ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

# Oman & UAE

## Arabian Birding Adventure

***1st October to 14th October 2023 (14 days)***



**Grey Hypocolius by Adam Riley**

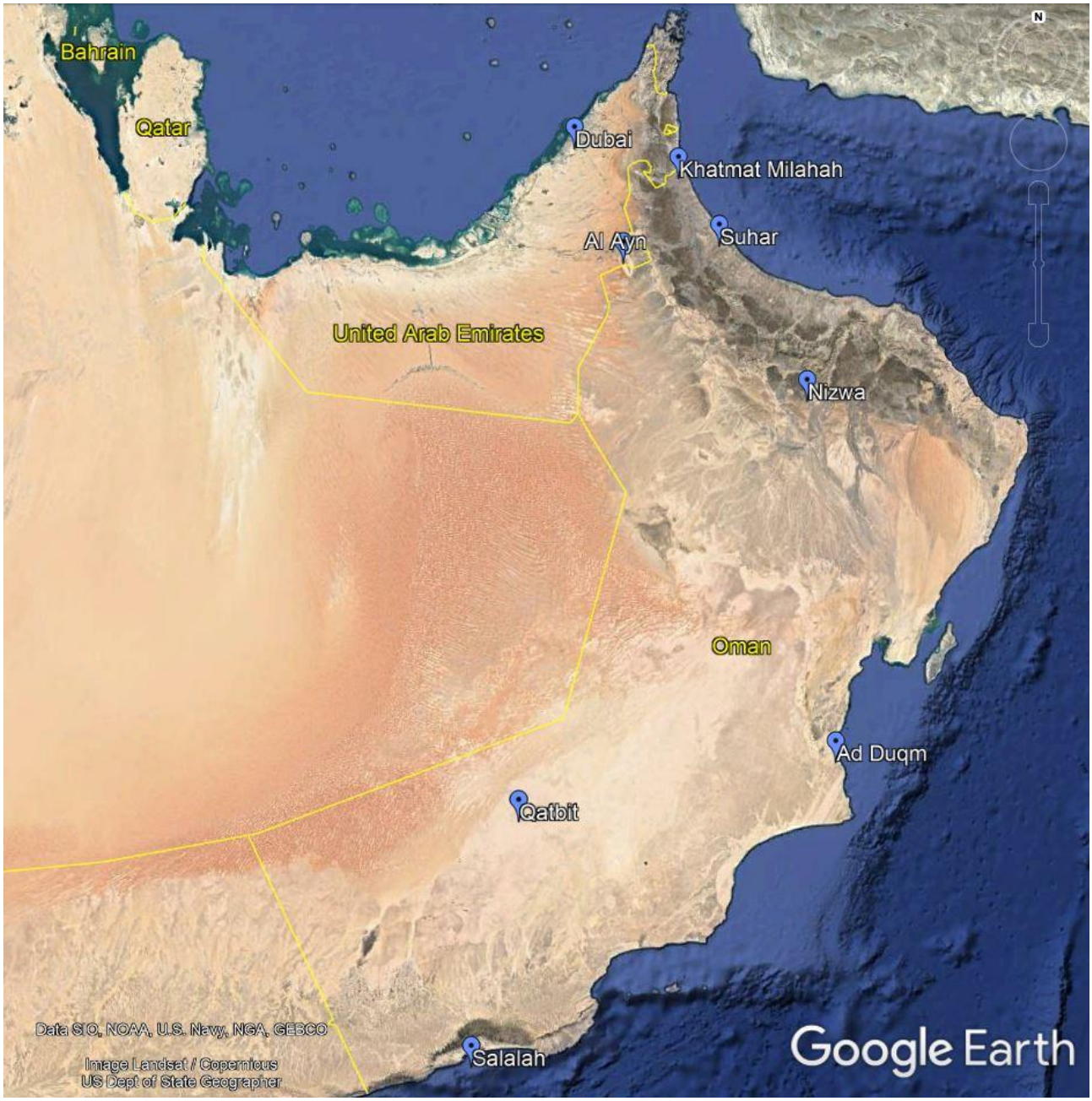
*There is little that can compare to the industry and mystery of forward-thinking Arab nations such as the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman. They exemplify and tout man's ability to master the harshest of terrain; while maintaining an utterly unique culture and proud history in the process. In the case of these countries, this is accomplished with an ease and grace that has gained the attention and marvel of the entire world. It will be our privilege to enjoy all this as the stage or backdrop for a relaxed, yet nonetheless exciting, birding adventure. While enjoying average daily temperatures of 25-32 Celsius and low humidity, migrant species from throughout the Western Palearctic and Central Asia take advantage of easy foraging and prolific groundwater at farms and oases. Eagles flock to local carcas dumps and waterfowl languish in the khawrs near the ocean and at freshwater pools in wadis. From the possibility of Grey Hypocolius to the wonders of sandgrouse flocking to drink at a remote oasis, fascinating birding experiences abound on this very relaxed and highly recommended tour!*

## THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

**THE ITINERARY**

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| **Day 1** | **Arrival in Dubai** |
| **Day 2** | **Dubai area - Wamm Farms, Mushrif NP & Qarn Nazwa** |
| **Day 3** | **Dubai to Al Ain, via Ra's al Khor, Qudra Lake and Zakher Pools** |
| **Day 4** | **Al Ain area, including Mubazzarah, Jabal Hafeet and Zakher Pools** |
| **Day 5** | **Al Ain to Sohar and Khatmat Milahah (Oman)** |
| **Day 6** | **Sohar and surrounds to Nizwa, Owling at Wadi Muaydhin** |
| **Day 7** | **Hajar Mtns and Wadi Tanuf** |
| **Day 8** | **Barr Al Hikkman area to Ad Duqm** |
| **Day 9** | **Ad Duqm to Qatbit via Oryx Reserve, Ja'aluni** |
| **Day 10** | **Muntasar and Qatbit Oases** |
| **Day 11** | **Qatbit to Salalah, via Central Desert farms & Mudday** |
| **Days 12 & 13** | **Salalah and the Dhofar Mountains** |
| **Day 14** | **Salalah and departure** |

## TOUR MAP


Bahrain
Qatar
Dubai
Khatmat Milahah
Suhar
Al Ayn
United Arab Emirates
Nizwa
Oman
Ad Duqm
Qatbit
Salalah
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus
US Dept of State Geographer
Google Earth

## THE TOUR IN DETAIL…



**Pharaoh Eagle-Owl by Ignacio Yufera**

**Day 1: Arrival in Dubai.** After arriving in Dubai, you will be escorted to our fine accommodations, overlooking one of the main plazas of this bustling metropolis. Here you will be met by your Rockjumper Tour Leaders and the tour will start officially with dinner tonight.

**Day 2: Dubai area - Wamm Farms, Mushrif NP & Qarn Nazwa.** Our adventure begins with a full day's birding, visiting the very best of the various birding sites around Dubai. As one may imagine, many birders have moved in and out of this burgeoning region over the years, discovering a myriad of wonderful birding opportunities, easily accessible from the city. These sites encompass a staggering variety of habitats and allow access to the region's most precious commodity: water. We will most likely start by spending time at Mushrif National Park as an introduction to many common birds of the region, such as White-eared and Red-vented Bulbuls, Southern Grey Shrike and the stunning Green Bee-eater. Mushrif is also one of our best opportunities to see three very special birds of the region. The noisy and gregarious Arabian Babbler is a year-round resident in the scrubby areas of the park, while both Plain Leaf and Eastern Orphean Warblers call this home during the short winter months.

Our next birding site is relatively new to the scene, though it has quickly become regarded as one of the best sites to bird on the whole Peninsula, during winter months and migration. Wamm Farms started up some 6 years ago and has been growing ever since. Their operations include vegetables and fodder grasses, and hay for livestock. This huge operation, easily seen from high altitude satellite imagery, shines out as a green beacon to passing migrants, and holds plenty of forage for over-wintering shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, sandgrouse, wheatears, wagtails, pipits, and more. Birds flock here by the hundreds (if not thousands) in migration, and many spend the Wintering months in the fine climate. Thereafter we will head to Qarn Nazwa at dusk for nocturnal birds, with Pharoah Eagle-Owl being the highlight seen here in the past few years. This is one of the few reliable sites for this beauty!



**Isabelline Wheatear by Forrest Rowland**

**Day 3: Dubai to Al Ain, via Ra's al Khor, Qudra Lake and Zakher Pools.** This morning we will make a final visit to the remaining city sites in Dubai. Ra's al Khor is best for viewing when the tide is in, and the light is at our backs. A stunning variety of shorebirds and waterfowl forage the banks and rivulets around the mangroves; while Black Kite, Greater Spotted Eagle and waders of a huge variety roost in the trees themselves. While this might be our first stop, we may opt for an early morning in Safa Park. Being a public



**Cream-colored Courser by Clayton Burne**

park, Safa fills up later in the day with families and visitors, but the vast lawns, tree plantings, gardens and water features are attractive to a great many migrant passerines. Common Whitethroat, Barred and Willow Warblers and Red-breasted Flycatcher are a few of the oddities we've noted there in past years, while Black Redstart, Alexandrine Parakeet, Eastern Orphean Warbler and Western Barn Owl are regular.

