

WILDLIFE TRAVEL



Morocco 2025

Morocco, species list and trip report, 1st to 8th March 2025

#	DATE	LOCATIONS AND NOTES
1	1 st March	Afternoon arrival in Agadir, transfer to Atlas Kasbah.
2	2 nd March	Atlas Kasbah and Tighanimine El Baz area.
3	3 rd March	Cap Rhir, Oued Tamri and Agadir Oufella.
4	4 th March	Taroudant and Tiout palmery.
5	5 th March	Imi Mqourn, Ait Baha and Laatik.
6	6 th March	Paradise Valley and the Cascades du Immouzer.
7	7 th March	Souss Massa National Park and Oued Souss.
8	8 th March	Atlas Kasbah, afternoon flight back to UK.

LIST OF TRAVELLERS

Leaders

Dom Price

Wiltshire

Mike Symes

Devon

A gallery of photos from the trip is at

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/wildlifetravel/albums/72177720324711517>

Front: *Striga barthlottii*. Photos: Mike Symes.

Day One: 1st March. Afternoon arrival in Agadir, transfer to Atlas Kasbah.

Our morning flight took us south from London Gatwick, across the Bay of Biscay to Asturias in north-western Spain, on to Faro in Portugal, before meeting the Moroccan coast near Casablanca. Passing over the High Atlas, we descended through the clouds and over the agricultural plains around Agadir.

With bags reclaimed it was out into blue skies, to meet our guide Mohamed and to drive along Agadir's new main road, whisking us out of town in record time to our accommodation for the week, the stunning Atlas Kasbah, perched on a hill top in the foothills of the High Atlas. After a short tour of the hotel facilities by our charming hosts, we relaxed on the terrace and sampled the first of many herbal teas, before settling into our rooms.

We reconvened a little later for an introduction to the week's itinerary, followed by a traditional Moroccan welcome supper, sitting on the floor on cushions as a dizzying array of salads and grilled meats were set before us on low tables; the ambience was further enhanced by the traditional musicians playing enthusiastically behind us. While we waited for dessert we were treated to a demonstration of the traditional Moroccan tea ceremony by the owners Helene and Hassan, who showed off their wonderful sense of humour and deep knowledge of Moroccan and Berber culture. As we left supper we were greeted by the distant call to prayer from the adjacent village Tighanimine El Baz, in this the first night of Ramadan.

Day Two: 2nd March. Atlas Kasbah and Tighanimine El Baz area.

With sunrise only shortly before breakfast, the Common Bulbul chorus was just starting on the terrace as we made our way for our first Moroccan breakfast: a selection of fresh bread, *jben* (fresh cheese), pumpkin and orange jams, *amlou* (made from ground almonds, honey and argan oil), eggs and *dchicha* (cracked barley soup), washed down with coffee and mint tea. We then took the opportunity to introduce ourselves properly and get to know one another, before setting off into the sunny morning for an exploration of the area around the hotel.

Our first stop was one of the many large Argan trees growing in the hotel's grounds. Argan is endemic to south-western Morocco and south-western Algeria, and belongs to a primarily tropical family, Sapotaceae; a relic of the time when this area had a tropical climate. Argan is at the heart of much of the local culture and economy, being used for culinary and health purposes, washing, feeding animals, fuel, and in much of the traditional architecture. The area of Argan forest has decreased by around half over the last century due to changing land-use, agricultural intensification and subsequent desertification. It now covers around 828,000 ha, and the Argan forest, and its surrounding area were declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1998, as a means of promoting the protection and sustainable development of this area.

The Atlas Kasbah was built with the objective of promoting responsible travel, both in terms of sustainable use of resources and environmental protection, but also in showcasing Berber culture, and supporting the local communities. At the top of the gardens, a phyto-purification water filtration system uses a series of pools containing gravels and plants to treat the 'grey water' from the hotel, which is then used to irrigate the garden: an oasis of green in an otherwise dry area.

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Unusually there were no frogs in the treatment pools, but we took a while to admire the citrus groves and the range of trees in the garden. Heading out onto the road it was sad to see that the bank outside the hotel where we normally find a good range of plants had been re-graded, meaning we would have to look for the unusual *Caralluma* plants another day. We then started to walk along an old goat track, but the lack of rain over the winter had resulted in quite a parched landscape, and plants were hard to come by; there was very little green vegetation on display, though the impressively structured *Riccia lamellosa* liverwort was noted, forming spreading patches on the track edges.

However, this was more than made up for by a very impressive array of birds. As we progressed along the track we recorded several species including Southern Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, the latter in particular giving good views as they perched prominently and chased after insects. A pair of Stone Curlews silently trotted away from us and out of sight, as a Western Orphean Warbler foraged in the trackside dead hedge. Pallid and Little Swifts flew overhead, as Laughing Dove, Hoopoe, Maghreb Magpie, African Chaffinch, Spanish Sparrow and a real local speciality, the handsome Moussier's Redstart, were spotted in and around the Argan trees.

As we rounded the hillside into the start of the valley, we walked alongside a farm with irrigated fields, and there we were lucky to see (through binoculars) a much wider range of flowering plants, including tall flowering *Asphodelus fistulosus*, some spectacular flowering *Volutaria lippii* and small carpets of *Heliotropium crispum*. Looking upwards, some distance away high in the sky, a kettle of White Storks could be seen soaring on a thermal, migrating northwards towards Europe.

As we reached the end point of our walk at a dry gully we inspected the rock face and were delighted to spot two Little Owls perched on the rocks, and a little further along a small group of Barbary Ground Squirrels put on a great display, scampering over the boulders and keeping watch from their favourite vantage points. Thekla Lark and Sardinian Warbler were also seen before we headed back to the hotel for lunch, and this time we were lucky enough to see eight North African Water Frogs in the filtration pools, showing off their remarkable skin and eye colour.

After a reviving lunch of vegetable tagine we met up with our guide and headed off to take a tour of the local village, Tighanimine El Baz. The road verges outside the hotel were largely dry, but we were able to see two spiny shrubs lining the roadside: the 'chicken-wire bush' *Launaea arborescens* and *Ziziphus lotus*, often used as dead hedging around fields.

Colchicum gramineum was present on the rocky banks, but just showing its basal leaves, hopefully a great sign for anyone passing later in the season. It took some close inspection to find flowering specimens, but two very small *Aizoon canariense* plants were discovered, showing the crystalline leaves and minute creamy white flowers. *Lavandula multifida* was in flower, with most other plants just in vegetative form, allowing tentative identification to genus level, and a solitary specimen of *Ajuga chamaepitys* was also noted nearby.

