundings. The two lines of trees to the north of the plantation held a lot of passerines (mainly Lesser Whitethroats and Eastern Bonelli's Warbler) and others such as Masked Shrike, Arabian Babblers, and a Semi-collared Flycatcher. Half way up the eastern edge of the plantation is a good spot for White-throated Munia, and Little Green Bee-eaters seemed very interested in a sand bank just over the border fence next to the North-east corner. The ringing station is about 100m north of the plantation, and is next to the main track. We didn't visit, but it's in operation between 6.30 - 9.00 am. Just a little further up are the two greenhouses reputed to be good for Namaqua Dove. They weren't present, but we did find Great Spotted Cuckoo, Quail, and Little Green Bee-eater there.

Sewage Works 8. Following the track north parallel to the canal on the left, the Jordanian border crossing is passed on the right. The track bends to the left here, and meets the Arava highway. Just before it does, a smaller track runs parallel to it. This runs past what were open fields, but are now enclosed vineyards. After these, the raised and fenced in sewage works are found. Despite the fence, birders generally cut through a gap in the North-west corner. Good numbers of Pipits and Wagtails (including some Citrine) were around the edges of the pools. A small bush-filled depression between the works and the vineyards held a flock of Dead Sea Sparrows.

North Sewage Pools 9. These are adjacent to the south end of the reservoirs. They are reeded pools surrounded by an open area (good for Spur-winged Plover), and are excellent for a wide variety of birds. Our selection included crakes, waders, grebes, and a variety of migrant passerines (one of which was a Basra Reed Warbler - boring but rare!).

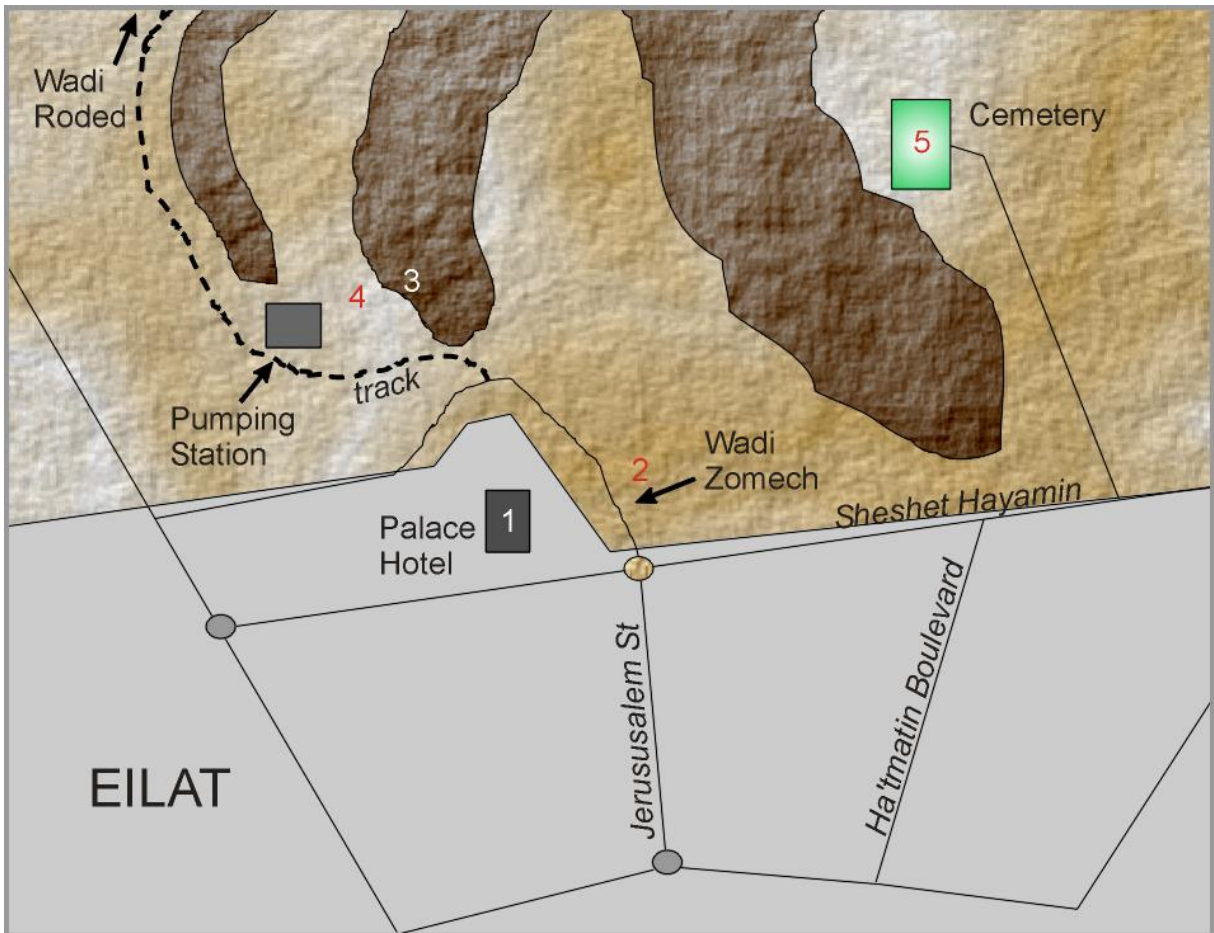
North Reservoirs 10. These reservoirs are quite large and shallow, and despite looking quiet, closer inspection reveals very good numbers of waders around the edges and on the floating vegetation. The best way to find them is to continue north past the sewage farm. A right turn at crossroads next to greenhouses leads to the reservoirs (check the open area on the left - we had a Hypocolius among the Masked & Woodchat Shrikes). A sign saying "Military Area - No Admittance" is generally ignored by everybody. At the end of this track, just before the reservoirs, look for 3 Namaqua Doves which are regularly seen around the last of the greenhouses. The reservoirs themselves can be driven around - probably a good idea since the birds seemed quite nervous.

