

Antalya to East Turkey and back 7.-20. June 2013:

Antalya, Oymapinar Barrage, Sivrikaya, Aktas Gölü, Dogubayazit, Çaldıran, Ceylanpinar, Birecik, Nemrut Dagi, Demirkazik, Göksu Delta, Akseki

Heikki Karhu, Jari Pitkääkoski, Jouni Riihimäki, Jani Vastamäki



From left to right Jani, Heikki, Jouni and Jari. Sivrikaya 8.6.13, Jani Vastamäki

Introduction

In summer 2012 Jouni emailed several birding friends his personal list of lacking WP species, which could be seen in Turkey, and suggested a trip for the next summer. Immediately five others were within, and reported their personal targets each. The planning began. Two of us, Seppo Järvinen and Ikka Sahi, lacking just a few species, wouldn't make the full round, but would cooperate with the others while making a shorter trip to East Turkey. So we divided into two groups - which then met once, at Sivrikaya.

In January 2013 Jani contacted Vigotour, one of the companies to arrange Brown Fish Owl boat trips. Flight tickets Helsinki- Antalya were bought. The plan was to start with the Eastern Turkey specialties, then to see the southern birds near Syrian border, including Birecik area and, either in the very beginning, before the flight to the East, or given a second try at the end of the trip, see the star bird: Brown Fish Owl near Antalya in SW Turkey.

We started early morning on 7th Jun 2013 by twitching the breeding Brown Fish Owl (saw a pair + female with 2 chicks) at Oymapinar Barrage, 100 kms from Antalya. Then flew the same day via Ankara to Erzurum in NE Turkey, and in course of the next 13 days drove via beautiful and peaceful mountain and other good bird areas back to Antalya. We drove 4338 kms (+ an additional 200 km transportation to Oymapinar Barrage and back), found 237 bird species, of which at least 10 were world lifers and WP ticks to everyone, plus a lot other interesting birds & experiences.

Origanally we had the plan to drive through Turkey from W to E and then fly back home. That included a bigger risk to dip out on the Brown Fish Owl, though, so we re-planned the sites and birds starting from E and entering to W.

Highlights of our trip were Sivrikaya in NE Turkey, with Caucasian Grouse, Caspian Snowcock and several other montane species, Lake Aktas at Georgian border with breeding White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Armenian border areas, with big flocks of Rose-coloured Starlings and especially Dogubayazit with Red-fronted Serin, Grey-necked Bunting, Mongolian Finch and Bearded Vulture. Breeding Radde's Accentors at Tendürek Pass, 2 km from Iranian border. Then via Lake Van, to a recently found non-sensitive Red-wattled Lapwing site near Syrian border at Ceylanpinar. Then three nights at Birecik area with all its specialties: See-see Partridge, Pallid Scops Owl, Iraq Babbler, Yellow-throated Sparrow, Pale Rock Sparrow etc., then Nemrut Dagı at Güneydog Mts: Kurdish Wheatear, Cinereous Bunting, White-throated Robin, and Demirkazık at Taurus Mts originally included for case we should miss the Snowcock in Sivrikaya, then Göksu Delta at Mediterranean and finally Akseki at mountains to NE of Antalya.

Fine birding sites enough, crammed into a two weeks trip. We also saw, but had to pass virtually unbirded several good-looking areas, like those on both sides of Ardahan and SE of Çıldır en route to Lake Aktas, and along Armenian border around Tuzluca and Iğdir, and at N of Dogubayazit.

Instead of Erzurum we could have chosen Trabzon as the flight destination on route from Antalya to Sivrikaya. We had to drive ca. 200 km in darkness, with no birds visible, and a long stretch of road construction work from Gelinkaya northwards.

Route:

Jun 7th Antalya - Oymapinar barrage - Antalya. Flight Antalya - Ankara - Erzurum. Erzurum - Sivrikaya.

Jun 8th Sivrikaya area.

Jun 9th Sivrikaya area - Black Sea Coast, Rize - Borcka - Çam Pass - Ardahan.

Jun 10th Ardahan- Lake Aktas - Kars - Dogubayazit.

Jun 11th Dogubayazit- Tendürek Pass - Çaldıran - Van.

Jun 12th Van - Ceylanpinar - Viransehir.

Jun 13th Viransehir - Ceylanpinar - Viransehir - Estagfirullah - Birecik.

Jun 14th Birecik area & Arsanlı/Göktepe road at SE of Birecik

Jun 15th Birecik - Halfeti - Yeniakpinar- Birecik

Jun 16th Birecik- Bozova - Nemrut Dagı

Jun 17th Nemrut Dagı- Demirkazık

Jun 18th Demirkazık -Tasucu

Jun 19th Tasucu, Göksu Delta - Manavgat

Jun 20th Manavgat - Akseki - Antalya

Security:

We only met polite or friendly people during all the trip. We got service, which is just history at home, if ever has even existed: e.g. fast service in cafés, restaurants and filling stations, and the car washed for price next to nothing while eating or drinking coffee. A car stopped at us on Ugurcuk road, outside Birecik, and an old lady smilingly stretched out us a fresh bread - was it also a reflection to how the birders visiting the area already for decades have acted themselves?

We saw on TV news of violent demonstrations in Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya just before and during our trip, but, like our contact in Turkey, Özcan Kilic at Vigotour had by email assumed, we saw no other sign of unrest.

We had no harm of the police or military. Police we did not see many times, maybe they were busy elsewhere. There was a small military camp, when entering the Lake Aktas at Georgian border, but no control or escorting, unlike the dutch Vlot & co had experienced two years earlier. The military was present at a view point at Armenian border N of Tuzluca and a tank patrol on road at N of Dogubayazit, but control points we met just two, both on the main road on S side of Lake Van. No encounters e.g. at Çaldıran, Serpmetas lava fields, where soldiers had chased the birders off a few years earlier – a politically calm period has now existed in Kurdistan for some time already.

Because of the Syrian war and former experiences of the birders at Cizre, we did not go for Red-wattled Lapwing there. Instead we twitched a pair, found in May at Ceylanpinar, also near Syrian border, but further to W, and noticed no visible military presence there. At Birecik area a good, but unmapped birding road leading to Arsanlı and Göktepe at SE of Birecik took us to less than one km from the Syrian border, but we were just overtaken by a military jeep, not stopped.

Trip reports:

Among many useful in the net, the Ruben Vlot's tripreport 9.-30.7.2011 at <http://www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/turkey-0711-vlot.pdf> was of great help, both when preparing and during the trip.

There are many good ones now especially at the <http://www.cloudbirders.com>. We found very useful the Christoph Moning's report at http://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport/repository/MONING_Turkey_09_2009.pdf and the Niels Bot's report at http://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport/repository/BOT_Turkey_07_2011.pdf.

Stefan Cherrug has also written a very good report (24.6.-8.7.2012), which should be found at the <http://www.birdtours.co.uk>.

We also read Silas Olofson's blog at <http://www.birdingturkey.wordpress.com>, and he gave us valuable information, as did also Markku Santamaa – Thank You both!

Maps and gps:

- Michelin Turkey 1:1.000.000 was good enough to support gps-navigating while driving.
- Euro Country Map Türkei Ost (Geo Center) 1:800.000 was a bit old, but more accurate.
- ADAC Türkei 1:800.000, bought after the trip, would also have been ok.

Jani used a Tomtom Via navigator with Eastern Europe maps, which reasonably well worked also in E Turkey.

Literature:

- The Birds of Turkey, of Kirwan & co (2008) is a handbook, containing plenty of detailed

information, and was kept in the car's library shelf and read for a reference on the road.

-The old good Gosney guides of "Ankara to Birecik" and "Eastern Turkey" were also browsed every now and then e.g. at Sivrikaya, Demirkazik and Göksu Delta. The online updates are at <http://www.birdguides.com/products/findingbirds/BKCT.asp> and <http://www.birdguides.com/products/findingbirds/BKET.asp>.

-Also a small dictionary was very useful.

Car and flights in Turkey:

The car was arranged by Vigotour, <http://www.vigotour.com>. A Ford Connect 1.9 diesel for 13 days from Erzurum airport to Antalya airport with unlimited km and full kasko insurance, cost combined to the Brown Fish Owl twitch, just 710 euro total and served us excellently well, with space enough also for luggage and 4 telescopes in the boot. Flight Antalya- Ankara- Erzurum by Turkish Airlines, instead of 2-3 days (1246 km) driving, cost just 63 euro per person.

Brown Fish Owl twitch:

Transportation from/to Antalya airport cost 110 euro and boat tour at Oymapinar Barrage 285 euro.

Hotels:

We reserved in advance just the accommodation in Sivrikaya, for the first nights. Elsewhere this was not necessary. See the daily accounts below.

Itinerary & Diary:

Jun 7th Fri Antalya - Oymapinar barrage - Antalya (ca. 200 km). Flight Antalya - Ankara - Erzurum. Erzurum - Çamlıkköy, Sivrikaya ca. 200 km.

Arrived Antalya airport at 2.20. Outside we were picked up by Vigotour driver, and at 3.07 left for the Brown Fish Owl site, Oymapinar barrage, all our luggage with. At Manavgat, a German birder joined our group at 4.00. The driver bought bread and offered us warm tidbits. First species of the trip at dawn: Barn Swallow. At 4.45 drove in at the barrage gate, opened by a guard. In the first daylight a Nightjar jumped into flight on the track, then landed and was flushed up twice more.

At the S edge of the barrage lake there were several boats in a small touring harbour, and another group of visiting birders waiting for us. The skippers chose one of the boats, and at 5.20 we sailed for a three hours trip to the lake, first heading towards E. After 12 minutes sailing, in the "Little Canyon" an adult male **Brown Fish Owl** of race *semenowi* was immediately located sitting at 40 metres in a bush. After some time the bird flew over us to the other side of the narrow gorge and perched on a pine nearby. Half an hour later our guide found the female a little onwards. Also the nest hollow was pointed to us. Having spent 50 minutes at the site, we left. A good start for the trip, and gave us a spare day, to use for other purposes, planned for the rest of the trip.



Oymapinar Barrage 7.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

We sailed on some 35 minutes to a second site at "Grand Canyon", and got close views of and adult female plus 2 big downy young at 6.45. Other birds of this gorge were Rock Nuthatch, Long-tailed Tit, Grey Wagtail, and Blue Rock Thrush, and a Krüper's Nuthatch, identified afterwards by the jizz.

On the way back from the barrage we made two stops to try for the second lifer for all of us, and at a roadside pine forest at SW of Oymapinar village found a pair of **Krüper's Nuthatch**. Also singing Turtle Doves, Olivaceous Warbler, and on a wire a pair of Roller.

We had an hours breakfast break until 10.30 at a riverside camping restaurant at SE of Bucakseyhler (a Google Earth name), and paid our Vigotour bill. The driver first converted the sum to liras - to a no good rate. The price of the Brown Fish Owl trip and 13 days car hire had in

advance been agreed to be paid in euros, so by a demand he cancelled the payment, and took it in euros, by Visa. A group of four **Eleonora's Falcons** circled nearby for a while, a lifer for the finder, Jani.

Back at Antalya airport at 11.50 the temperature was +29C. Cold Efes-beer for the lifers, while waiting for our flight to Ankara to leave at 16.00. After an hours flight landing to Ankara and at 18.35 an hour and a quarters continuation flight to Erzurum. After waiting for a quarter outside got the Vigotour car at 20.15, a Ford Connect, 9880 kms in the odometer. The tank was almost empty.

It was raining and getting dark, but according to the plan we left for the main road leading westwards. No gasoline station visible on this side of the airport - we had to turn left and drive a bit extra to Aziziye town, found also food-shops there. Filling the tank (59 l.) cost 212 lira. In total darkness we then continued the main E80 through the town (the airport road had in fact been D052) towards mountains in NW and towards Sivrikaya. Long stretch of the D925 from Gelinkaya onwards was under heavy construction, which meant slow driving. If we had known that, we might have chosen Trabzon at Black Sea Coast as the flight destination, instead of Erzurum. It took us an hour more than planned, nearly four hours, to reach our hotel at Çamlıkköy, N of Sivrikaya, ca. 200 km from Erzurum.

We arrived at the **Camlik Genesis Hotel** (30 € per person per night in a double) half an hour after midnight. We would perhaps have met an empty hotel, hadn't our friends Ilkka and Seppo arrived here already in the afternoon. They did meet the hotel empty, despite of an email a week earlier. Having then driven on northwards to İkizdere they by accident at a restaurant there met the hotel chief, who sent some staff to open the doors and warm up our rooms.