A lovely male Moussier's Redstart perched atop a small Argan tree as Swallow, Common Bulbul and Collared Dove were also seen around the edge of the village. We turned over a few stones, and

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though no scorpions were found, we did uncover a *Scolopendra* centipede and a couple of wonderfully diminutive Agadir Lizard-toed Geckos, with their colourful orange tails.

Nicotiana glauca (Tobacco tree) was in flower in the disturbed soils on the track edges, with its distinctive yellow tubular petals; this species is non-native but now widely naturalised in waste ground habitats in Morocco. We continued on to cross a dry river bed where a Painted Lady butterfly basked on a rock, and a close inspection of some of the Oleander plants growing here revealed the presence of many Oleander Seed Bugs.

As we walked a loop around the village we found another Little Owl, Barbary Ground Squirrel, Black Wheatear, Kestrel, House Bunting, Blue Rock Thrush and a very obliging Thekla Lark. On a downbeat note, many of the hillsides were marked by stark patches of dead Prickly Pear. Although not a native species to Morocco, it was first introduced around 1770 and has cultural and economic significance. Huge tracts of the cactus have been damaged or killed by a scale insect *Dactylopius opuntiae* since it was first detected in Morocco in 2014, leaving behind the sad remains we saw before us.

We returned to the hotel where we thanked our guide and then had some free time before meeting up again to go through the day's sightings before dinner.



Above: Woodchat Shrike; North African Water Frog.



Top to bottom: Common Bulbul; *Ajuga chamaepitys*; Barbary Ground Squirrel.

Day Three: 3rd March. Cap Rhir, Oued Tamri and Agadir Oufella.

As the Common Bulbuls' simple song again filled the sunny sky, we hadn't even left the hotel garden before we had a great bird sighting - a pair of Barbary Partridges walking along a low wall before flying off as we slowed to appreciate them. We then set off towards Agadir, and struck north along the Atlantic coast. The landscape quickly began to change, with low-growing coastal steppe vegetation alongside areas of succulent *Euphorbia* scrub.

On our way to Cap Rhir we stopped briefly to identify a pale-phase Booted Eagle perched atop a pylon on the rocky hillside. A little further on, near an old lighthouse, we found our main bird target for the day, a Northern Bald Ibis. Once widespread across southern Europe, North Africa and parts of the Middle East, this species was lost from most of its range as a result of poisoning from pesticides, hunting, disturbance at nesting sites, and more recently, loss of important foraging habitats to coastal development. Northern Bald Ibis reached a low of only around 100 birds by the 1990s, with the last remaining Middle Eastern birds, a tiny colony near Palmyra in Syria, which migrated down via the Yemen to Somalia and Eritrea for the winter. These birds are almost certainly extinct: doomed by the various conflict zones that make up their territory.

There is positive news from the Moroccan population, with at least 708 individuals at a recent count, and 170 chicks fledged in 2019. An introduced population in southern Spain now numbers around 80 birds, with further small, managed colonies introduced to Germany and Austria. The Northern Bald Ibis was down-listed to Endangered in November 2018, after more than three decades categorised as Critically Endangered.

The individual that we were watching proved to be very accommodating, and posed for photographs much to the delight of the group! Blue Rock Thrush, Black Wheatear and Common Bulbul were also seen nearby, however another local speciality, the Black-crowned Tchagra, was more elusive and sang briefly a couple of times but remained frustratingly out of view. Gannets cruised past offshore as *Heliotropium crispum*, *Aizoon canariense* and *Catananche arenaria* provided the botanical interest.

As we drove on northwards we were greeted by the spectacular site of four more Northern Bald Ibis in flight, and we stopped to observe them on the ground where they had landed in amongst some Yellow-legged Gulls. The group gathered by the side of the road, where at our feet we were distracted by *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, *Sclerosciadium nodiflorum* and *Limonium mucronatum*.

We stopped again close to Cap Rhir, to explore the interesting plant communities here, which are unique to the south-west Morocco coastline, down into coastal Mauritania, and across to the Canary Islands (where closely-related species make up a very similar flora). These communities are a botanical link between this part of Morocco and the flora of the North Atlantic Islands, collectively termed the Macaronesian flora. In the geological past this flora would have been more widespread on the mainland, becoming confined to these climatically favourable areas during recent cycles of glaciation.

We spent the next hour immersing ourselves in these wonderful *Euphorbia* coastal communities. Three succulent species were prominent among the vegetation: the umbrella-forming, lime-green shrubby *Euphorbia regis-jubae*, the cactus-like *Euphorbia officinarum*, and *Kleinia anteuphorbium*.

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Strange 'thumbs' of the red-brown *Cynomorium coccineum* emerged from the sand alongside spikes of yellow-flowered *Cistanche phelypaea*. Both species are obligate parasites, with the *Cistanche* most likely feeding on the Shrubby Sea-blite also present.

Turning over some stones revealed a Scorpion *Buthus* sp., a very long-legged House Centipede, a chunky Darkling Beetle, and two species of gecko - the tiny Agadir Lizard-toed Gecko and a larger, paler Moorish Gecko. A beautifully marked Desert Locust was also discovered amongst the rocks, remaining almost motionless as it tried unsuccessfully to evade detection.

We proceeded to the beach at Oued Tamri to eat our picnic lunch, accompanied by crashing surf and some patient dogs! More bright yellow *Cistanche phelypaea* spikes were admired, as was our third reptile species of the day, Margarita's Fringe-toed Lizard. On the brackish lagoon a breeding plumage Cormorant sat alongside a Ruddy Shelduck, with a Coot lurking in the background and Grey Heron and Little Egret distantly on another area of water. Western Subalpine Warbler and Common Chiffchaff skulked in the bushes, whilst an inspection of the large gull flock revealed a handful of smart Audouin's Gulls amongst the many Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

It was then time to retrace our steps towards Agadir, stopping first to avoid running over a Northern Bald Ibis on the road, and then again by a cemetery overlooking the pounding ocean waves. *Euphorbia officinarum* was abundant here, but the botanical highlight was the parasitic Witchweed *Striga barthlottii* with its light pink/purple flower spikes. A Tropical Tent-web Spider was found in its remarkable three-dimensional web, and another Scorpion was also discovered beneath a rock.