Wadi Shelomo

From Eilat, take the Ovda road for about 3-4km. After climbing upwards, the road dips again before its ascent of Mount Yoash. Wadi Shelomo is in this dip, and a car park can be used on the right hand side of the road. Strictly speaking, the signposts indicate that Wadi Shelomo is the one to the left (running to the south-west), with Wadi Metalin to the right. It is the latter which held Red-tailed Wheatear during our stay. Wadi Shelomo is well worth a walk - we saw House Bunting, Palestine Sunbird, Subalpine Warbler, and a selection of Eastern Orphean Warblers. With the correct winds, good numbers of raptors pass overhead.

Pumping Station and Cemetery

The Pumping Station is best known for the regular Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse which appear on most evenings. It is situated on the outskirts of Eilat, and shouldn't be too difficult to find. From the town centre, take Ha'tmarin Boulevard to the north, and turn left at the first traffic lights on to Eilat Street. Take the first right at the roundabout on to Jerusalem Street, and drive up and straight over the roundabout (the Palace Hotel will



now be on the left **1**). On the opposite side of the road to the hotel is a small wadi (Wadi Zomech **2**) which held a male Rock Thrush. After the hotel, the road bends to the left. On the crown of this bend is the semi rough track to the pumping station, which can just be seen from the main road. We found the best place to sit and watch was from the rocks to the north of the drinking pool **3** (which is situated below the lone bush **4**). The birds started to come in at twilight (7:05pm on 24th) and stayed for about 20 minutes. It is best to be in position at least 20 minutes before this - something comfortable to sit on is a good tip, as is a jacket and trousers for the drop in temperature. The drinking pool is also worth checking out at other times for drinking birds - we had Cretzschmar's Bunting, Desert Lark and Blue Rock Thrush **5**.