Jun 8th Sat Sivrikaya area 96 km

After less than three hours sleep we got out at five o'clock, a bit excited about what would the weather be like, and to our great relief noticed that the morning sun was shining. At a few kms drive to S from the hotel, the first two **Caucasian Blackcocks** were standing or slowly moving on the western upper slopes of the river valley, immediately south of Sivrikaya village. We found six more a bit further south, and Ilkka who had been watching the slopes already for some time had seen 11 in all from one place. A peaceful and beautiful scenery, with white and red flowering rhododendrons.

Continuing to S towards the highest point (2600 m.) of the road, Ovitdagi Geçidi (Pass), we found 2 **Crimson-winged Finches** by the roadside, and Chough, Shore Larks, Water Pipits, Alpine Accentors, Ring Ouzels and Snowfinches. The *brevirostris* -race Twites, in flight, somewhat reminded Linnet.

At Ovitdagi Pass we did a couple of hours searching by foot at the nearby open area at W of the road: Shore Lark 6, Water Pipit 15, Alpine Accentor 4, Ring Ouzel 2, Twite 4, Snowfinch 2. Our excitement eased, when Jouni after a patient combing, at nine o'clock shouted the **Caspian Snowcock** and each of us secured the 2nd lifer of the morning, a whistling male, on the highest ridge at West, through Jouni's telescope.



Caucasian Grouse-whereabouts at Iyidere river valley, Sivrikaya 8.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

A good breakfast back at the hotel after ten o'clock and the first **Green Warbler** briefly singing at the edge of the backyard forest.



Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*, Çamlıkköy, Sivrikaya, 8.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

After half an hours rest we drove back to Sivrikaya village and found a second Green Warbler singing at the opposite side of the fast flowing river. A slow searching by driving and walking along 3,6 kms the track opposite the hotel produced 14 more Green Warblers, most of them singing and many seen well. Also Dipper ad + juv. The temperature was +15C (in the morning +4C). The track begins at Çamlıkköy village (see Google Earth).

Back at Sivrikaya village some 20 Scarlet Rosefinches, and while enjoying coffee and baklava at café "Hosmer", a possible singing Semi-collared Flycatcher, which could not be secured, though. Then a second visit to Ovitdagi Pass: en route a singing **Mountain Chiffchaff** at open area E of the road, the bird seen well. Alpine Accentors, Rock Thrush 2 male. At the pass a Golden Eagle at a snowy mountain top in S, +8C. We heard later, that a Radde's Accentor had been seen by the buildings at E side of the road, a bit further on. Dinner at hotel at 19, also two British birders arrived – the first guests other than us.

Jun 9th Sun 376 km Sivirikaya area - Black Sea Coast, Rize - Borcka - Çam Geçidi (Pass) - Ardahan.

Wake-up at four, - 6,5 hrs sleep after the previous two very short nights - out at 4.45 : A repetition for the Caucasian Black Grouse (1 male + 2 males) at the yesterdays sites + 1 male when returning, this last one of the morning took off and flew behind the hill at 7.32.

At Ovitdagi Pass we now found four Caspian Snowcock males by searching with telescopes, and also heard and sound-recorded song. Breakfast back at the hotel after 8. The britons had a flat tyre - as had our friends Ilkka and Seppo had on Saturday, but were helped by the staff. We paid our bill and left at 9.30, northwards through Ikizdere.

Arrived at Black Sea coast at 10.20, sunny +22C. The sea was calm, and looked relatively birdless. Drove the very good and fast coast road past Rize, made a stop at shore W of Pazar: Yellow-legged Gulls and Dolphins. In Hopa town ca 300 gulls, but no stop to sort out them.

We wanted to see the famous raptor autumn migration area Borcka. Reached it by 1 p.m., trying to imagine the flow of raptors from Coruh river valley in September. Saw Blue Rock Thrush and Crag Martins. Passed Artvin at 13.40, +25C, a circling Golden Eagle half an hour later over the road, following a river canyon. A pair of Red-backed Shrike at W of Savsat.



At E of Savsat 9.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

At E of Savsat (alt.1000 m.) the road started climbing steeply higher, and we found by a roadside stop a food-carrying Rock Bunting, a dark morph Booted Eagle flew overhead.

At Çam Pass / Geçidi (2640 m.) we were at wide open mountain area again. A thundershower with hails had just passed to E, and covered the highest stretch of road with snow. Two Lesser Spotted Eagles passed us low, 3 Long-legged Buzzards were near around, first Armenian Gull flocks flying to S-SE. The road descended down towards Ardahan: 2 singing Mountain Chiffchaff, 3 Ortolan Bunting and a Snowfinch at a site where the road was blocked for a while to lift a lorry back to the road, then 50 Rook. Good-looking wet fields at NW and W of town: a Long-legged Buzzard, singing Quail, +12C, some rain. Reached Ardahan at 17.40.

Two double rooms at **Hotel "Kura"** on left side of Atatürk street when entering the town, cost 30 lira p.p., without breakfast. Ok for sleeping, but untidy - "wouldn't bring my wife here". A good and tidy restaurant nearby, on left side continuing the same street, though no beer, because of the religion - five kebab-spears, salad, water, 70 liras for four. A short electricity blackout in the restaurant, heavy rain, but short walk back. Good sleep.

Jun 10th Mon 370 km Ardahan- Aktas Gölü (Lake) -Kars - Dogubayazit.

At wake-up at 4.35 it was already nearly daylight. Quite easily, using the gps-map we found our way out of the town towards E at 4.50, +3C. The area looked a peaceful and green hinterland, and there were a lot of birds around. A Lesser Spotted Eagle sitting in a field, 3 Long-legged Buzzards, on a short forest stretch a Bullfinch on the road. At a wet meadow area 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun village there was 3 Ruddy Shelduck, 36 Armenian Gulls, 3 Long-legged Buzzards, Lapwings, Green Sandpiper, 5 singing Corn Buntings, 5 Yellow Wagtails and a Citrine Wagtail. Two km onwards 2 Whinchats, 2 Corn Buntings and a big chorus of singing Larks in the morning sunshine and one more Long-legged Buzzard.

We drove into the small Çildir town at 6.25, encountering a herd of cows on the main street in front of the town hall. Continuing through the town towards Georgian border we found an open filling station at the E edge of the town, and bought salty and sweet snacks with soft drinks to take the place of breakfast. A vast lowland/meadow/pasture plateau spread in front of us at S and towards E, and a hillside to N, but we had to leave them unbirded: saw Isabelline Wheatear 2 and a flock of 50 Rose-coloured Starlings flying SE.

The road climbed up to 2159 m and Lake Aktas came at 7.10 into sight. Despite of a few kms distance lots of Pelicans could already be seen swimming at the lake and standing on the isles. A beautiful male Montagu's Harrier passed us at 50 m. The road descended to Kenarbel village at the lakeside. Having read on the dutch Vlot report about a military escort two years earlier we were a bit surprised that the guards at the entrance of the barracks did not react us passing. There was no control point now, the entry was free. Marsh Warbler and Cetti's Warbler were singing near the barracks. We decided first to check the shore at E of the village. Could instead have continued directly past the village towards Kurtkale and the border, because the best observation point is by the road near the W shore there. Familiar- and nostalgic-looking Soviet style barrcaks and buildings on the other side of the border were not far away, but there is no border crossing to Georgia here.



Lake Aktas from West, 10.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

We spent some three hours at the lake. There were ca 200 White and ca 500 Dalmatian Pelicans present and adults with downy youngs – ca 20 of each species - at a colony on a small island not far from the W shore.

On the shore at Kenarbel was a flock of 20 White-winged Tern, 23 Greylag Goose incl. families

with young, 10 Little Egret, 6 Night Heron, 7 Gadwall. The female Marsh Harrier, 2 Common Tern and 40 Great Crested Grebe were also new for the trip. Armenian Gulls were numerous, ca. 200 present. 5 male and 1 female Montagu's Harriers were hunting around.



White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus* with black chicks and Dalmatian *P. crispus* with white chicks. Aktas Gölü 10.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

We returned to the picturesque Çıldır for a coffee-pause, then continued towards S and Kars at 11.20. At Çıldır Lake the landscape, in light rain, at +11C, reminded N Laplands barren low fell areas. Along the N shore of Çıldır Lake were some 150 Armenian Gulls, a Long-legged Buzzard in the air. From here to NE shore there was a very special mixture of flying flocks of 8+ 120 of White and Dalmatian Pelicans, singing Ortolans and a Snowfinch. Condition of the road was relatively modest, with potholes locally, for the last fifteen minutes before reaching the D060 at N of Kars.

At E of Çamçavus, where the road crosses River Kars at ca. 18 km N of Kars, we saw our biggest gathering of Ruddy Shelduck, 77 in the river. At SE of Kars between Tekneli and Dagpinar we watched until 14.10 at a fine wetland with two marshy pools and a colony of Black-headed Gulls. Saw among other 38 Black-necked Grebes and 2 pairs Montagu's Harriers and heard a Water Rail.

The landscape and bird fauna changed into a more deserty and southern after Digor, some 40 km's drive from Kars, first Short-toed Larks, besides a Rock Thrush. Half an hours disembarking at 14.45 at a wadi crossing the road and leading to Dolaylı, at SE of Digor: Tawny Pipit, food-carrying pair of Isabelline Wheatear, Rock Sparrow. Black-headed Buntings were common from here onwards. At 15.45 we couldn't resist a stop at Armenian border - there are no diplomatic relations with this neighbour - at a site where Armenian Bagaran village lies down in the river valley. We had just passed an armoured military car, a civilian talking to the lookout. We jumped out and took fast photos of the sight. Loudspeaker burst into voice. Back to the car and away. We were relieved to see that nobody followed. Flocks of flying Rose-coloured Starlings had appeared into the scenery a little earlier. At Tuzluca orchards there was a constant flow of them and a flock of at least 300 feeding at a slope by roadside. First Great Reed Warbler and Golden Oriole, both singing.



Roller *Coracias garrulus*,
13.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

From Tuzluca (16.15, +23C) onwards there were Rollers on the poles, wires and flying, and one at nest-hollow. A stop on the desert plateau near Armenian border at a site where the cooling towers of the former Soviet nuclear power station at Metsamor, still operating, came into sight: Black-bellied Sandgrouse 3+2+2, Lesser Grey Shrikes, our first Bee-eater. After Igdir (17.25) our first Hoopoe. We really began to feel that we had left the North behind and arrived to South in a few hours. The road continued as excellent, we passed Mount Ararat and an armed personnel carrier convoy.



South of Igdir, Mount Ararat on the background, 10.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

A vast wetland almost reaches the road at N of Dogubayazit at SE edge of Karabulak. We drove down to have a quick scan. Twenty minutes search until 19.35 with scopes produced 11 species new for the trip: Garganey, Ferruginous Duck, Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Spur-winged Lapwing, Curlew, Wood Sandpiper, Ruff, Whiskered Tern, and best of all a flock of ca 20 Black-winged Pratincoles hawking over a pool, and at least one Collared Pratincole with them. This was the only site during the whole trip, where we met a few annoying kids, with whom one of us in turn had to cope.

At Dogubayazit we took two doubles for 70 liras p.p., incl. breakfast boxes, at the good **Hotel Golden Hill** at W edge of the town. Had dinner in the town. A good 96 bird species observed today.

Jun 11th Tue 225 km, Dogubayazit- Tendürek Pass - Çaldıran- Van

Up at 4.10, out 5.15, light rain, +9C. The rain ceased just as we half an hour later arrived at the foot of Ishak Pasha Palace. Jani saw three smallbird in flight: **Red-fronted Serin**. The birds

disappeared, but were soon found feeding by roadside and we all enjoyed good views of their astonishing outlooks. We continued to the "Rock Formation", a little past the Palace, and did a little exploration opposite it, on the E side of road slope : **Grey-necked Bunting** singing and seen, **Mongolian Finch** voices heard and a female seen, and our first Finsch's Wheatear. At 7.35 rain with thunder arrived from W and we had to drive to the café near the palace, but found two confiding juv Red-fronted Serins there sheltering in the stone-wall of the carpark near the café door, later also a food-carrying male!



Red-fronted Serin site at the foot of Ishak Pasha Palace, and the Red-fronted Serins *Serinus pusillus* 11.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

In the café we got hot coffee and soup and met two belgian birders. Michel Huysmans gave us valuable information for the continuation. At 10.10 we drove back to the "Rock Formation". Grey-necked Bunting now 2 singing, Rock Buntings, Ortolan, Snowfinches. The immature Golden Eagle which was perched in the morning was now flying and at 11.35 a **Lammergeier** appeared to circle for a few minutes in W over the hills! At midday we went to have a look on at the Palace, and also Jani found his lifer, the Lammergeier at 12.50 over the same hills, having dipped out on its at first, while photographing outside the reach of our shouting.