We ended the day's excursion with a final stop at Agadir Oufella (translated from Berber to "the fortress at the top"), perched on a promontory close to the fishing port. The fortress dates back to the 16th Century and housed the old city of Agadir, much of which was destroyed in the 5.8 magnitude earthquake that struck the city on 29 February 1960, killing around 15,000 people. There is now a project underway to restore Agadir Oufella, as well as studying the archaeology of the site. After taking in the sweeping views of the city, we returned to base for a chance to freshen up after a long but rewarding day on the coast.



Above: Northern Bald Ibis.



Top to bottom: *Catananche arenaria*; Agadir Lizard-toed Gecko; Margarita's Fringe-toed Lizard; *Cistanche phelypaea*.

Day Four: 4th March. Taroudant and Tiout palmery.

The overnight moth trap brought in several species including Striped Hawk-moth, Scarce Bordered Straw, Setaceous Hebrew Character, Crescent Dart, The Nutmeg and the Erebid moth *Tytroca dispar*. The invertebrate interest continued while gathering for the bus, as there was great excitement with the discovery of a remarkably slender praying mantis, only visible as it had moved onto the large seat outside the hotel; later research revealed it to be a species of the genus *Severinia*.

We then set off east, heading for the town of Taroudant, our journey taking us through the important agricultural area of the Souss valley, where oranges, bananas and salad are grown (often under polythene), much destined for northern Europe. Taroudant is often described as a mini-Marrakech, with its mud-plastered ramparts dating back to the 16th Century. With almost 6km of walls and nine gates, Taroudant is an impressive and imposing sight on arrival.

We stopped for a drink in the peaceful garden of the Dar Zitouine hotel, where we were joined by a large female Spur-thighed Tortoise and had time to wander in the grounds, admiring the diverse plantings and the birds which included Sardinian Warbler, Blackcap, Common Bulbul, African Chaffinch and Collared Dove, before we headed into Taroudant's maze-like souk. With everything from jewellery to dates and teas to spices gleaming from its stalls, we tore ourselves away and continued south-east, to the edge of the Anti-Atlas and the palmery on the outskirts of the village of Tioute, stopping briefly for a photo opportunity with the impressive geology of the Anti-Atlas and usual range of interesting roadside plants on display.

At Tioute a mountain spring feeds the palmery via a network of irrigation pools and channels, allowing local villagers to grow wheat, corn and barley, alongside the many Date Palms and Carobs here. We found some welcome shade under which we enjoyed our picnic lunch, before taking a short stroll through the palmery. North African Water Frogs were seen in the narrow water channels, and some huge tadpoles were presumed to be those of the Berber Toad. A powder blue male Epaulet Skimmer Dragonfly perched on the waterside stones, occasionally making darting flights to patrol his territory, before returning to bask in the sunshine.

The water and lush vegetation in the palmery proved to be a magnet for butterflies, which otherwise were rather scarcely encountered during the trip. Red Admiral, Small White, Bath White, Green-striped White, Clouded Yellow, the lovely Moroccan Orange Tip and perhaps best of all, a freshly emerged Spanish Festoon were all found during our walk, alongside the migrant moth Rush Veneer.

Key botanical highlights included the delicate Maidenhair Fern growing alongside a water channel, the showy vetch *Vicia benghalensis* with its clusters of reddish-purple flowers, clambering White Bryony and the distinctive Dutchman's Pipe *Aristolochia baetica*, and the beautiful blue-flowered form of Scarlet Pimpernel. The birdlife comprised Kestrel, Blackcap, Spotless Starling, Great Tit, African Chaffinch, Sardinian Warbler, Western Orphean Warbler, and another striking male Moussier's Redstart. We then drove back to the hotel with time to relax before meeting up again for dinner and to reflect on the day's varied wildlife sightings. After another satisfying meal we headed up on to the roof of the hotel with M'bak who gave us a fascinating tour of the stars and constellations that were visible in the clear night sky.



Top to bottom: Epaulet Skimmer; Moroccan Orange Tip; *Aristolochia baetica*; Moussier's Redstart.

Day Five: 5th March. Imi Mqourn, Ait Baha and Laatik.

The appallingly named Green Drab was perhaps the pick of the overnight moth trap catch, being much more splendid than its name suggests. After breakfast, this morning's journey took us south-east towards Ait Baha, one of the larger towns in the western Anti-Atlas, as we set out to explore a little of Morocco's most southerly mountain range.

Our first stop was an unassuming field near the town of Imi Mqourn filled with towering Apple of Sodom Milkweed *Calotropis procera* plants. Many of the plants had been tightly grazed, but we searched with great enthusiasm (though ultimately unsuccessfully) for the caterpillars of the Plain Tiger butterfly, which uses this as its food plant. This search was soon interrupted due to the discovery of a large female Spur-thighed Tortoise, and with many pairs of eyes now on the lookout we soon found, incredibly, another five individuals, doing their best to find shade amongst the low-growing *Launaea arborescens* shrubs.

Sprawling over the ground were the ornate-looking leaves of Bitter Apple, along with several of its 'mini-melon' fruits. Despite how bare the site looked from the road, we soon found a host of other dry land plants, including Jointed Pine, Egyptian Sage, Spiny Globe-thistle and several newly germinated Lupin plants. Thekla Lark, Moussier's Redstart and a small flock of European Bee-eaters flying overhead were the pick of the birds.

We soon reached Ait Baha with time for a coffee on the terrace and a visit to the town's cobblers before carrying on into the Anti-Atlas proper. The Anti-Atlas contain some of the oldest rocks in the world: an ancient mountain range that started to form 300 million years ago, and once rivalled the Himalayas in height. Today, they are much eroded, the highest peaks reaching between 2,500m and 2,700m. As we climbed we spotted plenty of Barbary Ground Squirrels at the roadside, alongside the hillsides clad in Argan.

Reaching the tiny village of Laatik, we paid a visit to its ancient *agadir*, a fortified grain store dating from the time when local Berber tribes still fought one another (this particular *agadir* is some 770 years old). These buildings are typical of the Anti-Atlas and others could be spotted during the day, in various states of repair, perched on high ground. Once the local trusted custodian had let us in, Mohamed gave us a fascinating tour of this interesting mud and stone built structure, with its small storage rooms for villagers' valuables accessed by stepping stones, a well with fresh water, and water storage tanks for seeing out any siege. The *agadir* came complete with its own 'jail', with some doors protected by more than one lock (security against less-trustworthy relatives), whilst others bore the black cross to fend off the advances of the beautiful but dangerous *Aisha Kandicha* of Moroccan folklore.