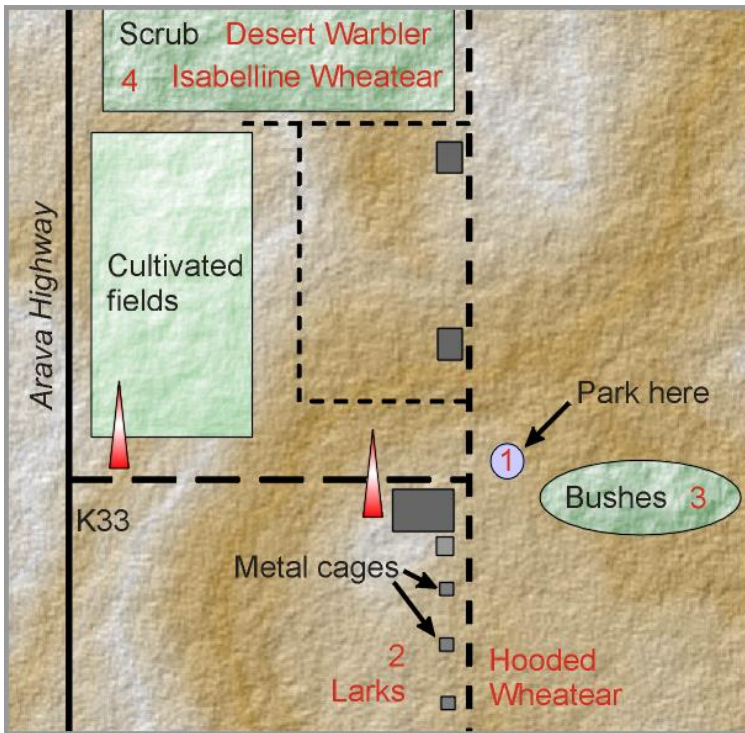
The Cemetery is good for close views of White-crowned Wheatear, as well as Tawny Pipit, Blackstart, and migrants. From the Palace Hotel roundabout, take the Sheshet Hayamin road east for about 1km. The white walled cemetery can be seen on the left hand side.

Timna

This is a popular tourist area, and is a wonderful geological site in itself. The valley runs for a few kilometres, and is reputed to hold breeding Sooty Falcons. It is well signposted just before the K40 road marker (follow the Timna Lake sign). There is an entrance fee of around £5 each, although we played dumb and flashed our bins, and got in for free. The best birding site was at the end of the road, where a small man-made lake attracted such birds as Sand Partridge, Desert Lark, and Squacco Heron. The bushes at the end of the valley are also worth a look (Little Green Bee-eater, Palestine Sunbird, and Rock Martin).

K33 (map on next page)

This is the best place to see a selection of desert residing larks, but patience is usually needed, and an early turn out almost essential. Both Hoopoe & Bar-tailed Larks sing first thing, and both become difficult to find after mid-morning (which in reality is around 8



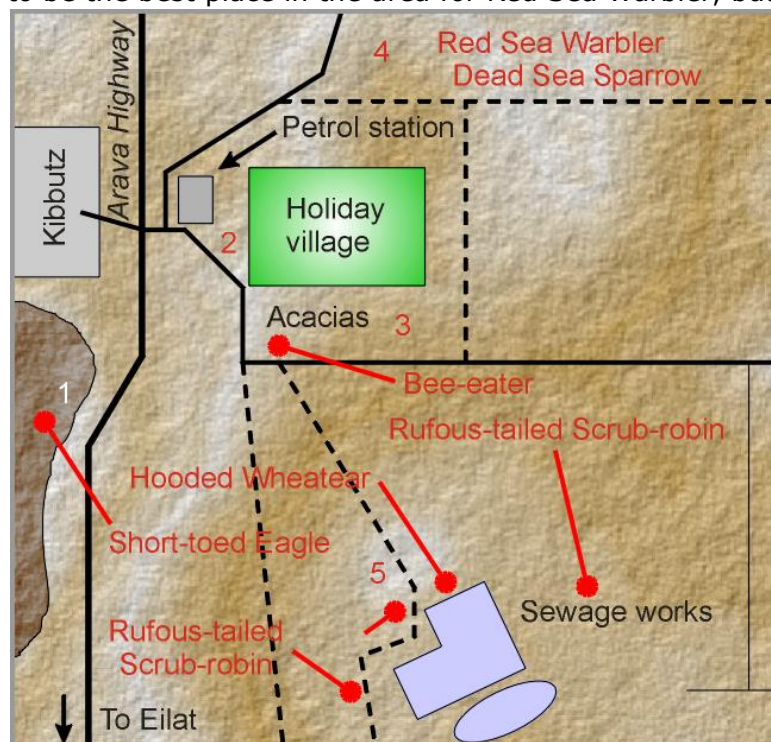
o'clock). The area is found by turning off the Arava highway at K33 (a radio mast is about 50m to the east). Park near the pumping station at the crossroads **1**. The best area for Larks was about 400m to the South of here **2**, with most birds being on the west of the track between the 2nd and 3rd small square cages. A female Hooded Wheatear and Isabelline Wheatear were also here. The area of bushes east of the pumping station **3** is supposed to be good for Asian Desert Warbler, although all those we talked to found none (there were other migrants present at varying times). We did find 5 Asian Desert Warblers in the scrubby area 1km to the north of the crossroads **4**. They usually