We left Dogubayazit at 13.40 (+18C). Long-legged Buzzard 2 by the roadside. The good E80 and then E99 took us swiftly at nearest to ca two kms from Iran border. At Tendürek Pass the road ascended to 2644 m. We stopped for an hour (14.40-15.45) and were happy to find a pair of **Radde's Accentor** plus a singing male on the S side of the road, thanks to the british birders, met at Sivrikaya. The road then followed the edge of a vast lava field on W side, and keeping on eye the raptors we saw 2 Short-toed Eagles, but no Saker, which is also possible here.



Radde's Accentor *Prunella ocularis*, Tendürek Pass 11.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

In forty minutes we reached the drinking site, favoured by the Serpmetas lava field birds, at NE of Çaldıran (coordinates 39°9'52.90" N, 43°56'37.04" E, see e.g. <http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html>). Best bird during the three quarter of hours watching in the car was a male Citrine Wagtail, though. Jani saw 4 likely Mongolian Finches in flight. In less than ten minutes we drove to another hotspot at N of Çaldıran, the fields at the edge of the lava field (39°10'35.52" N, 43°54'8.93" E) and found 3 Mongolian Finches rising from the road and 2 Crimson-winged Finches landing on the cultivated fields. Other birds were the first and only Honey Buzzard of the trip, 4 White-winged Tern flying overhead to W, Short-toed Larks, Isabelline Wheatear and Snowfinches.

We checked Muradiye town for a hotel at 18.35, but could not find any, and drove to Van city by 20 o'clock. It was dark already, lots of traffic and walking people on the crammed and narrow streets of the very centre, and finding a route with help of gps's to the Hotel Kahraman, mentioned in previous reports turned out to be too difficult. The new **Hotel Sardur** at one of the main streets, Karim Karabekir Caddesi, on right (S) side when entering from D300, next to the "Elite World" Hotel, proved to be good. Two doubles cost 65 liras p.p., breakfast included.

Jun 12th Wed 668 km, Van - Ercek Gölü - Ceylanpinar - Viransehir

Up at 6.20, and breakfast in the hotel rooftop restaurant. A warm days morning with hot sunshine. Left towards Ercek Gölü at 8.30. After half an hours drive the road D300 met SW corner of Lake Ercek. +23C. Our main target bird **Paddyfield Warbler**, lacking on Heikki's WP-list, was easy and gave close views at the well-known site, a small marsh at Baklatepe village crossing. Other new reedbed birds were Bearded Reedlings and Moustached Warblers. **White-headed Duck** 5 male 8 female were swimming in the pool, and a female Red-crested Pochard among Pochards and Black-necked Grebes near the Lake shore. An adult Egyptian Vulture circled against the hills in S, chased by Hooded Crows and a Long-legged Buzzard.

At 10.05 we started our long move over to W and passed Van City at 10.20. Had a coffee pause at a shore café to W of Gevas till 11.45, a male Lesser Kestrel circled overhead. Stopped at an Army control point before Kuskunkinar tunnel, were questioned shortly and friendly. The road, D300, was new, broad and fast. Half an hour later we encountered a second control point, and polite soldiers. Drove through Tatvan town at 13, temperature +20C. An hour later started descending to lower areas, and the temperature soon rose to +32C. Had a break at Kozluk at 14.30, and started counting White Stork nests from here onwards. Entered the vast agricultural area at headwaters of Tigris, with combine harvesters working on the fields. At Silvan 15.05 it was already +35C. In addition to numerous White Stork nests also Rollers were on wires every now and then. Driving through and around Diyarbakir took 15 mins, temperature +37C, the maximum we noticed during our trip. We could perhaps have passed the city faster by long before Silvan turning to the D955 to Batman and continuing on D370 to SE of the city.

From D950 we turned to a smaller, but paved road leading to Mazidagi. This was a good bird road, with not much traffic, and peaceful atmosphere. Saw the first Woodchat Shrike, and at Derik the first Laughing Doves. The great dry plains continuing S to Syria began here. Turned West on E 90, a new and fast road. Reached Viransehir town at 18.06 and turned SE to Ceylanpinar at Syrian border. To N of Ceylanpinar at 7 km N of the border Red-wattled Lapwings had been holding territory three weeks earlier. The traditional Cizre had seemed too sensitive for us, and the Idil Reservoir site not very tempting, either.

Here there was no signals of unrest or military in sight. We turned E from the main road and drove

a straight track past a recently built and just partly inhabited refugee camp to a few farm houses, with irrigated fields on S side of the track, to the edge of a dry and open undulating hill / agricultural area, of which the irrigated fields were separated by a high fence. Local people came to see us, and phoned to someone who spoke english with us and interpreted our questions about the target bird, "Büyük Kızıksu". One of the men promisingly imitated the warning of Red-wattled Lapwing. We asked the interpreter to tell, that we will come back in the morning. We searched the area until dark, heard a Quail and at 19.55 a Little Owl, but did not find the Lapwing.

Back in Viransehir we got two doubles for 60 liras p.p. at **Hotel Yükselhan** at the E entrance of the town, by main road near Ceylanpınar crossing. The hotel was new and tidy, the service very friendly, and good food in restaurant. We had come a long way from E Turkey, and met the first beer after three nights pause. There was a private party in the main restaurant, but we with other guests were served in a separate lounge. The beer finished after our firsts, but there still was raki with water left, and it was ok.

At night Heikki woke up thirsty, but no water bottle reserved in the room, had to drink tap water in the toilet. Somewhat puzzled what the red text "su icilmez!" on toilet wall meant, checked a dictionary in the morning. No extra effect added to the normal soft belly followed, though. Everyone of us experienced individual versions of diarrhoea more or less during the trip – probably mostly because we did not want to resist the fresh salads and vegetables served, even when we knew that they will cause disorder.

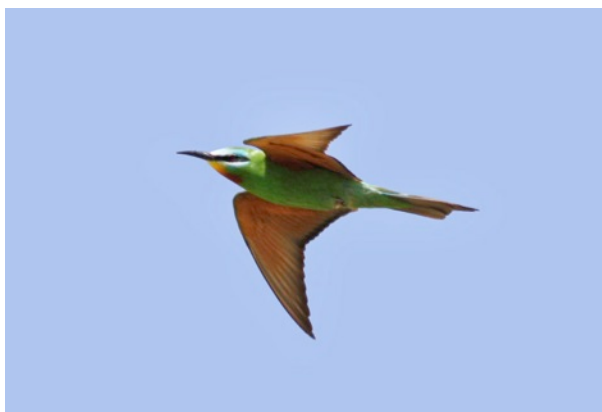
Jun 13th Thu 387 km Ceylanpınar - Viransehir - Estagfirullah - Birecik

Up late, at 6.30, breakfast at 7, carwash meanwhile, and back towards Ceylanpınar at 8.30, +23C already. Sorting out passerines by the roadside, no specialties found anyway. A pale morph Booted Eagle passed close-by. Back at the refugee camp farm houses at 9.20, +34C. Two boys came running and waving to us to tell, that they had seen three of the birds we were looking for, at a ditch by the fence, but the birds had flown off. We did some searching together on the nearby hills, but found nothing. Drove back to the ditch, and at 200-300 metres following the fence from the last house, found 2 **Red-wattled Lapwing!** The birds arose and began warning actively. Heikki used a microphone and all took photos. When we had done this enough and it was time to leave, the boys demanded 1000 liras for guiding, and for using cameras and the microphone. We gave 20 to each. The coordinates for the site are 36°56'7.73"N, 40°2'8.48"E.



Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*, Ceylanpınar 13.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Back in Viransehir at 11.15, then West towards Sanliurfa – a motorway began already 20 km E of Sanliurfa. Orientating to Estagfirullah Blue-cheeked Bee-eater-site took an extra hour, because we first drove past the crossing thought to lead to Estagfirullah. Near Hilvan at 13.30, we then turned back and then to W to a small (wrong) road which lead us to Ovacik, a small village with mosque at 5 km N from the D390 road. It was worth a stop: a flock of 30 Rose-coloured Starlings in flight, then a flock of 60 feeding by the mosque and then 200 in all flying back and forth a likely colony somewhere in NE. Temperature here was +36C. We drove S, hit the D390 at Apaydin, and continuing this road a few km SE, noticed a weary sign "Estagfirullah", and soon were at a colony, where 40 Bee-eaters and 60 Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters were sitting on wires and flying around and landing at a "volcano-like-hill" behind the buildings. Some 300 Rose-coloured Starlings were foraging and flying back and forth also here. We left Estagfirullah at 15 o'clock and turned back S to the main road D885/E90 at sign "Akziyaret". This was the nearest crossing, but there was no possibility to turn to D390 when coming from S - we did not see it, anyway.



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* at Estagfirullah and Rose-coloured Starlings *Pastor roseus* at Ovacik 13.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

We drove back S to the motorway and then continued towards W. Near Birecik interchance saw the 2nd and last Lesser Kestrel of the trip. At 16.25 we turned from motorway to Birecik road. There was no barrier, just a whistle and a blinking amber light – how to pay the road toll, we still have no idea of. In Birecik town at 16.40 we got rooms in the birders traditional **Motel Mirkelam** (22,50 lira a night in a double p.p., no breakfast), which is at the main D-400 road, near the W end of Euphrat bridge. It was +34C here.

First target was the Café Gülhane on the E (town) side of the river and, thanks to three British birders, **Pallid Scops Owl**, 2 adult and 2 big downy young were immediately found in a tall tree at the back (ladies) section of the café garden at 17.40.

Then we drove back to the W side of river, past our motel and turned right, to the N Gravel Pits, an area with reed-edged ponds a couple of km from the main road. We soon found a party of five **Iraq Babbler**. Also Pygmy Cormorants and free-flying birds from the Bald Ibis colony behind the river, first Dead Sea Sparrows and White-spectacled Bulbuls plus Rollers and Bee-eaters. Back to Café Gülhane for dinner, a singing Olivaceous Warbler there at dusk. The kebab was brought from elsewhere, but was ok. There was at least two other groups of birders at Motel Mirkelam, but we were too tired for more socialising than one beer with through-going our own daily birdlog, and went to sleep at ten past ten p.m.

Jun 14th Thu 107 km, Birecik area & Arsanli / Göktepe road, SE of Birecik

Wake-up at 4, out 4.30, +17C. Drove to the "Ibis Wadi" garage for one and half an hours slow morning walk into the wadi, at the N edge of Birecik. After having entered the wadi a few hundred meters from the barking garage dog, we could hear three different calling **See-see Partridges**. At 5.20 Jani caught in scope a calling male standing on a stone on a hill at the opposite side. Alpine Swifts were circling on the sky and there were Bald Ibises on the ledges, one feeding a big young, and flocks flying, more than 100 in all.

We continued the Euphrat E shore road to N and at "Ayran Baglarbasi 13 km" sign turned right . After ca 1 km parked by a small bridge and from 6.30 to 8.10 searched a low small wadi to NE, surrounded by pistachio orchards. **Menetries's Warbler** 2 singing males, **Yellow-throated Sparrow**, first Syrian Woodpeckers of the day total of 15, first Syrian Woodpeckers and Rufous-tailed Bush Robins, 6 Sombre Tit.

Back to Birecik to look for a breakfast café. Did not find any really, but found coffee and pastries. Watched the heronry on a wooded river island: a colony of Pygmy Cormorants, ca 350 birds present, also 180 Little Egrets and 55 Night Herons. Checked once more the Café Gülhane with the Pallid Scops Owl family in their nesting tree at 9.50. A short rest in the hotel till 11, when +34C. Back to the E side, a walk at noon at an old site for Upcher's warbler, immediately to the right of the morning pistachio orchards crossing, at a "cement brick stockpile" - the road leads to Ugurcuk village: nesting Little Swifts at the gorge cliff. Drove the Ayran / Baglarbasi road past the mornings wadi pistachio orchard and under the motorway and found a new Menetries's Warbler and a Yellow-throated Sparrow.

At 12.40 were back at the N Gravel Pits again. Surprisingly saw a **Purple Swampphen** with a chick on a reedy islet at a pond on right side of the way to the babbler-site. Had to drive for a rest for a couple of the hottest afternoon hours in hotel. Then back to the The N Gravel Pits road again: a singing Rufous-tailed Bush Robin and a Squacco Heron near hotel. A walk in the grave-yard at left side of the road 15.30-16.20 just produced more Rufous-tailed Bush Robins. At the N Gravel Pits at 16.25-17.20 a singing Black Francolin, first Graceful Prinia and on a dry field Jani found himself a lifer: a flock of 9 **Desert Finches** feeding.