After lunch we were entertained by close views of House Buntings before finding Scorpions, Millipedes and Agadir Lizard-toed Geckos sheltering under rocks outside the granary.

We stopped again a few minutes later on one of the rocky hillsides where *Euphorbia officinarum* made another appearance, here in its beautifully tight-cushioned *echinarum* form (considered by some to be a distinct sub-species). By now the group had become fairly obsessed with stone-turning, and we were rewarded with the discovery of yet another Scorpion and even better, a young Bibron's

Agama, which was wonderfully camouflaged against the background rock colouration. A Woodchat Shrike perched high in a tree nearby, and our luck with tortoises continued as two more Spur-thighed Tortoises were also found amongst the rocks.

Plants were still holding the ground attention, and we re-encountered the liverwort *Riccia lamellosa*, alongside an unusual lichen called Blushing Scale, with its platelets peeking up through the dry sandy soil. We also found a single individual of Scale Lip Fern, which is native to the Canary Islands and North Africa through to the Indian subcontinent, resembling a hairier version of Rusty-back Fern.

At this point the earlier sporadic rain turned into a full downpour, so we beat a hasty retreat back to the bus and returned to the Atlas Kasbah in plenty of time to relax or take a dip in the pool before dinner.

Following our meal we took a short walk through the hotel gardens to look for amphibians, and found North African Water Frogs as well as our main target, the spectacular Berber Toad. We heard the wailing calls of Stone Curlew and the distant 'tocking' notes of a Red-necked Nightjar as we slowly strolled the paths, noting Tropical Tent-web Spiders and many Brown Widow Spiders which lurked in webs near dark recesses in the garden walls. We then retired to bed, looking forward to tomorrow's journey into the High Atlas mountains.



Above: Spur-thighed Tortoise.



Top to bottom: *Calotropis procera*; House Bunting; Bibron's Agama.

Day Six: 6th March. High Atlas: Paradise Valley and the Cascades du Immouzer.

The day had started somewhat early for most of the group, with a dramatic storm at 3:30am, filling the sky with lightning and crashing thunder, with an intense downpour of rain (Helene remarked she had seen more storms in the last week than in all her previous time in Morocco!). Fortunately the sun was shining as we left the hotel, and we were amazed to see the dry river bed running with water, admittedly of the thick brown variety.

As we headed inland towards the High Atlas, many of the roads were covered with a thick layer of sticky mud, testament to the intensity of last night's downpour. Our first stop at a dry river valley at 200m was cut short by not being able to cross the river, but we did have a chance to see Argan, joined by Carob, along with Mastic Tree with its red flowers just beginning to form.

We then decided to make an impromptu visit to a small Argan Oil Cooperative, where we had a brief tour of the gardens (including a fascinating lemon-scented Cypress tree) and a chance to taste a multitude of honeys, as well as purchasing Argan products. These small community-led organisations provide a vital income to local people, as well as ensuring the economic value of the Argan forests is maintained.

Our next stop was at about 500m to explore an area dominated by *Tetraclinis articulata*, the 'Thuja of the Berbers'. This conifer is primarily found in Morocco and Algeria, with additional small relict populations in Andalucia and Malta. Morocco holds 600,000ha of the 1Mha world population of the tree, which is known for its unusual grain and rich colour. Thuja is handcrafted to produce ornaments and utensils, with its large burrs resulting from 'self-coppicing' (a way of managing over-grazing and wildfires) prized by wood-carvers.

Among the Thuja we found our first plant of Virgin's Mantle, *Zygophyllum creticum*, made all the more spectacular by the drops of rain on its vibrant petals. Along the trackside we also found several clumps of *Asteriscus graveolens*, with its aromatic leaves dividing the group into those who found its aromatic scent pleasant and those who did not! The recent dry weather had once again reduced the ground cover, but on closer inspection we started to find a diverse range of crustose lichens and bryophytes in the ground, including the Blushing Scale and *Riccia lamellosa* we had seen on previous days.

The birds were not numerous up here, though Black Wheatear and African Chaffinch were recorded, and we also noted an intriguingly angular Cone-headed Grasshopper which exhibited excellent cryptic colouration to blend in with the surrounding vegetation and stones.

From here it was a short drive down to the river at Paradise Valley, and another chance to marvel at the flowing waters! Despite the relative torrent we were able to find two Moorish Terrapins, enjoying the water with a flotilla of pond skaters.

There was a wealth of plant growth in rocks by the water's edge, including Mediterranean Stork's-bill *Erodium botrys*, and a spectacular Weld *Reseda phyteuma*, with its tentacle like tepals and oversized seedpods. As we walked down the valley we found our first Bladder Dock, a small plant but with highly decorative inflated seed cases, as well as noting clumps of Castor Oil Plant and Chaste Bush which

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were growing alongside the river. Birds observed in the area included Common Bulbul, Blackcap, Common Chiffchaff, Woodchat Shrike, Grey Wagtail, and the star of the show, a lovely male Blue Rock Thrush perched on the far cliff face.

Legs stretched, we continued on our way, taking in some superb geological scenery with a brief stop to photograph at a high vantage point, before we made our way up and down again towards Immouzer for our lunch stop, former home to cascades, which had been dry in recent years as a result of increasing pressure on the region's water supply. Despite the recent storms the falls remained resolutely dry!

As we departed the bus it was noticeably cooler, so extra layers were grabbed and hot drinks ordered to accompany our picnic. A tiny Mantis nymph had inadvertently hitched a ride on our bus, so we released it nearby and hoped it would find its new home to its liking...

Pressing on and a stop among the flowering Almond trees gave us the opportunity to appreciate one of the stars of the High Atlas, the prickly, glaucous Shrubby Milkwort *Polygala balansae*. Sadly its distinctive violet and yellow flowers were not on display, but we were able to admire its unusual spiny structure. Until recently this was thought to be endemic to Morocco, but a small population has now been found in southern Spain, close to Granada.

Looking skyward, we were treated to great views of a pair of mighty Bonelli's Eagles, one of which swooped down over our heads and across the valley at great speed. A little later, the other bird did the same, and we managed to follow it and see it land on what appeared to be its nest site; looking through the telescope we could just make out the eagle's head as it peered out from its chosen cliff recess.