appeared when an Isabelline Wheatear landed on their bush.

Yotvata

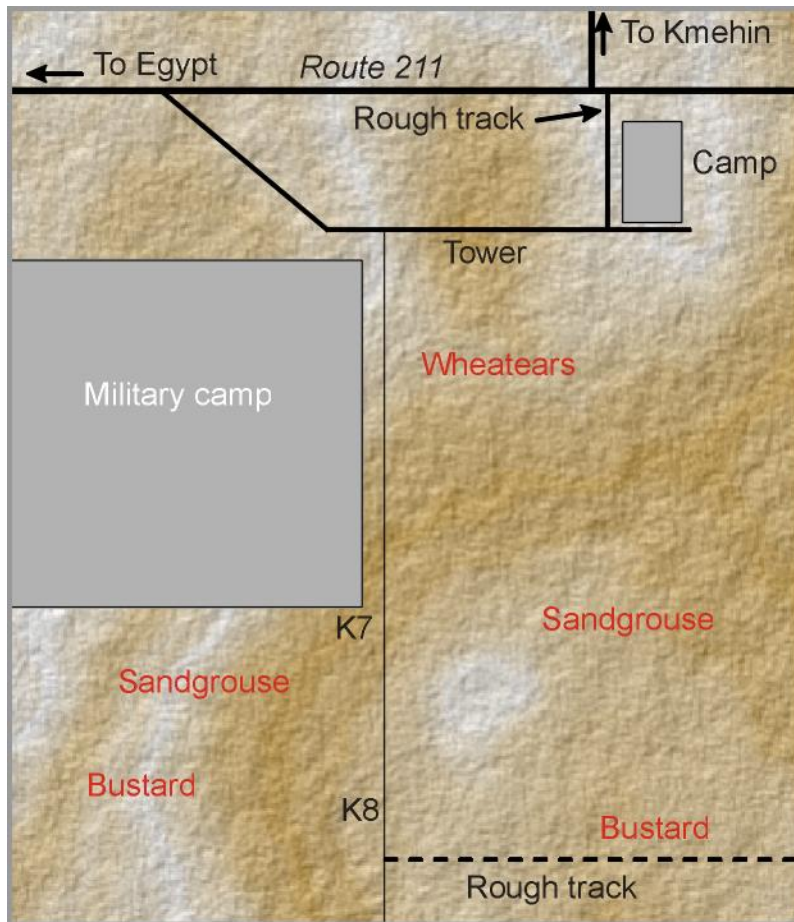
The Holiday Village and surrounding area on the other side of the road to this Kibbutz are very productive. It is situated at K50. The rocks to the left as the Kibbutz is approached from the south **1** had a Short-toed Eagle perched when we arrived. After these cliffs, turn right at the petrol station, keep to the right, and park near the entrance to the holiday village **2**. Entrance to the camp doesn't seem to be a problem, and there are usually plenty of migrants to be seen (eg. Nightingales, Wryneck and a Hume's Warbler). The restaurant also serves up a decent buffet. The acacias to the south of the perimeter fence **3** are supposed to be the best place in the area for Red Sea Warbler, but we caught up with a female in the more open area to the north **4**.