See-see Partridge
Ammoperdix
griseogularis,
Bentbahçesi
14.6.2013, Jani
Vastamäki

Having got a tip from the Belgian birders, met at Dogubayazit, we then at 17.37 drove to the Arsanli road which leads to SE from Birecik, to Göktepe village at Syrian border. This was a good bird-road. We turned to it a little before a petrol station on right side of the main D400 road before the crossing leading to motorway. It is not on our maps, but easy to see on Google Earth. We stopped just before entering the first village, Bentbahçesi at 17.48 for two See-see Partridge by the roadside. On the left was a small wadi surrounded by cultivation. In a small bush we found our first **Upcher's Warbler**, and further on, when continuing, by the roadsides one more See-see Partridge, 2 Turtle Doves, 2 Bee-eaters, 2 Rollers, 6 Hoopoes, 4 Rufous-tailed Bush Robins, a male Finsch's Wheatear, 5 Woodchat Shrikes and a Short-toed Lark. At Göktepe village near Syrian border at 18.35 everything looked peaceful and we turned to a small road leading right before a military post on the left. Found 1+3+3+2 Desert Finches. Less than at 500 m from the border we turned back. Now we encountered a military car, which made a turn to follow us, but then just drove past us. On the way back to Birecik we saw 5 Little Owls.

Back at Birecik, we had dinner at restaurant Sahra by the main road, next to our hotel: good pizzas, and beer, sensitively poured into metal jugs - the bottle was hidden in a plastic bag.

Jun 15th Fri 111 km, Birecik - Halfeti - Yeniakpınar- Birecik (S. Gravel Pits)

Wake-up at 3.50, to the road 4.45, +20C. Drove northwards, to Halfeti road. Until Yenihalfeti just "ordinary" species incl. a male Finsch's Wheatear - seven of the species seen would have required a rarities committee acceptance at home, though. After 6 o'clock the wide rocky and mountainous scenery of Euphrat valley opened in front of us and we made an hours search at the E side of the road : found **Eastern Rock Nuthatch** 5 in all, and could do side by side comparison with Rock Nuthatch on the same wire, Finsch's Wheatear a pair + 2 juv and Woodchat Shrike family of 1 ad 4 juv. Continued downhill at 7.50: 3 more Eastern Rock Nuthatch, Rock Thrush pair. Jani found a nest of a pair of Upcher's Warblers, with 3 small young. Little Swift overhead, first Black-eared Wheatears around: a male & female, and Rollers croaking in the background.



Nest-site of Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*, Halfeti 15.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Then down to Halfeti village, where we had coffee and a look at on the shore of a big barrage, until 9.20. On the way back saw an adult Egyptian Vulture and 16 Alpine Swift plus one more Finsch's Wheatear by Yenihalfeti. There we had tasty corba-soups at restaurant "Beyaz Saray" by roadside. Then we continued SE to Yeniakpinar for Ahmet Demir's farm, and saw one more adult Egyptian Vulture and on a pole a Short-toed Eagle.

After 18 minutes driving we at Karababa village at Veyis Petrol station turned to a small road leading ENE - a birdy road, best species Yellow-throated Sparrow - and after a few kms driving it was easy by signs to find our target, Ahmet's farm (coordinates 37°7'38.34"N, 38°4'31.66"E).

Ahmet promised to show us our lacking species of the area, and we did a two hours tractor-trailer trip to the hills N of Ahmets' farm. At the drinking pool nearby were 2 Desert Finches and 3 **Pale Rock Sparrows**. Continuing up to the hills we saw Calandra Lark 1+3+2, Bimaculated Lark 1+1+1, Lesser Short-toed Lark 1+1+12, Short-toed Lark 24, Thick-knee 2 ad with a chick, a See-see Partridge, a pair of Black-bellied Sandgrouse, a hunting Short-toed Eagle and one more Pale Rock Sparrow. Of the birds, hiding this time, the Cream-coloured Courser would have been a lifer to one of us. Ahmet really knew his birds, and all this cost just 30 liras per person - really worth of it. The three new lark species alone, not seen elsewhere during the trip, would have required time to find by our own or elsewhere.



Jouni, Ahmet & Jari in search for Pale Rock Sparrow and Larks, Yeniakpinar 15.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

After 25 mins driving we were back at Birecik, a flock of 120 Bald Ibis was circling over the Ibis Center, also 8 Alpine Swift. Tasty kebab spears at Restaurant Sahra and, meanwhile, the carwash.

Had a look at the South Gravel Pits area on the other side of Euphrat from 17.40 (+35C): Squacco Heron 4, Glossy Ibis, Red-crested Pochard 20, Ferruginous Duck 7, White-winged Tern a 2nd cal, Pied Kingfisher 3. Back at the hotel at 19, and to bed at 21.

Jun 16th Sat 263 km, Birecik- Bozova- Adiyaman- Nemrut Dagı

Up at 4.10, move 5.15. First checking the N Gravel Pits for the last time now for ca 1,5 hrs: saw several times flock of 5 Iraq Babblers. Little Bittern a 2nd cal male +1 seen flying at the ponds were a pleasant addition for the trip list. Additionally Red-crested Pochard 3, Black Francolin 2 calling males, Pied Kingfisher and a female Menetries's Warbler.

We met difficulties again with finding a suitable breakfast café in the town. Then left towards E at 7.36, and soon found along the motorway a new restaurant "Servis Alani" and had a break 7.55-8.45. Then drove on to Suruc intersection (nr. 17), and left the motorway wondering what to do with the "99TL" text at the gate and a yelping sound - saw nobody and drove on. Made a left turn E to a small road at a weary sign "Bozova" soon after the toll gate. Continuing a few km S and turning W to Büyükhani would have led to a better road. Our road was narrow and bumpy, but peaceful and led relatively straight, if slow, to Bozova in forty minutes through open dry undulating countryside landscape with scattered houses and small villages (Ergünköy, Kilçik). No very special birds, but Turtle Dove 3, Bee-eater, Roller 2, Hoopoe and Red-tailed Bush Robin were nice enough. Reached Bozova at 9.40 and continued the good D875 NW towards Adiyaman. Whiskered Terns 4 at a barrage bay after the crossing to D360. Reached Adiyaman by 10.45, a tidy town, +30C, and passed Kahta at 11.25. Here the scenery and terrain began to change to more mountainous. Passed Narince at 11.53, and Karadut at 12.05.

We continued uphill towards Nemrut Dagı and by 12.30 were at "**Cesme Pansion**", at the entrance of the national park. Two double rooms – the only ones of the pension with air conditioning, cost 50 liras p.p., with breakfast. Were delighted to see our first **White-throated Robins**, a pair at 10 metres from the restaurant terrace, while waiting the chef to grill fresh forell. Also an Upcher's Warbler and 2 Eastern Orphean Warblers on the bushy slope, at opposite side of the road, a male Finsch's Wheatear in sight on the rocks higher up and Red-rumped Swallows flying around. Splendid, and the food was good!



View to East over Cesme Pansion, hiding on this side of the red house, 16.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

The more shocking in contrast with all this for Heikki was the experience being hit at nipple by a small scorpion, hiding in the towel, spread on belly, while half-naked having an after-lunch nap on the room bed. Dr Jari dosed some antihistamine and Jani had a look on net and consoled, that the smaller the scorpion is, the more poisonous it is, but it should not be lethal, anyway. After showing the scorpion to the landlord, who looked devastated, we continued the nap, waiting for the effect of the hit. Heikki rememberd having recently laughed at a comment in the net about "mosquitos and all kinds of bugs both out- and inside the room", written by a lady who had visited the pension in May. A millipede climbing on trousers left at the chair then felt fully harmless.

At 15.55 we purchased tickets (9 liras each) at the nearby park entrance gate and driving slowly explored the mountainous roadside: **Cinereous Bunting** 12 in all, **Kurdish Wheatear** a pair + 2 juv + a male, Long-legged Buzzard, Rock Thrush 4, Finsch's Wheatear 4, Woodchat Shrike 4, Pale Rock Sparrow, Rock Sparrow 5, Black-headed Bunting 10, the temperature +27C.

Parked at the carpark with cafés and small shops at 2037 m. and walked a path to the mountain top to 2140 m – great sceneries, fine weather, many other visitors, but no crowded feeling. Kurdish Wheatear a pair at the top, and also Shore Lark 4, Finsch's Wheatear 3 and Snowfinch. Jani saw 3 Alpine Chough. A Black-eared Wheatear by the road back.

At the pension we met the two Britons from Sivrikaya. They made sure to shake the bedclothes. Birdlog, and a good dinner with cold beer. This was the only place during our trip, some of us had difficulties with the mobile phone coverage, even from the top of the mountain.

Jun 17th Mon 579 km, Nemrut Dagı- Demirkazık

Woke up at 4.20, got out at 5. Refreshing mountain morning wind, +16C. At the pension a singing White-throated Robin + a food-carrying pair, singing Rock Thrush and Cetti's Warbler, a pair of Black-eared Wheatears on the asphalt, 2 singing Black-headed Buntings. Driving and exploring the roadside forest downhill 5.50-7.05 produced White-throated Robin 3+1+1 male with 3 juv, Upcher's Warbler, Eastern Orphean Warbler 2 male 2 female, Finsch's Wheatear and Eastern Rock Nuthatch, but not the Olive-tree Warbler, we actually were looking for the next new species.



Cinereous Bunting
Emberiza
cineracea
semenowi, Nemrut
Dagi 17.6.2013,
Jani Vastamäki

Breakfast at the pension until 8.25. Then uphill to Nemrut Dagı: Finsch's Wheatear 7, Cinereous Bunting 10, White-throated Robin 2, Kurdish Wheatear 7, Rock Thrush, Pale Rock Sparrow. Drove also 1,5 km and back the track leading westwards to Arsemia and Kayadibi and saw there Cinereous Bunting 12, Finsch's Wheatear 4, Black-eared Wheatear 3, Kurdish Wheatear, Rock Nuthatch 3, a Pale Rock Sparrow and on a meadow a Turtle.

As a whole the Nemrut Dagı was a pleasant, peaceful, beautiful and bird-rich area, where the most important target birds were easy to find. At 10.05 we started our second long move of the trip to W.

There was a Blue-cheeked Bee-eater on wire between Kahta and Adıyaman, temperature +34C. We had a good four kebab-spear lunch for 66 liras and carwash at Gölbaşı at one p.m. Reached the excellent motorway at Narlı at three o'clock. After the mountain sceneries, vast corn fields area began here. Passed Adana at 17.10 and turned N to Ankara motorway, edged with sunflower fields. At Pozantı left the motorway and crossed the river to D-750, drove it a while North and turning to 01-77, which leads to Camardı and Demirkazık, crossed the river back again. A Hobby on a wire was new for the trip. The partly cloud-covered Aladağ Mountains came into sight. At 19.20 reached the Çukurbag village at Demirkazık, and found the pension of Hasan Safak, "Safak Pansiyon" by road on the left. Hasan himself was not at home, but we talked with him in telephone and got two rooms at 30 € p.p., incl. dinner & breakfast. It was raining, but the pension was cosy and the dinner with beer very good. And there was a thick bird logbook, which would have been interesting read - time allowing.

Jun 18th Tue 309 km Demirkazık - Tasucu

Wake-up at 4.20, out at 5.20: the mountain tops were heavily hidden with clouds. We drove to Demirkazık village, and past it to the Gorge mouth: in a bush there was an aberrantly singing Lesser Whitethroat superficially reminding subspecies *althaea* and we had a through look on at it, and also recorded the song. Then entered a short way to the gorge and back. The song we hoped to be of Radde's Accentor turned out to be Rock Bunting, a beautiful male, per se. In all 10 Rock Nuthatch around and a singing Woodlark back at the car - left the site at 7.35. Then drove uphill the track leading from Mountain Centre to Sobek camp (Gosney site n:o 4) in thick mist/cloud. Saw good birds: White-throated Robin 2, Isabelline Wheatear, Finsch's Wheatear, Crimson-winged Finch, Horned Lark, Rock Sparrow, Ortolan - but all these we had already seen in the course of the previous 11 days. There was light rain, +11 C, and at a slippery bend we turned back at 8.25.