Whilst taking turns to look at the eagle we had time to once again admire the remarkable diversity of Morocco's road verges, with our first finding of the Shaving Brush like *Phagnalon saxatile* and the distinctive short-leaved *Asparagus acutifolius*, alongside *Eryngium* and *Lavandula*.

As we drove yet higher into the High Atlas we hit an ominous bank of cloud, and soon were shrouded in damp mist. At the next roadside stop we managed to coax nearly all the group out of the minibus with the promise of close up views of Dwarf Fan Palm, which is confined to the higher slopes of these mountains, as well as the chance to try and see one of the rare local breeding birds, Tristram's Warbler, which has a very restricted range in north Africa and can often be difficult to track down. Fortunately, and somewhat unexpectedly given the damp, misty conditions, we were in luck: a pair flying down the hillside, giving good views at close range - fantastic!

Feeling satisfied by this encounter, we continued on to 1500m elevation but the viewpoint was shrouded in thick cloud so we didn't stop, deciding instead to begin our descent, via a series of sharp hairpin bends back down to Agadir and to the hotel for a welcoming herbal tea and the chance to warm up before yet another hearty evening meal.



Top to bottom: Blue Rock Thrush; *Zygophyllum creticum* (D. Price); High Atlas.

Day Seven: 7th March. Souss Massa National Park and Oued Souss.

Following breakfast, we were met by a fleet of 4-wheel drive vehicles, setting off south for our visit to Souss-Massa National Park. The National Park was established in 1991, and covers an area of almost 34,000 ha of sand dunes, steppe, wetlands and Argan forest. Souss-Massa has particular significance for its colonies of Northern Bald Ibis, as well as being an important site for many other breeding and wintering birds. We were of course also here for the mammals: the 'Sahelo-Saharan megafauna' is one of the most endangered assemblages of large animals in the world, threatened by a combination of lack of grazing as a result of competition with domestic livestock (primarily goats and camels), and over-hunting, with increasing numbers of high-powered weapons freely available across large swathes of their former range (which includes Libya, Tunisia, Mali and Chad). Once widespread across the arid regions of North Africa, almost all the large mammals of the Sahara are now extremely rare in the wild, and four important members of this megafauna have been 're-wilded' in Souss-Massa National Park.

As we approached the Park entrance we were treated to great views of a couple of Stone Curlews, trying to evade detection by remaining motionless before changing their minds and deciding to run away instead. We took a quick look inside the visitor centre and then explored the adjacent pond and scrub where we noted Greenfinch, African Chaffinch, Moussier's Redstart, Woodpigeon, Sardinian Warbler, Western Subalpine Warbler, and had our first views of Serin and a boldly-marked male Cirl Bunting. North African Water Frogs croaked in the pond as a large Moorish Terrapin basked on stones on a small island, and a shiny black *Scarites* beetle was found beneath a stone.

It was then time to visit the first of the Park's enclosures, which forms part of the captive-breeding programme here: the 2,000ha Rokein reserve. We soon spotted our first Addax, a large and ghostly-pale antelope with long, twisted horns topped with a 'toupée' of brown hair. Addax are native to arid stony and sandy desert out in the Sahara proper, where they graze on a range of vegetation. At one time Addax would have been abundant across North Africa, however they are now Critically Endangered in the wild, with some last individuals possibly clinging on in Mauritania, Chad and Niger: a survey in 2016 of prime habitat identified just three wild Addax. Captive populations, including these in Morocco, mean the Addax still persists as a species, with reintroductions underway into the Sahara of Tunisia and Algeria, but its future in the wild is far from secure.

We also found several dainty Dorcas Gazelle, with their lyre-shape horns and intricately marked faces and ears. These small antelope of steppe and desert are found across North Africa however are considered Vulnerable, with the Moroccan sub-species showing a marked decline in recent decades. Somewhat easier to locate were the numerous Red-necked Ostriches which have been re-introduced to the Park: this is the North African sub-species of the Common Ostrich, and it is the largest living species of bird. The Red-necked Ostrich is noticeably more colourful than sub-Saharan birds and the males were sporting the sunburn-pink of the breeding season as they attempted to impress the more-muted females.

Driving round the enclosure we also spotted Little Owl, Thekla Lark, Sparrowhawk, Pallid Swift, Southern Grey Shrike, White Wagtail, Swallow, and had prolonged views of several Kestrels perched and in flight over our heads, as more Addax were seen close to the side of the track.

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We then exited the enclosure and crossed a flat semi-desert area where species seen included Northern Wheatear, Tawny Pipit, Spur-thighed Tortoise, and the undoubted highlight - a group of graceful Cream-coloured Coursers, a real desert species and a great sighting! Slightly further on another Courser was spotted a bit closer to us, and when it hunkered down in a small depression on the ground it looked just like a pebble - if we hadn't seen it move, there's no way we would have found it...

As we entered the second enclosure, the 1,200 ha Arrouais reserve, we had brief views of a Bonelli's Eagle, which flew low over the dunes and perched in a distant small tree; it was interesting to see this species in such a different habitat to yesterday's pair, up in the ridges and valleys of the High Atlas. As we climbed back into our 4x4 vehicles, yet another Spur-thighed Tortoise was seen, searching for fresh green shoots amongst the arid landscape.

We drove on, and before long we notched up the final species of megafauna on our list, the largest of the three antelopes within the National Park: Scimitar-horned Oryx, a handsome beast with its ginger neck, tear-shaped face markings and swept-back horns. Like the Addax, the Scimitar-horned Oryx has not fared well, and was declared Extinct in the Wild in 2000. The population here at Souss-Massa is now the largest single herd left on the planet. Scimitar-horned Oryx once grazed extensively across North Africa, migrating seasonally with the rains. There are now ambitious plans from Chad to re-establish this species in the wild, at its former stronghold in Ouadi Rimé-Ouadi Achim Game Reserve. In late summer 2016, the first individuals were released into the wild, with a calf born in September 2016 considered the first 'wild-born' Scimitar-horned Oryx for over 30 years. The project aims to have a self-sustaining population of 500 animals within five years.

Following lunch with views over sand dunes out to the Atlantic and accompanied by the song of Thekla Larks, it was time to leave the National Park and head to a nearby pottery store for a chance to peruse the wide selection of bowls, tagines and more - though the opportunity to buy ice creams next door proved just as popular amongst the group!