Leaving Dubai, we head south towards Abu Dhabi and then east towards Al Ain. Nearing the junction of the two main highways in the UAE, known as Saih al Salam, or Qudra, new collecting pools and fodder fields for racing camels are a great habitat for shorebirds - with Common and Spotted Redshanks, Common Greenshank, Marsh, Green and Wood Sandpipers, Little and Temminck's Stints, and several species of plover having been found here. However, the main attraction on our approach to Al Ain is the Zakher Lake. Zakher Pools, as they were formerly known, have been opened to the public. The wellsprings and flats that form its centre offer some great birding. Pin-tailed Snipe is not uncommon, while Common Snipe are abundant. Beautiful Desert and regal Isabelline Wheatears are numerous and Clamorous and Great Reed Warblers inhabit the reeds. A march through the scrub has, on several occasions in the past, even flushed the odd nightjar! We end the day driving amongst the red sand dunes and gardens to beautiful Al Ain. If the group is feeling more adventurous, this area is one of the herpetological highlights of the World. The red, Aeolic dunes are home to some incredible geckos and lizards, with the odd chance for the enigmatic Sand Boa!

**Day 4: Al Ain area, including Mubazzarah, Jabal Hafeet and Zakher Pools.** Al Ain is considered by most nationals to be the most luxuriant and beautiful city in all the Emirates. The numerous museums and archaeological sites are immaculately preserved and the summit of Jabal Hafeet provides a view over all of the city's streets and gardens. Today we will focus on the green Mubazzarah recreational site at the foot of the Jabal. Arabian and Chukar Partridges co-mingle on the park lawns, while Sand Partridges putter along the rock walls. Two of our main target birds, Hume's and Red-tailed Wheatears, prefer the edge of the greens at the base of the towering cliffs. African Sacred Ibis have taken up residence along the watercourses and streams, which are also frequented by Grey Wagtail and Red-tailed Shrike. Long-billed Pipit and Blue Rock Thrushes turn up, as do Siberian Stonechat, Whinchat and a number of other occasional and rare visitors to this lush park. We will also take the time to sift through many of the commoner birds here, as we are likely to encounter Eurasian Crag Martin, Eurasian Hoopoe, Purple Sunbird, Southern Grey Shrike, Crested Lark, Common Chiffchaff and Grey Francolin.



**Trumpeter Finch by Markus Lilje**



**Pallid Scops Owl by Adam Riley**

After thoroughly birding all the nooks and crannies of the Mubazzarah, we will take the scenic drive up to the summit of Jabal Hafeet. Stops along the way often allow great looks at Egyptian Vulture, Sand Partridge, Desert Lark and both Hume's and Hooded Wheatears.

The hotel greens near the top are always worth a check as the rare Eversmann's (Rufous-backed) Redstart has been seen here on several occasions, but is not to be expected. We will make brief stops at two migrant traps before returning to the productive Zakher Pools in the afternoon. These remote oasis pools attract a great number of birds and, with luck, we may see flocks of Trumpeter Finch gathering for a drink before dusk falls and we bid farewell to the birds of the UAE.

**Day 5: Al Ain to Sohar and Khatmat Milahah (Oman).** We will be among the first to cross the border today, as we make our way to Sohar on the shores of the Gulf of Oman. Otherwise known as the Batinah Coast, the flat plains that run from the base of Hajar Mountains to the Gulf are rich for farming and have a few remnant expanses of open forest. Before we cross the UAE/Oman border, into the Batinah, we might make a quick stop at the broad wadi at the base of Jabal Hafeet. Short-toed Snake-Eagle frequents the skies, Desert Whitethroat, Plain Leaf Warbler, Eastern Orphean Warbler, and Wheatears of various makes frequent the wash of this beautiful, rocky, wadi. With huge luck, we might come across our first Menetrie's Warbler of the tour!