Demirkazık Gorge mouth, 18.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Had a good breakfast at the pension. Because we had no target species left here, we instead of a tractor trip had a chat with Hasan, who had returned from Ankara. A Golden Oriole was singing and a flock of 25 Rose-coloured Starlings passed to N. The clouds began to ascend and the visibility got better: a loose flock of ca 130 Chough sp. on the mountain foothill meadows.

We went back to gorge mouth to continue exploring the *althaea*-candidate, now joined by a normal-looking Lesser Whitethroat. A male Finsch's Wheatear also here now. A warden appeared by car and in addition to 50 liras per person as an entrance fee, demanded 250 liras per microphone and every camera. Telling him, that we are guests for Hasan Safak did not make any effect. Phoning to Hasan helped: 40 liras total for everything and no extra fees! Writing receipts did take some time.



Sobek, Demirkazik, 18.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

We then drove back to the mountain track and passed the muddy section with care: 3 Red-backed Shrikes, a White-throated Robin, a male Rock Thrush, 2 male Horned Lark, a male Rock Bunting. At 13 o'clock we parked at a tent camp at Sobek at ca 2000 m, then searched the area by foot till 15.30. White-throated Robin a food-carrying pair, Rock Sparrow 12, also a nest found by Jani, Snowfinch 18. Best bird was Red-fronted Serin, 5 in all, with good and near views on ground and in flight. On the way back a Long-legged Buzzard on ground near Demirkazik village and 4 Alpine Swifts overhead.

Left Demirkazik at 16.30. Got delicious kebab-dishes at Camardi village, after difficult stamp business in the local Post Office - all our postcards reached Finland, anyway, despite of not complete amount of stamps. In the green cultivated valley en route S to Pozantı three different Lesser Grey Shrike and Krüpers Nuthatch's voice at 18.35 at 5 km N of Pozantı. Then down to the Mediterranean Coast, where we reached Tasucu at Göksu Delta at 21.30 and got two airconditioned doubles at **Hotel Konak** for a reasonable 30 liras (no breakfast) p.p. Sweaty warmth outside, but cold Efes in the hotel garden by the street.

Jun 19th Wed 409 km Tasucu – Manavgat

Up at 4, and out 4.30, heading for the Göksu Delta at SE of the town. Temperature +28C already. Drove in darkness, with help of gps-maps, somewhat by guessing the route, to W side track of Akgöl Gölü. Heikki was left at the NW bird-tower at 5.15 to listen with microphone and start the morning watch. Jari, Jouni & Jani joined half an hour later, having first tried to scan seabirds at the seaside shore, but soon saw that there was nothing at sea. A Kentish Plover on the beach, though.

Black Francolins were singing nearby at dawn, the sun appeared from behind the horizon at 5.27. In an hour and a quarter we saw Purple Heron 20, Squacco Heron 4, Spoonbill 15, Teal 1, Red-crested Pochard 10, Ferruginous Duck 2, Ruddy Shelduck 17, Purple Swampphen ssp. *poliocephalus (caspius)* 7, Eleonoras Falcon 5, Hobby 1, Long-eared/Short-eared Owl 1, Gull-billed Tern 1, White-winged Tern 17, Bearded Reedling 35, heard voice of Little Ringed Plover and a shortly singing Savi's Warbler, seven species of these were new for the trip.

At the S shore of the lake (Gosney site nr 5) we found Purple Heron 7, Little Egret 11, Great Egret 2. In Paradeniz Gölü lagoon a lone 2nd cal Flamingo. Left the delta at 9.15 for morning coffee. Found a good café at the nearby Silifke town, and had breakfast.

We then tried to drive to the river mouth, by following the riverside, but the trail had collapsed into the river, and we had to turn back. A Little Tern was fishing at the river. A little westwards found a track to the beach. Heikki, Jari and Jouni spent there an hour from 11.45 seawatching, while Jani walked to check the gulls at the river mouth.

Best birds were a 2nd cal **Pomarine Skua** flying at sea, and a Whimbrel migrating W. By telescopes we by jizz just could identify the ca.10 Audouin's Gulls resting at the river mouth, Jani told us that half of them were 2nd cal. Also 30 Little Tern there and 18 flying W in front of us in ones and twos. Sandwich Tern 25, White-winged Tern 5, Oystercatcher 6, Kentish Plover 5. Yellow-legged Gull 40, Common Tern 30 plus unidentified Tern ca. 100. It felt great to be on sea shore (temperature +36C) after all the inland birding.

Back at Silifke 13.30 and continuing the main road to W. A **Great Spotted Cuckoo** - a lifer for Jari - flew over the road in front of us at 16.08 at SW of Anamur. Between Camlıpınaralanı and Uçarı we spent 20 mins from 16.45 watching the sea at a beach near a coast guard / military base: **Scopoli's Shearwater** 3 flying at sea, one pretty near. Five more, but a bit distant at E of Alanya at 18.25. Passing Alanya took 20 mins.

Checked a hotel at the crossing of Konya and Akseki road (D695): air condition out of order, then the "Sea World Resort & Spa" near the shore: big and crowded, hot lobby, and "no rooms available". The Hotel Andria in Manavgat, mentioned by Vlot & co 2011, was under repair and took no guests. By searching a little we found the decent "**Otel Mercan**" in Manavgat centre, by the E side of the river, to SW from Fevzi Pasha Caddesi. No english was spoken here, but the service was ok, and two doubles cost 45 lira p.p. (no breakfast). A very good dinner at a terrace in the town. A pleasant-feeling town, compared with the coast tourist hell, tasted during the afternoon. It looked like Manavgat was favoured by holidaying Turkish people.



Manavgat 19.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Jun 20th Thu 249 km Manavgat-Akseki-Antalya

A "sleeping morning": up at 5, out 5.35, move 5.47, after the two other cars parked on the narrow street had been temporarily moved away. Fuel and breakfast incl soup at a new and tidy "servis"-type roadside café-restaurant at 15.50 liras by Akseki road until 7.40. Then a forty minutes birding at opposite side of the road, by a small village, just before Güçlüköy mosque: Eastern Bonelli's Warbler and Rüppel's Warbler, both new for the trip, plus Sombre Tit 2. Continuing towards Akseki a hovering Short-toed Eagle.

In Akseki we started at 8.20 at the graveyard near football ground and Dutluca crossing, to search for Olive-tree Warbler: our first Masked Shrike, the song reminding Olive-tree Warbler, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler, Syrian and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers and breeding *samamisicus* Redstarts. Outside the town immediately at SE of the graveyard along a small track leading to SE Rüppel's Warbler, Red-backed Shrike, a family of Woodchat Shrike and, seen only by the lucky Jari & Jouni, an **Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus*.

A few kms SE at SE of Dutluca by the road to Hüsamettinköy we came to another forest-graveyard and explored the area for one and a half hours until 12 o'clock: the best bird, a lot sought-after during the previous days and now found in an Olive-tree outside the NW corner, was the **Olive-tree Warbler**, a lifer for Jani - with playback it delivered also a little song - a second bird was also seen around. Additionally Olivaceous Warbler, Eastern Bonelli's Warbler 4, Eastern Orphean Warbler 2, Rüppel's Warbler, Krüpers Nuthatch 3, Sombre Tits, Masked Shrike 2, Turtle Doves plus a circling Short-toed Eagle.



Cimiköy, Akseki 20.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

We continued driving a few kms from Dutluca to E to Cimi village: Rock Nuthatch, Green Woodpecker (at the 3rd, Cimi graveyard), Finsch's Wheatear, Black-eared Wheatears. After passing the village by the track yet three more - and the last ones for the trip - new species: Serin 3, Cretzschmar's Bunting 2 singing males, and as the very last, a Sardinian Warbler. We turned back, reached Akseki again at 13.45 and enjoyed coffee & coke with baklava. Then revisited the Isabelline Shrike site, but did not find the bird again. Temperature +30C.

We left Akseki at 14.50, passed Manavgat at 15.55, had a good köfte-meatball meal by a roadside eatery at 16.40 and got double rooms at Antalya airport at Comfort Hotel for 50 € (list price 90 €) per person. A Nightjar was singing in the garden in the evening.

Jun 21st Fri Antalya- Helsinki

Wake-up at 00.30, at 01.00 transportation to the airport, last birdlog, and at 03.35 flight to Helsinki by Finnair.

Bird list

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

1-4 seen on 4 days, 9 in all, sites: Erçek Gölü (Van) , Birecik N and S Gravel Pits, Akgöl Gölü (Göksu Delta).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

40 Aktas Gölü (at Georgian border) and 14 Çildir Gölü NE-shore 10.6., 1 Birecik S Gravel Pits 15.6., 20 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

38 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar, SE of Kars 10.6., 10 Erçek Gölü 12.6..

Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris d. diomedea*

At Mediterranean coast 4 at SE of Uçari and 5 at 20 km E of Alanya 19.6..

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Ca. 300 adults, on a small island ca. 20 downy young Aktas Gölü, 4 flying Çildir Gölü NE-shore 10.6..

Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*

Ca. 500 adults, ca. 20 downy young in colony with White Pelicans Aktas Gölü, 4 flying with White Pelicans Çildir Gölü NE-shore 10.6..



Dalmatian Pelican
Pelecanus crispus, Aktas
Gölü 10.6.2013, Jani
Vastamäki

White / Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* / *crispus*

120 + 7 flying E at Çildir Gölü NE-shore 10.6..

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

18 at Black Sea Coast between Rize and Hopa 9.6., 3 Çildir and ca 400 Aktas Gölü 10.6..

Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*

10-400 seen daily on 4 days at Birecik 13.-16.6., of which ca. 350 in a colony on an island of River Euphrat at 9 o'clock 14.6..

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

1-18 seen on 5 days, max. 18 Akgöl Gölü 19.6.. 23 in all.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

27 Akgöl Gölü 19.6., 20 of which seen from the tower at W shore and 7 at the S shore.

Great Egret *Casmerodius albus*

4 Akgöl Gölü 19.6., 2 of which at the S shore and 2 at the Göksu river mouth.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

20 Aktas Gölü 10.6., 2-200 seen daily on 4 days at Birecik 13.-16.6., of which ca. 180 in a colony on an island of River Euphrat at 9 o'clock 14.6.. 20 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

1 in a field nr cemetery at the N Gravel Pits Rd at Birecik 14.6., 4 at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6., 4 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

5 Diyarbakir 12.6. 5- 30 seen daily on 4 days at Birecik 13.-16.6., 2 nr Osmanliye 17.6. and 15 Göksu Delta area 19.6..

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

6 Aktas Gölü 10.6., 60 at Birecik 14.6., of which 55 in a colony on an island of River Euphrat at 9 o'clock. 3 Birecik Motel Mirkelam and 2 at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6..

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

2 (1 2nd cal male +1) at Birecik N Gravel Pits 16.6..

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

1-16 seen on 8 days, 49 in all. At nests as follows: a pair nr the camping restaurant between Oymapinar and Manavgat 7.6., 1 at Çildir and 1 at W of Igdir 10.6., 1 ad 2 pull + 1 ad 2 pull at E of Çatakköprü, 1 ad 1 pull at Alabel, 1 ad at Kengerli, 1 ad 2 pull + 2ad 2 pull at S of Diyarbakir and 1 ad at E of Viransehir 12.6., 1 ad 2 pull between Hilvan and Ovacik 13.6, 2 ad at W of Adiyaman nr Bozova crossing 17.6., 1 pull + 1ad +1 ad 3 pull at SW of and at Kurtulus (Göksu Delta), 1 ad at Beyrebuzak (Anamur-Alanya) 19.6., 16 active nests in all.

[Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*]

Ca. 150 at Birecik 13.-16.6., also a young seen fed at nest at Ibis Wadi 14.6. Category D.



Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*, Birecik 14.6.2013,
Jani Vastamäki

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

1 at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6..

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

15 Akgöl Gölü (Göksu Delta) 19.6..

Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

1 2nd cal Paradeniz Gölü (Göksu Delta) 19.6..

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

23 (3+ a family flock of 20 incl. downy youngs) Kenarbel, Aktas Gölü 10.6..

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

3 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun, 15 Aktas Gölü, 2 Çildir Gölü NE-shore and 77 at river Kars at E of Çamçavus ca 18 km N of Kars and 3 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar 10.6., 17 at Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

7 Aktas Gölü, 5 Çildir Gölü NE-shore and 4 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar 10.6..

Teal *Anas crecca*

1 at Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

5 male at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun, 10 in all later during the day, on 10.6., 2 Birecik 15.6., 16 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

1 male at wetland SE of Karabulak, N of Dogubayazit 10.6..

Shoveler *Anas chipeata*

2 male at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpınar, SE of Kars 10.6..