The Sewage Works are also a very productive site to visit. Follow the track round to the south from the car park and take the second rough track after about 100m. Park near the fenced in sewage works **5** (if you can't see them, follow your nose!). 4 of the 5 pools are within this fence, but a 5th is unfenced and more approachable. Passerines included good numbers of Dead Sea Sparrows, singing Rufous Bushchats, female Hooded Wheatear, Bluethroat, and Citrine Wagtail, and water birds Purple Heron, Squacco Heron, roosting Cattle Egrets



and various Sandpipers.

Nizzana



The specialities of the area are various sandgrouse and Macqueen's Bustard, making the 3 hour trip to here well worthwhile. Probably the quickest way from Eilat is to take Route 40 north (take the Mizpe Ramon turn about 11km north of Yotvata on the Arava Highway). There are two petrol stations on route - 1 at Mizpe Ramon and the other about 20km further north. Route 40 north of Mizpe Ramon is also the only place we saw Mourning Wheatear. From Route 40, take Route 211 west (Nizzana should have been signposted by now). Before the Egyptian border is reached, turn left on to what begins as a rough track (opposite the right turn to Kmehin). Turn right at the T-junction after 2km, then first left after 1 km next to a tower. This road passes a military camp (on the right)

- the area is good for a variety of Wheatears. The camp ends just before the 7K marker, and it is the open areas on either side of the road from here that holds Macqueen's Bustard, and Pin-tailed & Spotted Sandgrouse. The Macqueen's can be very easy to find if displaying, or very difficult if hiding behind bushes. Best techniques for the Sandgrouse are to either listen for the calls or scan the open ground. One word of caution - although car crime is not common in Israel, we had our car broken into here (the radio was the target). The thieves were in a white Subaru pickup, and it is apparently down to one particular pair of Bedouins.

Ein Avdat Gorge

Although a Wallcreeper is reputed to have overwintered here, no signs were seen during our stay, although the area is well worth visiting for the breeding Bonelli's Eagles and Eagle Owls. It is found by taking Route 40 north (this is also the best way to get to Nizzana from Eilat). The gorge is about 27km to the north of Mizpe Ramon. The first signpost is actually for the rim of the gorge - this isn't the best place to be. The entrance to the base of the gorge is found by turning right into Ben Gurion College (4km north of the rim), and following the signs. There is a small charge to enter the area, but it is well worth it. Apart from the Eagles, we saw plenty of Egyptian Vultures, breeding Streaked Scrub Warblers, Chukar, and Pallid & Alpine Swifts. There was also a good raptor passage overhead, and Roller within the college grounds.

While here, the open area to the north of the college is also worth checking. An orange sign for Ma'ale Zin is 1km north of the college turning. Take this down a rough track. The ploughed fields on the left hand side held 20 Black-bellied Sandgrouse and Tawny Pipits, and the scrub a little further along a pair of Sakers.

SPECIES SEEN

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

North Sewage Pools (2)

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

North Sewage Pools (1)

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

A single bird was fishing off the north beach at 7:20 am on 29th

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

3 birds flying together over North Beach

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Regularly seen over Eilat area

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

A confiding bird emerged from the reeds at Yotvata Sewage Pools



Great Egret *Ardea alba*

7 birds flew over North Beach on 25th

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Up to 4 at North Beach on mooring lines

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis*

At least 4 white phase birds on mooring lines at North Beach

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Eilat Saltpans (2), Yotvata Sewage Pools (1), Timna Lake (1), North Beach (2)

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Up to 5 birds feeding on camels at Yotvata, and 16 birds roosting together at Yotvata Sewage Pools late evening

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

North Beach (2 on mooring lines)

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Yotvata Sewage Pools (1)

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

A resting group of 32 birds on the slopes of Mount Yoash took to thermals at around 9:30 am on 29th; Eilat (1 over); North Reservoirs (1 over)

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Seen only overhead on passage (apart from single bird in fields near Ein Avdat gorge) - 2 groups of 40 & 20 over Eilat

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

68 birds together on North Reservoirs

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

North Reservoirs (group of 12)

Pintail *Anas acuta*

North Reservoirs (group of 8)

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

North Sewage Pools (1 on pool); North Beach (flock of ~60); Yotvata (group of 3)

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

North Reservoirs (2)