After getting settled into our Hotel in Sohar, and taking a moment to cool off in the pool during the heat of the day, we will head north to Shinas and Khatmat Milahah. The mangroves at Shinas offer a great opportunity for the very localised Sykes's Warbler. This is also one of the few sites for the local *khalba* race of Collared Kingfisher, which is critically endangered in the region, with perhaps as few as one pair left in all of Oman. The beachfront here can be great for gulls and terns, often congregating by the thousands for extraordinary comparative views. Our next stop, Khatmat Milahah, is a wondrous maze of small tracks and trails through vast, open woodland on a stony plain. It is the most reliable wintering ground for one of the most range-restricted species we'll encounter on the tour – Eastern Variable Wheatear. We have been successful in finding both this species and Plain Leaf Warbler on all previous visits. Little Owl and Pallid Scops Owl also occur here, so we may linger after dusk in an attempt to locate these fine species. Again, we find ourselves in an extraordinary spot for herps. For those



**Sand Partridge by Forrest Rowland**

so inclined, Southern Tuberculated Gecko is common here!



**Greater Hoopoe-Lark by Clayton Burne**

**Day 6: Sohar and surrounds to Nizwa, Owling at Wadi Muaydhin.** The premier birding site in all of the Batinah used to be the OAR Farms, previously known as Sun Farms Sohar. As a large series of pinwheel-irrigated fodder fields, complete with cattle pens, water impoundments, windbreaks and offal pits, the farms offered a veritable buffet-style situation for a huge variety of wintering and migrant birds! However, in recent years, the funding for such farms has been moved to sites in the most arid region of the country – the Central Desert.

Though counterintuitive, groundwater there is less saline and easier to pump to the surface. Nevertheless, a quick stop at this famous site might turn up Pallid or Montagu's Harrier, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Bimaculated, Greater Short-toed or Lesser Short-toed Larks, Whinchat, Siberian Stonechat, Indian Roller, Steppe Grey Shrike, or the sought-after Menetries's Warbler, which frequents the scrubby pasture blocks. Such habitat will always provide a magnet for vagrant and accidental species and among the birds seen on past visits, Red Turtle Dove, Sociable Lapwing and Black-eared and Finsch's Wheatears have been the most exciting. Of course, most of these species appeared back when the farms were being constantly irrigated. On recent tours, Wamm Farms, in the UAE (which is only about 80 miles to the north - as the Brown-necked Raven flies), has provided a lovely substitute for this once iconic site, and most of the farm-dwelling species will already be logged on our trip list from our visit to that site on our first day of the tour.

Depending on conditions at Sun Farms, and our success at Khatmat Milahah the previous evening, a return visit to that site might be in order. We may opt, rather, to search for Pallas's Gull and Syke's Warbler around the fishing settlement of Liwa before making our way to the foothills of the spectacularly scenic North Hajar Mountains – the discovery area of the recently-described Omani Owl. The rocky plains at the base of the unimaginably steep mountains before us are home to Long-billed Pipit, the monotypic Streaked Scrub Warbler, and it will provide our best opportunity to luck into the gorgeous Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse. We will enjoy a relaxed picnic dinner tonight, as we wait for nightfall and our first encounter with the elusive Omani Owl and Pallid Scops Owl!



**Tristram's Starlings by Forrest Rowland**

**Day 7: Hajar Mtns and Wadi Tanuf.** This morning, we will drive directly to Birkat al Mawz on one of the most spectacular drives in the Middle East, up into the high Hajars,



**Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse by Markus Lilje**

reaching 10,000ft! We will spend the day amidst the most spectacular of vistas, as we search for Lappet-faced and Egyptian Vultures, Wood Pigeon (a scarce local race that has the potential for future species status), Streaked Scrub Warbler, Hume's and Red-tailed Wheatears, and any one of a number of over-wintering migrants possible. In years past, these have included Black-throated and Mistle Thrush, Ring Ouzel, Eurasian Siskin, Pied Wheatear, and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. Striolated Bunting, Long-billed and Tawny Pipits, and the mountain form of Desert Lark are all regular here at high elevations, and Sand Partridge is often encountered lower down.

Back at the base of the southern Hajars, we may decide to visit the well-wooded and very birdy Wadi Tanuf in search of more views of Plain Leaf Warbler, Striolated Bunting, or the other odd migrant. Interesting ruins are situated at the mouth of the canyon, and a permanent spring-fed reservoir is a huge attraction for many species, including Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse and South Arabian Toad. Depending on our successes with Pallid Scops Owl and Omani Owl the previous evening, we may wish to linger here after dark, as both of these species were found here on a recent visit in January 2016. This area, known as Jabal Akhdar, is also home to the endemic Akhdar Heart-toed Gecko; a gorgeous specimen only known from two wadis on Earth! Or, rather, we may wish simply to enjoy an evening's rest at our opulent accommodations, as the group sees fit.