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

1 ad female Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., 20, including a female with 8 pull at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6., 3 at the N Gravel Pits at Birecik 16.6., 12 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

8 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpınar, SE of Kars and 2 male at SE of Karabulak, N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 15 Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., 5 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

1 male at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 1 male flying at Euphrat, Birecik Centre 14.6., 7 at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6., 2 Akgöl Gölü 19.6..

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

2 pairs at E of Çıldır and 15 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpınar, SE of Kars 10.6..

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

13 (3 male, 8 female) at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6..

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

1 at N of Çıldır 11.6..

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

1 ad circling at 11.35 and 12.50 over the hills to W of Ishak Pasha Palace.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

1 ad circling at S at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., 1 ad circling at E of Halfeti and 1 ad seen between Yenihalfeti and Akpınar, at NE of Birecik 15.6..

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

1 at S of Çıldır 10.6., 1 at and 1 to S of Tendürek Pass 11.6., 1 hunting at hills to N of Yeniakpınar 15.6., 6 at Akseki area 20.6..



Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Akseki 20.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

1 female Aktas Gölü, 3 pairs at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar, SE of Kars and 1 female at wetland SE of Karabulak, N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 1 11.6., 1 12.6., 25 Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

7 male 1 female at Aktas Gölü, 2 pairs at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar, SE of Kars 10.6. 1 2nd cal male Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6..

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

1 Sivrikaya 8.6..

Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

Seen on 11 of 14 days, 1-4 per day, 16 in all.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

1-10 seen on 7 days, 24 in all. Best days 4 between Çam Pass - Ardahan 9.6., 5 Ardahan - Çildir, 3 Çildir - Kars, 1 Kars - Tuzluca and 1 Tuzluca- Igdir 10.6..

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

2 Çam Pass at NW of Ardahan 9.6., 1 in a field at E of Ardahan, early morning 10.6..

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

2 Sivrikaya area 8.6., 1 Artvin 9.6., 2 Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., 2 Sobek, Demirkazik 18.6..

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata*

1 Savsat, NW of Ardahan 9.6., 1 Viransehir - Ceylanpinar 13.6..

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

1 male at W of Gevas, Lake Van S shore 12.6., 1 at E of Birecik 13.6..

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Seen on 12 of 14 days, 1-10 per day, 57 in all, the most common raptor. Biggest count 10 from Ceylanpinar to Birecik 13.6..

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

A group of 4 circling at the riverside camping café at SE of Bucakseyhler, en route from Oymapinar barrage back to Manavgat 7.6. and 4 hunting at Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

1 at Camardi 17.6., 1 Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Caucasian Grouse *Lyrurus mlokosiewiczii*

13 cocks at upper W slopes at S of Sivrikaya village at 5.20- 6.30 o'clock 8.6., 4 cocks at the same sites at 5.10 – 7.30 on 9.6..



Caucasian Grouse *Lyrurus mlokosiewiczii*, Sivrikaya
8.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Caspian Snowcock *Tetraogallus caspius*

1 singing male seen on mountain top ridge to W of Ovtdagi Pass, Sivrikaya, highest road point, at 9.00 - 9.20 o'clock 8.6., 4 singing males seen from the same site, all on W side, one very distant in NW, ca. 6.00 – 7.00 on 9.6..

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*

1 + voice Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., voice heard at Halfeti and 2 seen at hills to N of Yeniakpinar 15.6., voice at Demirkazik 18.6..

See-see Partridge *Ammoperdix griseogularis*

3 heard, of which 1 male seen singing at 5.20 in Ibis Wadi, Birecik and 2+1 by roadside at 17.48 at Bentbahçesi village, Arsanli & Göktepe road, to SE of Birecik, 14.6..

Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus*

1 heard singing at the N Gravel Pits at Birecik 14.6., 2 heard at the same site 16.6., 3 heard (1 seen) at Akgöl Gölü NW bird tower, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

1-3 heard on 4 days 9.-12.6. Ardahan NW, Ardahan E, Aktas Gölü, Ishak Pasha Palace, Çaldıran, Ceylanpinar, 8 in all.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

1 heard at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar, SE of Kars 10.6..

Purple Swampphen *Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus (caspius)*

1 ad 1 pull at the N Gravel Pits at Birecik 14.6., 7 at Akgöl Gölü NW bird tower, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

1 ad + pulli at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., 3-20 per day at Birecik 14.-16.6., heard at Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Coot *Fulica atra*

13 at Çıldır Gölü NE-shore and 40 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpınar, SE of Kars 10.6., max 200 / day at Birecik 14.-16.6., 1 at Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

4 at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

10 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 10 at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., 5 at Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

4, one of which at nest incubating, at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6..

Thick-knee *Burhinus oedipnemos*

2 ad 1 pull at hills to N of Yeniakpınar 15.6..

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

1 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6..

Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

20 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6..

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

3 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun, 1 at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpınar, SE of Kars and 2 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 1 11.6., 1 Kurtulus, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*

2 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 3 at the N Gravel Pits at Birecik 13.6. and 13 at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

A breeding pair warning at dry agricultural area WNW of Ceylan village, at ca. 7 km N of Ceylanpınar, 1 km E of the main road, past refugee camp N side of the track and past the last agricultural house, 13.6.. Coordinates 36°56'7.73"N, 40°2'8.48"E.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

20 at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

1 + voice heard at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

2 at wet fields NW of Ardahan 9.6..

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

1 migrating W at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

1 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6..

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

1 Ovitdagi Pass, Sivrikaya 9.6., 3 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun and 6 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 1 Çaldıran 11.6., 1 at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6. and 5 at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

1 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun 10.6., 2 Çaldıran 11.6., 3 at the S Gravel Pits at Birecik 15.6. and 3 at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

1 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6. and voice heard at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

3 Ovitdagi Pass, Sivrikaya 8.6., 1 on 9.6..

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

15 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6..

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

1 2nd cal watched ca 15 mins at 12.05 o'clock at Göksu river mouth 19.6.. A rather big skua, brought into mind at first Great Skua, but soon identified as a Pomarine. Rounded tips of short central tail feathers. Looked bigger and broader-winged than Arctic Skua. Was a little smaller compared directly with Yellow-legged Gulls.

Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*

14 (7 ad 7 2nd cal) at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

1 ad identified at W of Pazar, Black Sea Coast 9.6..

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

30 Oymapınar Barrage 7.6., 70 at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus*

160 between Çam Pass and Ardahan 9.6., 36 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun, 200 Aktas Gölü and 150 Çıldır Gölü NE-shore 10.6., 30 11.6., 4 Lake Van 12.6..



Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus*, Ardahan
10.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

1 ad Çildir Gölü NE-shore, 30 at N of Kars and ca. 100 pairs at marshy pools between Tekneli and Dagpinar, SE of Kars 10.6..

Caspian/Yellow-legged/Armenian Gull *Larus cachinnans/michahellis/armenicus*

Ca. 300 at Hopa rubbish tip 9.6., 40 17.6., 20 19.6..

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

1 Akgöl Gölü (Göksu Delta) 19.6..

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

26 at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

2 Aktas Gölü 10.6., 2 at Euphrat, Birecik 14.6., 7 ad migr. S Birecik N Gravel Pits 16.6., 2 Adiyaman 17.6., 60 Göksu river mouth (additionally ca. 100 *Sterna/chlidonias*) 19.6..

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

1 ad fishing at the Göksu river and ca. 50 flying and resting at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

2 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6. and 4 nr the crossing of D360 and D875 at SW of Adiyaman 16.6..

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucoptera*

A flock of 20 at Kenarbel, Aktas Gölü and 10 at wetland SE of Karabulak N of Dogubayazit 10.6., 4 flying W at Çaldıran 11.6., 1 2nd cal at Birecik S Gravel Pits 15.6., a flock of 17 flying E + 2 ad at Akgöl Gölü (Göksu Delta) and 4 ad 1 2nd cal at Göksu river mouth 19.6..

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

3+2+2 flying at plateau nr. Armenian border at E of Tuzluca, S of Sürmeli at 16.40 o'clock 10.6. and a pair on ground at hills to N of Yeniakpinar 15.6..

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Common, seen on 13 days of 14 – not seen 8.6. Sivirikaya area.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

1-8 seen on 9 days 10.-17.6. and 19.6., 28 in all. Not observed Sivirikaya area, from Demirkazik to Tasucu, nor Akseki – Antalya.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Seen or heard on 7 days, 1-7 per day, 27 in all, most in Birecik area and from Birecik to Nemrut Dagı (Adiyaman).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common, lacking just Sivirikaya area, seen on 12 days, max day total, written down, 40.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Common from Derik in E (12.6.) to W to Birecik area, max day total 20. 1 seen at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*
1 at SW of Anamur, Mediterranean Coast 19.6..

Cuckoo *Cuculus canor*
Heard or seen 1-4 per day on 5 days, 10 in all, from Sivrikaya 9.6. to Ardahan etc. 10.6., at Dogubayazit 11.6. and 1 somewhere between Van and Ceylanpinar 12.6.. 1 singing at Ibis Wadi, Birecik 14.6..

Pallid Scops Owl *Otus brucei*
A family of 2 ad 4 pull at Café Gülhane, Birecik 13. -14.6..

Brown Fish Owl *Bubo zeylonensis semenowi*
A pair in the Little Canyon and a female + 2 pull in the Grand Canyon of Oymapinar Barrage 7.6..



Brown Fish Owl *Bubo zeylonensis semenowi*,
Oymapinar Barrage
7.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Little Owl *Athene noctua*
1-5 seen on 9 days, 23 in all. Most seen Birecik area, best count 5 single birds seen along Arsanli road in the evening of 14.6.. A family of 4 at the bridge nr SE shore of Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta.

Long-eared / Short-eared Owl *Asio otus/flammatus*
1 hunting over N meadows of Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta at 6.02 on 19.6..

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
1 on the track when arriving at Oymapinar Barrage at 4.45 on 7.6.. 1 singing at the Hotel International Comfort Airport in the evening of 20.6. and after 1 o'clock in the morning of 21.6..

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*
17 over the Ibis Wadi, Birecik at 5.30 on 14.6., 16 at SE of Halfeti and 8 at mouth of Ibis Wadi 15.6., 1 + 4 Demirkazik 18.6. and 1+3+5 between Silifke and Anamur 19.6..

Swift *Apus apus*
Common, seen on 12 days, 100 biggest day total (10.6.), written down.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

2 at nest at gorge to E of the crossing of Ugurcuk road, separating to NE from the Euphrat riverside road leading N from Birecik 14.6., 2 Halfeti 15.6..

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

3 at Birecik S Gravel Pits 15.6., 1 at Birecik N Gravel Pits 16.6..

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

Ca. 60 at Estagfirullah colony 13.6.. 1 between Kahta and Adiyaman 17.6..

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

1-56 seen on 10 days of 14, 118 in all. Entering from NE-Turkey to S, the first Bee-eaters seen from between Tuzluca and Igdir onwards, 7 in all that day before Dogubayazit 10.6.. 3 at Muradiye nr. Van on 11.6., 25 Van-Ceylanpinar 12.6., 56 Ceylanpinar- Birecik, of which 10 nr Ovacik and ca. 40 at Estagfirullah colony on 13.6.. Birecik area 7 on 14.6. and 10 on 15.6.. Birecik – Nemrut Dagi 5 16.6., voice heard on 17.6. and 19.6., voices heard on 20.6..

Roller *Coracias garrulus*

1-17 seen on 10 days, total number 69. A pair at N of the riverside camping café at SE of Bucakseyhler, en route from Oymapinar barrage back to Manavgat 7.6., 10 single birds, one of which at nest Tuzluca-Igdir, 7 Igdir- Dogubayazit, day total 17 on 10.6., 7 Dogubayazit - Van on 11.6., 15 Van - Ceylanpinar on 12.6., 8 Ceylanpinar - Birecik 13.6.. Birecik area 10 on 14.6. and 5 on 15.6., 2 at Birecik N Gravel Pits (again) and 2 between Büyükhan and Bozova 16.6., 1 19.6. and 1 20.6..

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

1-12 seen on 8 days, 33 in all. Biggest number 12.6. 12 Birecik area, 6 of which along Arsanli road.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*

1 pair Akseki graveyard and 2 pairs Dutluca graveyard 20.6..

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

1 + voice Sivrikaya 8.6..

Syrian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*

Numerous at Birecik: 15 on 14.6., 2 15.6. and 2 16.6., 4 Akseki area 20.6..

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

1 at Cimiköy at E of Akseki 20.6..

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

6 at hills to N of Yeniakpinar, N of Birecik 15.6..

Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*

3 at hills to N of Yeniakpinar, N of Birecik 15.6..

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

2 Tuzluca – Igdir 10.6., 6 Çaldıran 11.6., 5 Ceylanpinar 13.6.. At Birecik area 3 on 14.6., 2 nr Halfeti and 20 at hills to N of Yeniakpinar 15.6.. 1 singing at Kurtulus, Göksu Delta 19.6..

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Calandrella rufescens*
12 at hills to N of Yeniakpınar, N of Birecik 15.6..

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*
Seen on 10 days of 14, from Tuzluca onwards, when 5 on 10.6., biggest count written down 30 on 13.6..

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*
3 Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., 1 singing Demirkazık 19.6. and 1 singing E of Cimiköy at E of Akseki 20.6..

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
2 Ardahan 9.6., ca 100 in all, common Ardahan – Çıldır – Aktas Gölü area on 10.6., 15 on 11.6., 3 singing Birecik area 15.6..

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris penicillata*
10 on 8.6. and 10 on 9.6. at Sivrikaya – Ovitdagi Pass area, 3 Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., 4 at Nemrut Dagı 16.6. and 6 Demirkazık 18.6..

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*
Seen on 7 of 14 days, 30 on 10.6., and daily between 12.-16.6., last ones 19.6..

Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
2 Sivrikaya 8.6., 5 Borçka and 3 elsewhere on 9.6., 2 on 10.6. and 10 Demirkazık 18.6..

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Common, seen on 13 of 14 days, the very first bird observed during the trip: voices at N of Manavgat after 4 o'clock in the morning 7.6.. Daily numbers written down 50 on 7.6. and 40 9.6.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*
2 Birecik area 14.6., 3 Nemrut Dagı, Cesme Pansion 16.6., 3 the same site + 2 Nemrut Dagı - Kahta and 2 at N of Pozantı on 17.6., 2 Göksu Delta 19.6., 6 Manavgat- Akseki and 6 Akseki area on 20.6..

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*
Common, seen on 12 days of 14. Written down: 1 nr Antalya 7.6., 20 Sivrikaya on 8.6., 40 on 9.6. and 150 on 16.6. written down.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Common, 1-20 seen on 12 days of 14, 44 in all + 12.6. Numbers not written down. The 20 on 10.6..

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
1 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun and 1 ad male at drinking site at Çaldıran 11.6..

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
A pair of *feldegg* at NE of Ardahan 9.6., 6 *feldegg* at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun and a total of 32 later during the day at Aktas Gölü and onwards on 10.6., 5 on 11.6., 32 Göksu Delta on 19.6..

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

1 Oymapinar Barrage 7.6., 3 Sivrikaya area 8.6., 5 in all, of which 1 Ovitdagi Pass, 1 Borçka, 1 Artvin on 9.6., 5 Demirkazik 18.6..

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

1 at SE of Digor (Kars- Tuzluca)10.6., 1 Ishak Pasha Palace and 1 at Çaldıran 11.6., 1 Ceylanpınar 13.6..

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

1 Sivrikaya and 1 singing at NW of Ardahan 9.6., 1 singing at E of Ardahan 10.6..

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

1 at 27 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun + 1 on 10.6..

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

45 Sivrikaya area on 8.6., 15 seen during 9.6..

White-spectacled Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

2 on 13.6., 6 14.6. and 4 on 15.6. at Bircik area, 6 Göksu Delta- Manavgat 19.6..

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

4 Sivrikaya 8.6..

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

1 ad 1 juv Sivrikaya 8.6., 1 – site not written down – 10.6..

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

8 on 8.6. and 3 on 9.6. at Sivrikaya.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

10 on 8.6. and 3 on 9.6. at Sivrikaya to Ovitdagi Pass area.



Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*, Sivrikaya
8./9.6.2013, Jani
Vastamäki

Radde's Accentor *Prunella ocularis*

1 pair + 1 singing male seen at 14.40-15.45 o'clock at S side of the main 975 at Tendürek Pass, to S of Dogubayazit, ca. 2 km from Iran border 11.6..

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

3 Sivrikaya 8.6. and 1 singing there on 9.6..

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

2 males N of Ovitdagi Pass, Sivrikaya area 8.6., 1 male 20 km N of Ardahan 9.6., 1 male Digor area 10.6., 1 pair Ishak Pasha Palace, 1 male 1 female Tendürek Pass and 1 male to S of Tendürek Pass on 11.6., 3 males 1 female Nemrut Dagı area 16.6., 2 males at the same area on 17.6., 1 male Demirkazık 18.6.. 16 in all.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

1 male 1 juv Oymapınar Barrage 7.6., 1 male 1 female Borçka and 1 male Artvin area 9.6., 1 male 1 female Halfeti 15.6.. Total number 7.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus amicornum*

6 at Sivrikaya to Ovitdagi Pass area 8.6..

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

1-6 seen on 8 days of 14, 22 in all. At Sivrikaya, and on 10.6., on 13.6., and 2-4 daily 17.-20.6..

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

2 singing Sivrikaya 9.6..

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

2 Sivrikaya 8.6., 1 9.6., 2 at E of Ardahan 10.6., 3 at Cimiköy at E of Akseki 20.6., 8 in all.

Graceful Prinia *Prinia gracilis*

1 Birecik and 1 Göktepe 14.6., 8 Birecik area 15.6., 3 Birecik N Gravel Pits 16.6., 2 Göksu Delta 19.6..

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

1 singing Aktas Gölü 10.6., 2 singing Birecik 15.6., 1 singing Cesme Pension, Nemrut Dagı 17.6., 2 singing nr Safak Pension, Çukurbag, Demirkazık 18.6..

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

1 singing nr the NW bird tower at Akgöl Gölü, Göksu Delta on 19.6..

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

3 at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6..

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

5 at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6..

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

1 singing Muradiye, nr Lake Van 11.6., 2 at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., at Birecik area 3 on 13.6., 2 on 14.6., 1 15.6., 8 16.6.. 1 at Göksu Delta 19.6..

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

2 singing at Aktas Gölü 10.6., 1 singing nr Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6..

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

1 singing at N of Tuzluca 10.6., 3 at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6. 1 singing Birecik S Gravel Pits 15.6. and 3 singing Birecik N Gravel Pits 15.6..

Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*

1 singing Oymapinar- Manavgat 7.6., 1 at Café Gülhane, Birecik 13.6., 20 Birecik area 14.6., 2 Halfelti 15.6., 1 at SE of Akseki 20.6..

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*

1 at W edge of Bentbahçesi village, Arsanlı & Göktepe road, to SE of Birecik, 14.6., a pair + nest with 3 pull aged 2-3 days nr Halfeti 15.6., 1 at Cesme Pansion, Nemrut Dagı 16.6. and 2 at downhill from Cesme Pansion, Nemrut Dagı on 17.6..

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*

A pair nr the road nr NW corner of the forest graveyard at SE of Dutluca at rd to Hüsamettinköy, Akseki area 20.6..

Mountain (Caucasian) Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus sindianus lorenzii*

1 singing and seen at 16.15- 17.03 at open rhodomeadow on a single salix sp bush at E edge of the road to N of Ovitdagı Pass, Sivrikaya area on 8.6. and 2 singing at ca. 20 km NW of Ardahan 9.6..

Eastern Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus orientalis*

1 nr breakfast café / petrol station at 7.45 between Manavgat- Akseki, (Güçlüköy mosque), and 4 at the forest graveyard at SE of Dutluca at rd to Hüsamettinköy, Akseki area 20.6..

Green Warbler *Phylloscopus nitidus*

1 shortly singing at Hotel Genesis, 1 Sivrikaya café at W side of the river and 14 on 3,6 km's by the track opposite Hotel Genesis, Sivrikaya 8.6. and 1 singing at Hotel Genesis, Sivrikaya 9.6..

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

1 singing at the track opposite Hotel Genesis, Sivrikaya 8.6., 1 singing Sivrikaya 9.6..

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

1 singing at the track opposite Hotel Genesis, Sivrikaya 8.6..

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

1 male Savsat 9.6., 2 on 10.6., 3 Ishak Pasha Palace area 11.6., 2 Demirkazık 18.6..

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

2 at Demirkazık Gorge mouth, the singing male with concolorous head, atypical, reminding *althaea*-type, 18.6..



Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* reminding *althaea*-type, Demirkazik 18.6., Jani Vastamäki

Eastern Orphean Warbler *Sylvia crassirostris*

2 at Cesme Pansion, Nemrut Dagı 16.6., 2+2 in the E side of road forest, downhill from Cesme Pansion, Nemrut Dagı 17.6., 2 nr NW corner of the forest graveyard at SE of Dutluca at rd to Hüsamettinköy, Akseki area 20.6..

Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rüppelli*

1 1st cal opposite breakfast café / petrol station at 7.45 between Manavgat- Akseki (Güçlüköy mosque), 1 ad female to SE of Akseki graveyard and 1 juv nr the forest graveyard at SE of Dutluca at rd to Hüsamettinköy, Akseki area 20.6..

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

1 female at E of Cimiköy, E of Akseki 20.6..

Menetries's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*

2 males at a wadi ca 1 km Ayran road and 1 male continuing the same road to the N side of E90 motorway, at N of Birecik on 14.6..

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

1 on 7.6., 1 Sivrikaya 8.6. and 1 Sivrikaya 9.6..

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

5 on 8.6. and 4 on 9.6. at Sivrikaya.

White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*

A pair at Cesme Pansion and a male at a drinking pond en route to the top, Nemrut Dagı 16.6., a food-carrying pair + 1 2nd cal male at Cesme Pansion, a family of a male +3 juv in the E side of road forest, downhill from Cesme Pansion and a pair warning en route to the top Nemrut Dagı 17.6., 8 incl. at Sobek a food-carrying pair, Demirkazik 18.6..



White-throated Robin
Irania gutturalis, Nemrut
Dagi 16.6.2013, Jani
Vastamäki

Rufous-tailed Bush Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes syriaca*

At Birecik area common: 30 on 14.6. and 12 on 15.6. there. 1 Suruç- Bozova 16.6. and 3 Göksu Delta 19.6..

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

10 Sivrikaya area 8.6. most *ochruros* -type , in all 7 seen on 9.6., of which 1 ad male *semirufus* at Çam Pass. 1 on 10.6., 10 on 11.6., and 1 on 12.6.. 7, incl. 2 families at Demirkazik area on 18.6..

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

2 Sivrikaya 9.6., a pair of *samamisicus* at nestbox at Akseki graveyard 20.6..

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

1 Sivrikaya 8.6., 2 males at 29 km E of Ardahan, at W of Eskibeyrehatun 10.6., 1 Ishak Pasha Palace and 2 males at Çaldiran drinking site on 11.6.. No Stonechat identified.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

1-20 seen on 10 days of 14, 84 in all. Common in Sivrikaya and NE- Turkey, 1 seen on 15.6. and 5 on 16.6. at Birecik area. 5, also Nemrut Dagi on 17.6. and 8 at Demirkazik area on 18.6..

Finsch's Wheatear *Oenanthe finschii*

1 male at Ishak Pasha Palace and 1 at Tendürek Pass 11.6., a pair at Bozova old rd, between Hilvan and Ovacik 13.6., 1 male Arsanli road, SE of Birecik 14.6., 6 incl 2 juv Halfeti area 15.6., 7 on 16.6. and 10 on 17.6. at Nemrut Dagi, 3 Demirkazik 18.6. and 1 male Cimiköy, Akseki area on 20.6..



Black-eared Wheatear
Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca female,
Cimiköy 20.6.2013, Jani
Vastamäki

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica melanoleuca*

1 pair of *melanoleuca* nr Halfeti 15.6., 1 ad female 16.6. and 1 pair + 1 male + 2 females 17.6. at Nemrut Dagı and 1 male 1 female at Cimiköy, Akseki area on 20.6..

Kurdish Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrma*

8 incl. 2 pairs and 2 juv on 16.6. and 7 incl a new pair +1 juv + 1 juv + 1juv on 17.6. at Nemrut Dagı.



Kurdish Wheatear
Oenanthe xanthopyrma
male, Nemrut Dagı
16./17.6.2013, Jani
Vastamäki

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

1 female + 1 at E of Çildir, 1 breeding pair feeding at SE of Digor and 7 in all by roadsides from there to Tuzluca / Iğdir area on 10.6., 1 Ishak Pasha Palace and 1 Çaldıran on 11.6. and 1 at Demirkazık on 18.6..

Iraq Babbler *Turdoides altirostris*

A family of 5 on 13.6. and 5+5 on 16.6. at Birecik N Gravel Pits.