Our final stop for the day was at the Oued Souss estuary, where in the strong late afternoon sunshine we saw a range of water birds wading in the shallows or roosting on the exposed muddy riverbanks. These included distant Greater Flamingo, Spoonbill, White Stork, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Ruddy Shelduck, Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Black-winged Stilt and Slender-billed Gull. A Zitting Cisticola was heard giving its distinctive, repetitive one-note song, but the highlight for many was not avian but another mammal, as a Wild Boar with young in tow were seen on the opposite bank - a great end to a fantastic day.



Top to bottom: Stone Curlew; Addax; Cream-coloured Courser.

Day Eight: 8th March. Atlas Kasbah, afternoon flight back to UK.

Our final morning took some of us back down the goat track, where after some near obsessive searching we finally found the weird and wonderful *Orbea decaisneana*, a strange succulent member of the Apocynaceae which had eluded us for the rest of the trip. More *Lavandula multifida* flowers had appeared on the track since our earlier visit, no doubt spurred on by the recent rain, along with one or two fine specimens of *Volutaria lippii* on the adjacent road verge.

The bird assemblage was similar to what we had seen here previously, and included Woodchat Shrike, Greenfinch, Serin, Maghreb Magpie, Common Bulbul, Thekla Lark, Hoopoe, Moussier's Redstart, African Chaffinch and a rather elusive Laughing Dove. The highlight was perhaps the sighting of several Barbary Partridges on the nearby hillsides, which were observed chasing each other and running between the Argan trees.

There was still time for one more Spur-thighed Tortoise encounter (the number of Tortoises seen on this trip was remarkable!) before we again located the pair of Little Owls on the gully rock face, with their Barbary Ground Squirrel companions in close attendance. The first spots of rain falling from the sky signalled that it was time to head back to the hotel, so we returned for a final meal together, where we discussed and reflected upon the many highlights of our time in Morocco. All too soon it was time to leave the Atlas Kasbah, so we thanked the wonderful staff before departing for the airport to draw to a close what had been a thoroughly enjoyable and successful holiday.

Dom Price and Mike Symes, Wildlife Travel. March 2025.



MOROCCO 2025: some highlights

Selected Plant Species

Some plant species do not have English names and English names vary according to author. A common name is given as a guide to help those who are not familiar with the scientific name. The **Scientific name** consists of the **Genus** (the first name starting with a capital) and the **species** (the second name, without a capital). Families are in alphabetical order (not in the order found in many plant books - which now changes frequently as the systematic order of families is changing rapidly due to clarification by genetic research). The English name of a family member is also given so you can relate the family to plants you may know. Some species have recently been transferred to different families and the names of species also change occasionally. Orchid names are always problematic as many people split them into a number of species. For families and species, the list follows the (up to date as much as possible) Plant List (Kew) and INPI classification (although for orchids, popular names are sometimes also given).

D: dead, E: endemic, H: heard only, I: introduced, P: planted

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
PTERIDOPHYTES			
Pteridaceae (maidenhair fern family)			
	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Maidenhair Fern	4 th
	<i>Cosentinia vellea</i>		5 th
CONIFERS			
Cupressaceae (cypress family)			
	<i>Tetraclinis articulata</i>	Thuja of the Berbers	6 th
Ephedraceae (joint pine family)			
	<i>Ephedra fragilis</i>	Joint Pine	5 th
DICOTYLEDONS			
Aizoaceae (fig marigold family)			
	<i>Aizoon canariense</i>		2 nd
I	<i>Carpobrotus acinaciformis</i>		2 nd
	<i>Mesembryanthemum crystallinum</i>	Common Ice Plant	3 rd
Anacardiaceae (sumac family)			
	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	Mastic	6 th
I	<i>Schinus molle</i>		3 rd
Apiaceae (carrot family)			
	<i>Eryngium ilicifolium</i>		6 th
	<i>Ferula communis</i>	Giant Fennel	4 th
	<i>Sclerosciadium nodiflorum</i>		3 rd
Apocyanaceae (dogbane family)			
	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Apple of Sodom Milkweed	5 th
	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	2 nd

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
	<i>Orbea decaisneana</i>		8 th
Aristolochiaceae (birthwort family)			
	<i>Aristolochia baetica</i> var. <i>bicolor</i>		4 th
Asteraceae (daisy family)			
	<i>Asteriscus graveolens</i>		5 th
	<i>Asteriscus imbricatus</i>		3 rd
	<i>Calendula arvensis</i>	Field Marigold	5 th
	<i>Catananche arenaria</i>		3 rd
	<i>Centaurea gentilii</i>		7 th
	<i>Echinops spinosissimus</i> ssp. <i>spinosus</i>		5 th
E	<i>Kleinia anteuophorbium</i>		3 rd
	<i>Launaea arborescens</i>		2 nd
E	<i>Onopordum</i> cf. <i>macranthum</i>		7 th
	<i>Pallenis spinosa</i>	Spiny Golden Star	4 th
	<i>Phagnalon saxatile</i>		6 th
	<i>Volutaria lippii</i>		2 nd
Boraginaceae (borage family)			
	<i>Echium horridum</i>		2 nd
	<i>Heliotropium crispum</i>		2 nd
Brassicaceae (cabbage family)			
	<i>Cakile maritima</i>	Sea Rocket	3 rd
	<i>Marcus-kochia</i> (= <i>Malcolmia</i>) <i>littorea</i>	Sea Stock	3 rd
	<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i> ssp. <i>raphanistrum</i>	Charlock	2 nd
Cactaceae (cactus family)			
I	<i>Austrocylindropuntia subulata</i> (= <i>Opuntia cylindrica</i>)	Cactus (native to Colombia and Peru)	5 th
I	<i>Opuntia maxima</i> (= <i>O ficus-barbarica</i>)	Fig of the Berbers	2 nd
Caryophyllaceae (pink family)			
	<i>Polycarpaea nivea</i>		3 rd
	<i>Silene colorata</i>	Mediterranean Catchfly	5 th
	<i>Spergularia fimbriata</i>		4 th
Convolvulaceae (bindweed family)			
E	<i>Convolvulus glauorum</i>		4 th