**Day 8: Barr Al Hikkman area to Ad Duqm**. One of the most recent marvels of civil engineering in the Sultanate is the completion of the Coastal Highway spanning from Muscat to Ad Duqm, the new major port under construction. This will be our route South from the famed Barr al Hikkman, a staging area for tens of millions of shorebirds, including Great Knot, Crab-Plover, Terek Sandpiper and the occasional Caspian Plover (rare). Single-site count totals (estimating from one scope site) conducted in the mid-1990's exceeded 850,000 individual shorebirds!!! The shallows near Shanna and Filim will provide us with plenty of midday and afternoon diversion, before continuing south to Ad Duqm, and the edge of the Rub al Khali, also known as The Empty Quarter.

**Day 9: Ad Duqm to Qatbit via Oryx Reserve, Ja'aluni**. This morning will mostly be devoted to travel. There are a few choice wadis and plains to explore as we travel from the coast inland, where we will be sure to check for Bar-tailed and Dunn's Larks, as well as for the endangered Arabian Oryx, for which the massive Ja'aluni Game Preserve was established. Inside the Oryx Preserve, water features in the breeding pens of Sand Gazelle and Arabian Oryx attract an incredible show of Sandgrouse. A typical morning, depending on recent precipitation (less is better) might see upwards of 800 Sandgrouse of 3 species



**Sociable Lapwing by Rich Lindie**



**Arabian Gazelle by Forrest Rowland**

coming to drink. In the driest, hottest, times of the year, the Sandgrouse are utterly fearless and may number in thousands! By aiming to be at the watering holes at peak viewing time, we can expect fine views of Chestnut-bellied, Spotted, and Crowned Sandgrouse.

Otherwise dubbed "The Empty Quarter", the wide, eastern portion of the Rub al Khali occupies more than 40% of Oman's land mass. We enter it from the East, before veering south, farther into the sands. It is truly impressive to travel across, replete with travelling Bedouin clans and Camel Trains 1000's of camels deep. An amazing sight indeed!

Qatbit is a must-stop for any birder, as no better migrant trap exists on the tour. The lush green of the groves near the Hotel and the small oasis to the rear of the property, attract a staggering variety of birds! Though the likes of Hume's Leaf Warbler, Asian Koel, Masked Shrike, Eurasian Scops Owl and Menetries's Warbler would be enough to warrant a lengthy visit, Qatbit has become the most reliable place in the Middle East to see the enigmatic, beautiful Grey Hypocolius. We have yet to miss this wonderful species here! En route to Qatbit, we will also stop at Ghaftayn, which has produced some surprising species for the area, from Woodchat Shrike to Eurasian Wryneck.

**Day 10: Muntasar and Qatbit Oases.** The nearby oasis of Muntasar first gained the attention of birders as a wintering site for Grey Hypocolius and watering hole for hundreds of sandgrouse. Early in the morning, Crowned Sandgrouse takes the stage and, by mid-morning, Spotted Sandgrouse has begun to filter in from the surrounding desert. The flat, featureless, pale vista from which this spot of green arises makes the whole scenario quite surreal. A morning at Muntasar is quite an experience, for sandgrouse aren't the only visitors for a drink. Bluethroat, Red-breasted Flycatcher and the sought-after Asian Desert Warbler are frequent visitors to the oasis, along with wagtails, pipits, redstarts and warblers. Little Bunting and Whinchat are among the vagrants we have found here. There will be no shortage of camels, either, as many Bedouin lead their purveyors to water here and Cream-colored Coursers often follow the camels, foraging. The afternoon will be spent birding the Qatbit Guesthouse grounds and the small oasis a few kilometres behind it. Evening visits to Muntasar can be great for mammal watching, and almost guarantee a Scops Owl! Past visits have yielded up great views of Ruppell's Sand Fox, Arabian Golden Jackal, and, on one occasion, Small-spotted Genet.