Iraq Babbler *Turdoides altirostris*, Birecik

16.6.2013, Jani Vastamäki

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biarmicus*

Voice heard at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6., 40 at Göksu Delta on 19.6..

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

2 + voices heard at Oymapinar Barrage on 7.6., 3 downhill from Cesme Pansion, Nemrut Dagı 17.6. and 15 Akseki area on 20.6..

Sombre Tit *Parus lugubris*

6 Birecik 14.6. and 6 Akseki area 20.6..

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

1 on 7.6.. 15 Sivrikaya on 8.6.. 5 on 9.6.. 1 singing Pozantı- Camardı road, S of Demirkazık 17.6.. 12 Akseki area on 20.6..

Great Tit *Parus major*

Observed on 7 of 14 days, 10 on 7.6., 5 Sivrikaya 8.6.. At Birecik area 2 on 14.6. and 5 on 15.6.. 1 on 17.6., 2 Demirkazık 18.6., observed 20.6..

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Observed on 4 days of 14, 10 in all: 2 on 7.6., 3 Sivrikaya 8.6.. Voice heard Birecik 14.6., 4 Akseki area 20.6..

Krüper's Nuthatch *Sitta krueperi*

1 seen in flight at Oymapinar Barrage and 2 by the roadside at SW of Oymapinar Village on 7.6.. Voice heard by roadside at Demirkazık road 5 mins NE from Pozantı 18.6., a pair at the forest graveyard at SE of Dutluca at rd to Hüsamettinköy, Akseki area 20.6..

Rock Nuthatch *Sitta neumayer*

5 Oymapinar Barrage 7.6., 7 Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., 1 nr Halfeti 15.6., 3 Nemrut Dagı 17.6., 12 Demirkazık 18.6., 5 Akseki area 20.6..

Eastern Rock Nuthatch *Sitta tephronota*

8 Halfeti area 15.6., 1 Cesme Pansion, Nemrut Dagı 17.6..

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

1 at Tuzluca, singing, 10.6., 2 singing nr Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., 1 singing at Safak Pension, Çukurbag, Demirkazık 18.6..

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A pair at W of Savsat 9.6., 1 male 2 females at Demirkazık area 18.6., 1 male at SE of Akseki town 20.6..

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

1 female on wire by a track leading SE of Akseki graveyard on 20.6..

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

2 nr Köprübaşı, between Tuzluca and Iğdir 10.6., 1 seen on 11.6., 1 nr Ovacık, SW of Bozova 13.6., 3 between Camardı and Pozantı 18.6..

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*

7 Akseki area 20.6..

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

2-9 seen on 7 days, 35 in all, starting from Mazıdagı, at SW of Diyarbakır - where 1+1 on 12.6. - westwards. At Birecik area 5 on 14.6. and 7 incl. a family of 1 ad 4 juv nr Halfeti on 15.6.. Of 9 on 16.6. 5 seen at Nemrut Dagı, and 4 there on 17.6.. 3 Göksu Delta 19.6., 5 incl. a family of ad male + 3 juv at Akseki area 20.6..

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

3 Oymapinar area 7.6., 10 Sivrikaya 8.6., 5 seen on 9.6., 2 between Tarsus and Pozantı 17.6., 3 Akseki area 20.6..

Magpie *Pica pica*

Because of lack of reported numbers, some notes written down on 7 of the 10 days the species was seen: 2 Ankara airport 7.6., Sivrikaya not observed 8.-9.6., 1+2 Yavuzköy, E of Savsat and 1 at 3 km NW of Ardahan 9.6., 1 Hanak crossing E of Ardahan, 1 at 35 km E of Ardahan, 1 Çıldır, the writing down given up then – 27 more seen during the 10.6.. 8 on 11.6., Observed also on 12. and 13.6.. Not seen on 14. and 15.6., Birecik area. 1 seen on 16.6. and 1 on 17.6., 10 Demirkazık area and southwards on 18.6.. Observed on 20.6..

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

8 on 8.6. and 6 on 9.6. at Sivrikaya area, 2 Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., ca. 25 at W of Gevas, Lake Van S shore 12.6. and 80 Demirkazık, where also a flock of 130 Chough/Alpine Chough, on 18.6..

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

3 at top of Nemrut Dagı 16.6., 20 Demirkazık 18.6. and 2 at Cimiköy, SE of Akseki 20.6..

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

50 on 7.6., 150 seen during 9.6., 20 of which at Ardahan. Seen daily 10.-12.6. After that just 1, on 18.6.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

70 at NW of Ardahan 9.6. and seen daily 10.-12.6., but not after that.

Raven *Corvus corax*

1-8 seen on 8 days of 14, 25 in all, on 7.-12.6. and 19.-20.6.

Hooded Crow *Corvus c. corone*

Common, seen on 14 days of 14, max daily count 30 on 11.6. Dogubayazit – Van.

Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus*

Fairly numerous in East and nr. Estagfirullah Bee-eater colony: 50 flying SE at 6.52 at E edge of Çıldır, then nr. Armenian border 32 S at 15.42 +9 S + 7 S at NE of Halikislak, to S of Halikislak smaller and bigger flocks flying: 6, 5, 2, 10, 15, 20, 100, 50 etc. as a constant flow, ca. 300 in all to Tuzluca and a flock of 300 feeding at Tuzluca, but none from there to Iğdir and Dogubayazit, on 10.6.. 20 E + 3 at Erçek Gölü (Van) 12.6.. Ca 300 taking food and flying back and forth to NE – a colony? – at Ovacık at SE of Hilvan, and ca. 300 at Estagfirullah on 13.6.. 25 flying N at Safak Pension, Çukurbag, Demirkazık 18.6..

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Seen daily from 9.6.- 11 at Ardahan - onwards, biggest number 100 Dogubayazit – Van on 11.6..

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

1 male with food in beak at E of Savsat 9.6., 1 male+1 Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6., 3 Demirkazık 18.6.

Grey-necked Bunting *Emberiza buchanani cerruti*

3 singing males, also seen, at Ishak Pasha Palace on 11.6..

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea semenowi*

11 uphill from Cesme Pension at Nemrut Dagi on 16.6. and 28 at the same area + 1,5 km the Arsemia / Kayadibi track on 17.6..

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

3 at NW of Ardahan 9.6., 1 Çıldır- Aktas Gölü and 2 singing males + 1 Çıldır Gölü NE shore on 10.6., 1 singing male Ishak Pasha Palace 11.6. and 1 singing male + 2 Demirkazık 18.6..

Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*

2 singing males at E of Cimiköy, SE of Akseki 20.6..

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*

Common from SE of Digor onwards, when a pair at a wadi leading to Dolaylı, 2 males to Tuzluca and a male to Iğdir on 10.6.. Seen then all days, except on 19.6. (Göksu Delta), 1-12 per day. Total number 62.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Fairly common. 1-25 seen on 10 of 14 days, 76 in all. Biggest daily counts 25 on 10.6. and 20 13.6. (Ceylanpınar- Birecik).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Seen on 7 of 14 days, 5 on 7.6., 20 Sivrikaya 8.6., observed on 9.6., 1 on 10.6. Then 2 Pozantı-Camardi on 17.6., 1 singing 18.6., 5 Akseki area 20.6..

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

40 Sivrikaya 8.6., 15 on 9.6., 5 on 10.6. and 5 on 11.6..

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

3 at E of Ardahan 10.6., voice twice at Birecik N Gravel Pits on 14.6., 1 at downhill from Cesme Pansion at Nemrut Dagi on 17.6. and 3 Akseki area on 20.6..

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Fairly common, 2-10 seen on 9 days of 14, 41 in all. Not seen at Sivrikaya, not 13.6., not Akseki.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris brevirostris*

9 on 8.6. and 4 on 9.6. at Sivrikaya (Ovitdagi Pass) area and 2 Ishak Pasha Palace, 4 Tendürek Pass and 2 at Çaldıran drinking site on 11.6..

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Seen on 7 days of 14, 36 in all. Not Sivrikaya and Birecik areas or Göksu Delta.

Red-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus*

1 male 2 females by roadside beneath Ishak Pasha Palace at 5.45- 6.25 o'clock and 1 male feeding 2 flying juveniles at the café nr the Palace at 7.40 on 11.6.. A pair + 3 nr Sobek camp, Demirkazık on 18.6..

Serin *Serinus serinus*

1+1+1 by the track at E of Cimiköy, SE of Akseki 20.6..

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

1 at E of Ardahan 10.6..

Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus*

2 by roadside at S of Sivrikaya en route to Ovitdagi Pass on 8.6., 2 landed on the cultivated fields at the edge of lava field at Çaldıran on 11.6. and 1 Demirkazık on 18.6..

Mongolian Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

1 female seen + voices heard opposite Ishak Pasha Palace "Rock Formation" and 3 at the edge of lava field + 4 likely to have been this species at the drinking site at Çaldıran on 11.6..

Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

9 at S edge of Birecik N Gravel Pits and 1+3+3+2 at Göktepe at the end of Arsanlı road, SE of Birecik 14.6. and 2 at a drinking pool nr Ahmet Demir's house, at Yenikapınar 15.6..

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common, seen on 13 of 14 days, not seen on 8.6. Sivrikaya.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

1 male nr Oymapınar on 7.6., 5 Viranşehir- Ceylanpınar 13.6., 2 Birecik area 14.6., 2 males nr Ahmet Demir's house, at Yenikapınar and 3 elsewhere at Birecik area on 15.6..

Dead Sea Sparrow *Passer moabiticus*

At Birecik, most at N Gravel Pits, maximum daily number 120 on 13.-16.6..

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

1 at Café Gülhane, Birecik 14.6. and 1 Pozantı- Camardi road 17.6..

Yellow-throated Sparrow *Gymnoris xanthocollis*

2 at orchards around a wadi ca 1 km Ayran road and 1 continuing the same road to the N side of E90 motorway, at N of Birecik on 14.6. and 1 by the road leading to Ahmet Demir's house, at Yeniakpinar on 15.6..

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

1-19 seen on 7 days of 14, 40 in all. 1 at a wadi leading to Dolayli, at SE of Digor on 10.6., 5 Ishak Pasha Palace area 11.6., 2 Erçek Gölü – Van 12.6., 2 Birecik area 14.6.. 7 on 16.6. and 4 on 17.6. at Nemrut Dagı. 19 Demirkazık, also nest with young, on 18.6..

Pale Rock Sparrow *Carospiza brachydactyla*

3 nr Ahmet Demir's house and 1 at hills to N of Yeniakpinar on 15.6.. 1 on 16.6. and 2 on 17.6. at Nemrut Dagı.

Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis*

6 on 8.6. and 7 on 9.6. at Ovitdagı Pass, to S of Sivrikaya, 1 at ca. 20 km NW of Ardahan 9.6., 1 Çıldır Gölü N shore area on 10.6., 3 nr Ishak Pasha Palace and 2 at Çaldıran 11.6.. 2 on 16.6. and 1 on 17.6. Nemrut Dagı. 25, including a flock of 16 at Demirkazık on 18.6..

Epilogue:

Species awaited, but not seen were not many. There were surprisingly few raptors at most areas. Best area for them was at NW and E of Ardahan in NE Turkey, also Dogubayazit area. We did not see a single Griffon or Black Kite, not to talk about rarer raptors – perhaps we did not watch the skies tough enough. It would also have been nice to see e.g. Black Stork in NE Turkey, Cream-coloured Courser during the tractor trip at hills to N of Yeniakpinar 15.6. or White-throated Kingfisher at Göksu Delta.

Seppo Järvinen and Ilkka Sahi saw 135 species in course of their trip 7.-13.6.2013, including Ilkka's target birds Mongolian Finch and Grey-necked Bunting, added with Seppo's Caucasian Grouse, Green Warbler, Caucasian Chiffchaff and Paddyfield Warbler. Of the birds on their list we didn't see Black Stork, Black Kite, Shelduck and Slender-billed Gull.

Heikki Karhu kept the log during the trip and wrote this report, Jari Pitkäkoski was the main driver and also did the longest stretches, Jouni Riihimäki kept up tough and active observing and Jani Vastamäki responded of most of the planning, organising, orientating and trickiest bird identification. All have done birding trips before, Jani also ringing-, to Middle East and elsewhere to southern latitudes. Fine team spirit made the trip very enjoyable. Thank You!

Big thanks also to Jani Vastamäki and Olli Karhu for editing the photos, and to Olli also reducing the size of this document from the gigantic 165 MB, when left from Heikki's hands, to 5MB.

1.5.2014, Heikki Karhu, Lahti, Finland, email heikki(at)karhut.org