Osprey *Pandion heliaetus*

North Reservoirs (1); North Beach (1,1)

Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Small numbers seen daily, including Red Kite like <i>aegypticus</i> race	
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
2 over date plantation; 10 at Ein Avdat gorge	
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Eilat (1,1); Yotvata (1 perched on cliff top); near Nizzana (1 perched on hill)	
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Canal area (1); Yotvata (1)	
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
K33 (1); Nizzana (1)	
Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Exceptional numbers passed through, particularly early in the week. Total numbers were probably between 2-3000	
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>
Eilat (1)	
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
Eilat (2,3)	
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>
1 bird circling at Ein Avdat gorge was probably of the breeding pair there	
Booted Eagle	<i>Aquila pennata</i>
1 dark phase bird passing over Eilat with other raptors	
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>
Canal area (1); Yotvata (1)	
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Seen occasionally throughout the week	
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>
A pair of birds was over the rough ground adjacent to the Ben Gurion College (top of the Ein Avdat gorge entrance). One was subsequently seen chasing a Crow	
Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>
Nizzana (4); Ein Avdat gorge (2)	
Sand Partridge	<i>Ammoperdix heyi</i>
7 birds came to the Timna Lake area just before dusk; also 2 in Wadi Shelomo	
Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
All birds seen were flushed from cover - Eilat (1); Greenhouses (4); Yotvata (1)	
Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>
Flock of 7 passing over Eilat	
Little Crake	<i>Porzana parva</i>
Male and female together at North Sewage Pools	
Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana porzana</i>
North Sewage Pools (1)	
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
North Sewage Pools (3); Yotvata Sewage works (2)	
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
North Sewage Pools (6)	
Macqueen's Bustard	<i>Chlamydotis macqueenii</i>
3 separate birds at Nizzana, including 1 displaying	
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
North Beach (1)	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Saltpans (2); North Reservoirs (10)	
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
North Reservoirs (1)	
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
Yotvata (1)	
Spur-winged Plover	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>
Saltpans (6); North Sewage Pool area (~40); Yotvata (16)	
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
North Reservoirs (2)	

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

North Reservoirs (1)

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

North Sewage Pools (2), Yotvata Sewage works (1)

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

North Reservoirs (30)

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Single summer plumaged female at North Reservoirs

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Canal area (1); North Sewage works (1)

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Canal area (2)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Yotvata Sewage works (1)

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Canal area (1); North Reservoirs and Sewage Pools (4); Yotvata Sewage works (2)

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Yotvata Sewage works (1)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Salt pans (2)

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

North Reservoirs (70)

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

North Reservoirs (100)

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

North Reservoirs (8), Yotvata Sewage works (1)

White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus*

North Beach (At least 8)

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Good numbers of birds passing over North Beach (on migration?)

Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus*

North Beach (10)

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus micahellis*

North Beach

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

Best count was 6 in the air following an explosion in Jordan - they may have been resting on the Jordanian side of the Red Sea coast

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

North Beach (40)

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*

North Beach (~60); North Reservoirs (10)

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

North Beach (2 fishing together on one occasion only)

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

North Beach (1)

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

North Beach (1 on mooring ropes)

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

North Beach (1,1)

Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*

A group of 6 birds flew overhead 7km south of Nizzana

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse

Pterocles alchata

~150 birds were in large flocks around K7 and K8, South of Nizzana. They were seen both on the ground and flying locally

Black-bellied Sandgrouse

Pterocles orientalis

20 birds were easy to see feeding in a ploughed field to the north of the Ben Gurion College perimeter fence

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse

Pterocles lichtensteinii

Large groups of birds were scattered over the open land 7km south of Nizzana. They were easily seen when flying, but could also be located on the ground by listening for the calls

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Widespread

Laughing Dove

Streptopelia senegalensis

Widespread



Namaqua Dove

Oena capensis

2 males and a female bird were regulars at the greenhouses adjoining the North Reservoirs. The area around the last of the greenhouses before the track reaches the reservoirs is their favoured spot

Great Spotted Cuckoo

Clamator glandarius

A single bird was approachable in the greenhouses just to the North of the date plantation