**Nile Valley Sunbird by Markus Lilje**

**Day 11: Qatbit to Salalah, via Central Desert farms.** Our next destination, Salalah, requires a 3-hour journey across seemingly endless sands. However, many productive stops along the way will provide welcome breaks in the drive. The Shisr and Al Baleed Farms are relatively new additions and new, extensive farms are cropping up annually. These large, irrigated fields are wonderful for birding, given the distance



**(Percival's) Black-crowned Tchagra by Bernard Master**

between water sources. Long-legged Buzzard, Barbary Falcon and other prize raptors are regularly seen over the fields, as well as one of the most prized birds in the desert – the enigmatic and rare Dunn's Lark. A stop at Mudday, as we near the Dhofar Mountains, is always fascinating. With a mix of Dhofari species, and deep desert species, it's a bizarre meeting place of two distinct avifauna. Aside from the fact that Nile Valley Sunbird is one of the most numerous species at the Mudday Oasis, Grey Hypocolius are generally in good number, African Collared Dove have set up an odd colony here, and we will see our first Blackstarts of the tour as well. With any luck, we may spot the head of a basking *Uromastyx* atop a rock! Confined to Arabia and the African Far North, Oman is one of the best countries to look for these Spike-tailed Lizards, some species of which grow up to 4ft in length!

Before we descend the steep face of the Dhofars into Salalah, we may stop at the Frankincense Museum, where visitors are given both historical and natural information about this iconic tree. On our last visit, the friendly attendant allowed us to smell the sap and walk through some of the oldest groves of Frankincense Trees on Earth.

**Days 12 & 13: Salalah and the Dhofar Mountains**. Two-and-a-half days is just enough to do this fascinating region justice. Being affected by warm trade winds and the tropical influence of the Indian Ocean, the Dhofar is much more akin to Africa in both climate and vegetation. Many African species occur here and this is by far the most diverse stop on our tour, both in terms of culture and habitat. According to both Islamic and Christian historical texts, Salalah is a site of major significance. Archaeological sites and museums are numerous, though outnumbered by the many wooded canyons, lush springs and coastal Khawrs on which we will focus our efforts and attention.

Some of the more widespread species we will search for at the various birding locales here include Jouanin's Petrel, Eastern Imperial, Verreaux's and Bonelli's Eagles, colourful Bruce's Green Pigeon, Singing Bush Lark, Blackstart, South Arabian Wheatear, Shining and Palestine Sunbirds, Tristram's Starling and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. Range-restricted and near-endemic species we can expect include the *percivali* subspecies of Black-crowned Tchagra (probable future split), Arabian Wheatear, Arabian Warbler, Abyssinian White-eye, the extremely localised Yemen Serin and the handsome Arabian Golden-winged Grosbeak. Sporadic and more difficult species we might hope to encounter include Abdim's Stork,



**Desert Lark by Clayton Burne**

Intermediate Egret, the showy Pheasant-tailed Jacana and the goggle-eyed Spotted Thick-Knee. We will make at least two nocturnal outings in search of the recent split of Arabian Scops Owl, Arabian Spotted Eagle-Owl, Hume's Owl and Spotted Thick-knee, as well as mammals which have included the likes of Small-spotted Genet, Arabian Golden Jackal and Striped Hyena! All of these great species can be enjoyed at a relaxed pace, allowing us time to also enjoy the white sand beaches and warm Indian Ocean waters from our beachfront accommodations.

**Day 14: Salalah and departure.** The tour will then conclude after breakfast this morning with a transfer to Salalah International Airport. For those continuing on our Petra extension, we will fly to Amman for the night.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

**Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.**

This includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 14;
- Bottled drinking water at meals and 2 litres of drinking water every day;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights;
- All beverages, except that mentioned above;
- Extra excursions and activities not included in the itinerary;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls and
- Laundry and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement:** The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

**a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**

**b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**

**c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**

**d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

**Tipping:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

**Special Notes:**

- It is important for you to be aware that although it can get quite hot in Dubai, we have set this tour up to coincide with the coolest time of the year. Daytime temperatures will be in the mid to high 20's C (high 70's, low 80's F) and the humidity is generally quite low. Rain is more likely at this time of the year but, as it is an arid climate, this should not hamper us too much.
- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover some long distances in order to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not overpack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:**

This tour does not include ANY airfares. As day 1 is an arrival day in Dubai, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude in the mid-morning at Salalah International Airport on day 14.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**FLIGHTS:**

Dubai International Airport, Dubai (IATA: DXB) is the main port of entry for international flights into the United Arab Emirates and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. Salalah International Airport, Oman (IATA: SLL) is well serviced by an international carrier via Dubai. We have the capacity to advise you on the best route according to your preferences, but your local travel agent will best be able to book these flights for you. **However, please DO NOT book your international flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**