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
	<i>Cuscuta</i> sp.	Dodder	2 nd
P	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	Sweet Potato	2 nd
Crassulaceae (stonecrop family)			
	<i>Petrosedum sediforme</i>		6 th
	<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	5 th
Cucurbitaceae (gourd family)			
	<i>Bryonia dioica</i>	White Bryony	4 th
	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>	Bitter Apple	5 th
Cynomoriaceae (desert thumb family)			
	<i>Cynomorium coccineum</i>	Desert Thumb	3 rd
Euphorbiaceae (spurge family)			
	<i>Euphorbia officinarum</i>		3 rd
	<i>Euphorbia paralias</i>	Sea Spurge	3 rd
	<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty Spurge	4 th
	<i>Euphorbia regis-jubae</i>		3 rd
I	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Castor Oil Plant along roadsides and in Tiout palmery	4 th
Fabaceae (pea family)			
	<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	Carob	2 nd
	<i>Genista tricuspidata</i>		6 th
	<i>Lotus creticus</i>	Southern Bird's-foot Trefoil	4 th
	<i>Ononis natrix</i>		3 rd
	<i>Retama monosperma</i>	White Broom	3 rd
	<i>Vicia benghalensis</i>		4 th
Frankeniaceae (sea heath family)			
E	<i>Frankenia laevis</i> ssp. <i>velutina</i> (=Frankenia <i>corymbosa</i>)	Sea Heath	3 rd
Geraniaceae (geranium family)			
	<i>Erodium botrys</i>	Mediterranean Stork's-bill	6 th
Lamiaceae (mint family)			
	<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>	Yellow Bugle	2 nd
	<i>Lavandula multifida</i>		2 nd
	<i>Salvia aegyptiaca</i>		5 th
E	<i>Thymus broussonetii</i> ssp. <i>hannonis</i>		3 rd
	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	Chaste Tree	6 th
Lythraceae (loosestrife family)			
P	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Pomegranate	4 th
Malvaceae (mallow family)			
	<i>Malva parviflora</i>		3 rd
Moraceae (mulberry family)			
P	<i>Ficus carica</i>	Common Fig	4 th

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
	Oleaceae (olive family)		
	<i>Olea europaea</i>	Olive	2 nd
	Orobanchaceae (broomrape family)		
	<i>Cistanche phelypaea</i>	Desert Hyacinth	3 rd
	<i>Striga barthlottii</i>		3 rd
	Papaveraceae (poppy family)		
	<i>Glaucium corniculatum</i>	Red Horned Poppy	4 th
	Plumbaginaceae (leadwort family)		
E	<i>Limonium mucronatum</i>		3 rd
	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i> ssp. <i>beaumierianum</i>		4 th
	Polygalaceae (milkwort family)		
	<i>Polygala balansae</i>		6 th
	Polygonaceae (knotweed family)		
	<i>Rumex spinosus</i> (=Emex <i>spinosus</i>)	Spiny Dock	5 th
	<i>Rumex vesicarius</i>	Bladder Dock	6 th
	Primulaceae (primrose family)		
	<i>Lysimachia arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel	4 th
	Resedaceae (mignonette family)		
	<i>Reseda phyteuma</i>	Rampion Mignonette	6 th
	Rhamnaceae (buckthorn family)		
	<i>Ziziphus lotus</i>	Jujube	2 nd
	Rosaceae (rose family)		
	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat	2 nd
	<i>Prunus amygdalus</i> (= <i>dulcis</i>)	Almond flowering in the High Atlas	6 th
	Sapotaceae (sapota family)		
	<i>Sideroxylon</i> (=Argania) <i>spinosa</i>	Argan	2 nd
	Scrophulariaceae (figwort family)		
	<i>Scrophularia arguta</i>		3 rd
	Solanaceae (nightshade family)		
I	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>		2 nd
	Tamaricaceae (tamarisk family)		
	<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	French Tamarisk	3 rd
	Zygophyllaceae (caltrop family)		
	<i>Zygophyllum creticum</i> (= <i>Fagonia cretica</i>)	Virgin's Mantle	6 th
	MONOCOTYLEDONS		
	Amaryllidaceae (amaryllis family)		
	<i>Pancratium foetidum</i>	Stinking Sea Daffodil	6 th

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	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
Aracaceae (palm family)			
	<i>Chamaerops humilis</i> var. <i>argentea</i>	Dwarf Fan Palm	6 th
	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	Date Palm	2 nd
	<i>Washingtonia filifera</i>	California Fan Palm	2 nd
Asparagaceae (asparagus family)			
	<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i>		6 th
	<i>Asparagus albus</i>		5 th
Asphodelaceae (asphodel family)			
	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	Hollow-stemmed Asphodel	2 nd
Colchicaceae (colchicum family)			
	<i>Colchicum</i> (= <i>Androcymbium</i>) <i>gramineum</i>		2 nd
Iridaceae (iris family)			
	<i>Moraea sisyrinchium</i>	Barbary Nut	2 nd
Poaceae (grass family)			
	<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant Reed	2 nd

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
LIVERWORTS			
	<i>Riccia lamellosa</i>	Thallose Liverwort	2 nd

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NOTES	FIRST SEEN
LICHEN			
	<i>Psora decipiens</i>	Blushing Scale	4 th

BIRDS

This checklist follows the taxonomy published in the **HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World**, as updated by www.birdsoftheworld.org

English names follow those used in the **Collins Bird Guide** (3rd edition).

ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Family Struthionidae (Ostriches)										
Red-necked Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus camelus</i>								◆	
Family Anatidae (Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl)										
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>				◆				◆	
Family Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse and allies)										
Barbary Partridge	<i>Alectoris barbara</i>			◆				◆		◆
Family Phoenicopteridae (Flamingoes)										
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopus roseus</i>								◆	
Family Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)										
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia (domest.)</i>			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>			◆					◆	
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>			◆						◆
Family Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and allies)										
Red-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>						H	H		
Family Apodidae (Swifts)										
Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>			◆		◆	◆		◆	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>			◆						
Family Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules and Coots)										
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>			◆						
Family Burhinidae (Thick-knees)										
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>			◆			H		◆	
Family Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)										
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>								◆	
Family Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and allies)										
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>								◆	
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>								◆	
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>								◆	
Family Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)										
Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>								◆	
Family Laridae (Gulls, Terns and Skimmers)										
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus genei</i>								◆	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>								◆	
Audouin's Gull	<i>Ichthyophaga audouinii</i>			◆						
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>		◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