Little Owl

Athene noctua

1 bird on a wall 8km South of Nizzana

Alpine Swift

Tachymarptis melba

Regularly seen in small numbers. The highest concentration was at Ein Avdat gorge

Common Swift

Apus apus

Widespread

Pallid Swift

Apus pallidus

Occasional at Eilat and Ein Avdat Gorge

Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

1 flew along Canal

Pied Kingfisher

Ceryle rudis

At least 4 birds in the North Beach and Canal area

Green Bee-eater

Merops orientalis

Seen on most days in small numbers - Canal area (4); Date Plantation (4, and an extra 2 which may have been nesting between the border fences). All were of the Dead Sea Valley *cyanophrys* subspecies



Bee-eater

Merops apiaster

2 groups of birds were seen at Yotvata - 10 flew over on 27th, and ~50 landed beside (and on) the car to feed on winged termites just before dusk on 29th

Roller

Coracias garrulus

Ben Gurion College (1)

Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Eilat (1); Yotvata (4,3); Nizzana (6); Wadi Sholom (1)

Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

Yotvata (2,1), Wadi Sholom (1)



Hoopoe Lark

Alaemon alaudipes

2 adults and a young bird were at K33. Early morning is best, when they sing and show reasonably well

Bar-tailed Lark

Ammomanes cinctura

K33 (3,3)

Desert Lark

Ammomanes deserti

Pumping Station (1 drinking at artificial pool); K33 (3); Timna Lake (1 adult with juvenile next to lake); Nizzana (1)



Short-toed Lark

Calandrella brachydactyla

Nizzana (10); Ein Avdat (10 young birds together in fields north of Ben Gurion College)

Crested Lark

Galerida cristata

Quite common in open areas

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

Common

Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Very common

Rock Martin

Ptyonoprogne fuligula

Canal (1); North Sewage works (1); Timna Lake (2); Ein Avdat (1)

House Martin

Delichon urbica

Common

Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

Very common

Tawny Pipit

Anthus campestris

Pumping station (2); Fields adjacent to Ben Gurion College (20)

Red-throated Pipit

Anthus cervinus

Flock of 20 birds on Eilat football fields



Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Eilat football fields (1 with flock of Red-throated Pipits)

Water Pipit

Anthus spinoletta

Canal (2); Eilat football fields (1)

White Wagtail*Motacilla alba alba*

Very common

Yellow Wagtail*Motacilla flava*Very common - black-headed *feldegg* most common, but blue-headed *flava* also quite common**Citrine Wagtail***Motacilla citreola*

Canal (2 males, 1 female); North Sewage works (2 males); Yotvata sewage works (1 male)

White-spectacled Bulbul*Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Very common and widespread in most habitats

**Hypocolius***Hypocolius ampelinus*

A single male was in the open bushy area to the north of the greenhouse adjacent to the North Reservoirs. This is a barely annual visitor to the area

Rock Thrush*Monticola saxatilis*

Single male in Wadi Zomech, which is a small wadi opposite the Palace Hotel (top of Jerusalem Street)

Blue Rock Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

Pumping Station (1); Wadi Sholom (1); Route 40 (1)

Streaked Scrub Warbler*Scotcerca inquieta*

Only seen in Ein Avdat gorge, where 2 of the 4 adults seen were feeding 5 newly fledged young

**Graceful Prinia***Prinia gracilis*

Common in canal area of Eilat; individual birds were seen elsewhere in various habitats

Sedge Warbler*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

North Sewage Pools (1); Yotvata Sewage works (3)

Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Canal (3); North Sewage Pools (2)

Basra Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus griseldis*

A major rarity for Israel - 1 bird was seen in the reedbeds at North Sewage Pools

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler*Hippolais pallida*

Common in most areas with bushes or trees. Up to 10 seen daily

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

North Sewage Pools (1)

Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

Quite common

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler*Phylloscopus orientalis*

Very common

Hume's Warbler*Phylloscopus humei*

Yotvata Holiday Village (1)

Blackcap*Sylvia atricapilla*

Common

Eastern Orphean Warbler

Sylvia hortensis

Wadi Sholom (8)

Asian Desert Warbler

Sylvia nana

K33 - 5 individuals were seen 1km South of the reported site. All birds were seen following an Isabelline Wheatear sitting on the top of the bush

Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Occasional birds only seen in Lesser Whitethroat flocks

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Very common

Red Sea Warbler

Sylvia leucomelaena

Yotvata (1 female)

Rüppell's Warbler

Sylvia rueppelli

A single male found around the perimeter of Yotvata Holiday Village

Subalpine Warbler

Sylvia cantillans

Yotvata (1); Wadi Sholom (2)

Sardinian Warbler

Sylvia melanocephala

Saltpan area (2); Wadi Sholom (1)

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Eilat (1)

Thrush Nightingale

Luscinia luscinia

Yotvata Holiday Camp (1)

Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Yotvata Holiday Camp (1)

Bluethroat

Luscinia svecica

Date Palms (1); Eilat Parks (2); North Sewage Pools (5); Yotvata (1 on 3 occasions, 4 on another); Timna (2)



Rufous-tailed Scrub-robin

Cercotrichas galactotes

Park Ofira, Eilat (1); Yotvata sewage works area (3 singing)

Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Up to 4 birds seen almost daily

White-crowned Wheatear

Oenanthe leucopyga

Eilat cemetery (3); Timna Valley (3); Wadi Sholom (5)



Hooded Wheatear

Oenanthe monacha

2 females - at K33 and Yotvata Sewage works

Northern Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

Common and widespread

Black-eared Wheatear

Oenanthe hispanica

North Beach (2 females); Date Palms (1 male); Yotvata (3 males)

Red-tailed Wheatear

Oenanthe zanthopyrna

A female in Wadi Sholom was one of 3 birds which had overwintered. They are a rare bird for Israel (less than 10 records)

Isabelline Wheatear

Oenanthe isabellina

K33 (2); Nizzana (2)

Mourning Wheatear*Oenanthe lugens*

6 birds were seen on Route 40, between Mizpe Ramon and Ashalim, including one pair feeding young in a roadside nesthole

**Blackstart***Cercomela melanura*

Common (up to 6 a day) in most rural and semi-rural areas

**Arabian Babbler***Turdoides squamiceps*

Date Palms (1); Yotvata (2,1,2)

**Palestine Sunbird***Cinnyris oseus*

Yotvata (1,3,5); Timna Lake (4); Wadi Sholom (1,2); Ein Avdat (1)

Southern Shrike*Lanius meridionalis*

Nizzana (4)

Masked Shrike*Lanius nubicus*

Up to 5 birds seen daily in habitats ranging from town parks to open land with scattered bushes

Woodchat Shrike*Lanius senator*

Canal area (1); North Sewage area (1); K33 (1); Yotvata (2); Wadi Sholom (1); North Reservoirs (2)

House Crow*Corvus splendens*

Reasonably common in Eilat area

Hooded Crow*Corvus cornix*

Only seen in small numbers in the Nizzana area

Brown-necked Raven*Corvus fuficollis*

Reasonably frequent in small numbers in open areas

Tristram's Starling*Onychognathus tristramii*

Seen in both urban and rural areas. Flocks of up to 5 birds seen on most days

House Sparrow*Passer domesticus*

Common

Spanish Sparrow*Passer hispaneolensis*

Very common, with flocks of birds occasionally in the hundreds

Dead Sea Sparrow*Passer moabiticus*

North Sewage works area (24); Yotvata Sewage works (100). Only a small proportion of the birds were males

White-throated Munia*Euodice malabarica*

7 birds between the date palms and the border fence

Greenfinch*Carduelis chlorus*

Nizzana (2)

Trumpeter Finch

Bucanetes githagineus

Wadi Sholom (4,2)



Ortolan Bunting

Emberiza hortulana

Date Palms (1); North Sewage Pools (1)

Cretzschmar's Bunting

Emberiza caesia

Pumping Station (5); Nizzana (1); Date Palms (1)



House Bunting

Emberiza striolata

Wadi Sholom (2 singing males)

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

Nizzana (1)

Corn Bunting

Emberiza calandrella

Nizzana (1)

TOTAL SPECIES = 166