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Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>			◆		◆		◆	
Family Ciconiidae (Storks)								
White Stork <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>		◆	◆				◆	
Family Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)								
Gannet <i>Morus bassanus</i>			◆					
Family Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)								
Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			◆				◆	
Family Ardeidae (Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns)								
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>			◆				◆	
Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>			◆				◆	
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>			◆		◆			
Family Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)								
Northern Bald Ibis <i>Geronticus eremita</i>			◆					
Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>								◆
Family Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles and Kites)								
Booted Eagle <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>			◆					
Bonelli's Eagle <i>Aquila fasciata</i>						◆	◆	
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>							◆	
Family Strigidae (Owls)								
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>		◆					◆	◆
Family Upupidae (Hoopoes)								
Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>		◆						◆
Family Meropidae (Bee-eaters)								
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>					◆			
Family Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)								
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		◆		◆	◆		◆	
Family Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and allies)								
Black-crowned Tchagra <i>Tchagra senegalus</i>			H					
Family Laniidae (Shrikes)								
Southern Grey Shrike <i>Lanius excubitor algeriensis</i>		◆	◆				◆	
Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>		◆			◆	◆		◆
Family Corvidae (Crows, Jays and Magpies)								
Maghreb Magpie <i>Pica mauritanica</i>		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Family Paridae (Tits)								
Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>					H		◆	
Family Alaudidae (Larks)								
Thekla Lark <i>Galerida theklae ruficolor</i>		◆	◆		◆		◆	◆
Family Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and allies)								
Zitting Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>								H
Family Hirundinidae (Swallows)								
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Family Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)								
Common Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Family Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)								

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Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			◆			◆	◆	
Family Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers and allies)									
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			◆			◆		
Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca hortensis</i>		◆		◆				
Tristram's Warbler	<i>Curruca deserticola</i>						◆		
Sardinian Warbler	<i>Curruca melanocephala</i>		◆		◆	◆	H	◆	H
Western Subalpine Warbler	<i>Curruca iberiae</i>			◆				◆	
Family Sturnidae (Starlings)									
Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>				◆	◆			
Family Turdidae (Thrushes and allies)									
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula mauritanicus</i>		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Family Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)									
Moussier's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus moussieri</i>		◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>		◆	◆			◆		
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>			◆					
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>							◆	
Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>		◆	◆			◆	◆	
Family Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)									
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>		◆						
Family Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)									
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>						◆		
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>				◆			◆	
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>							◆	
Family Fringillidae (Finches and allies)									
African Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla spodiogenys</i>		◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		H	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆
Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		H				H	◆	◆
Family Emberizidae (Buntings)									
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>							◆	
House Bunting	<i>Emberiza sahari</i>		◆	◆		◆		◆	

H = Heard only

MAMMALS									
Dorcas Gazelle	<i>Gazella dorcas</i>							◆	
Addax	<i>Addax nasomaculatus</i>							◆	
Scimitar-horned Oryx	<i>Oryx dammah</i>							◆	
Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>							◆	
Barbary Ground Squirrel	<i>Atalantoxerus getulus</i>		◆			◆	◆		◆

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

This checklist follows the taxonomy published in *Amphibians and Reptile of Morocco*, as updated at www.moroccoherps.com

AMPHIBIANS									
Berber Toad	<i>Sclerophrys mauretanic</i>				◆				
N. African Water Frog	<i>Pelophylax saharica</i>	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆		
REPTILES									
Spur-thighed Tortoise	<i>Testudo graeca</i>			◆	◆		◆	◆	
Moorish Terrapin	<i>Mauremys leprosa</i>						◆	◆	
Agadir Lizard-toed Gecko	<i>Saurodactylus brosseti</i>	◆	◆		◆	◆			
Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>			◆					
Margarita's Fringe-toed Lizard	<i>Acanthodactylus margaritae</i>			◆				◆	
Bibron's Agama	<i>Agama bibronii</i>					◆			

BUTTERFLIES									
Family Papilionidae (Swallowtails)									
Spanish Festoon	<i>Zerynthia rumina</i>				◆				
Family Pieridae (Whites)									
Moroccan Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis belia</i>				◆				
Green-striped White	<i>Euchloe belemia</i>				◆				
Bath White	<i>Pontia daplidice</i>	◆			◆	◆	◆		
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae mauretanic</i>	◆			◆		◆		
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>				◆				
Family Nymphalidae (Admirals and Fritillaries)									
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	◆				◆			
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				◆				

ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
OTHER INVERTEBRATES										
Vagrant Emperor	<i>Hemianax ephippiger</i>			◆						
Epaulet Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum chrysostiga</i>					◆				
Striped Hawk-moth	<i>Hyles livornica</i>				◆	◆	◆			
Scarce Bordered Straw	<i>Helicoverpa armigera</i>					◆		◆		
Setaceous Hebrew Character	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>					◆				
Crescent Dart	<i>Agrotis trux</i>					◆	◆	◆		
The Nutmeg	<i>Anarta trifolii</i>					◆		◆		
An Erebid moth	<i>Tytroca dispar</i>					◆				
Rush Veneer	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>					◆				
Green Drab	<i>Ophiusa tirhaca</i>						◆			

Morocco, species list and trip report, 1st to 8th March 2025

ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pale Mottled Willow	<i>Caradrina clavipalpis</i>						◆			
An Erebid moth	<i>Albarracina warionis</i>						◆			
Robust Tabby	<i>Pandesma robusta</i>							◆		
An Erebid moth	<i>Drasteria philippina</i>							◆		
Mantis	<i>Severinia</i> sp.					◆				
Mantis nymph	Family <i>Mantidae</i>							◆		
Oleander Seed Bug	<i>Caenocoris nerii</i>		◆				◆			
Oleander/Milkweed Aphid	<i>Aphis nerii</i>						◆			
Cone-headed Grasshopper	<i>Acrida ungarica</i>							◆		
Desert Locust	<i>Schistocerca gregaria</i>				◆					
Darkling Beetle	Family <i>Tenebrionidae</i>				◆		◆			
A Ground beetle	<i>Scarites</i> sp.								◆	
Termite	Family <i>Termitoidae</i>					◆	◆			
Yellow Scorpion	<i>Buthus</i> sp.				◆		◆			
Tropical Tent-web Spider	<i>Cyrtophora citricola</i>				◆		◆		◆	
Brown Widow Spider	<i>Latrodectus geometricus</i>						◆			
Centipede	<i>Scolopendra</i> sp.		◆							
House Centipede	<i>Scutigera coleoptrata</i>				◆					
Millipede	Class <i>Diplopoda</i>						◆			

thank you for travelling with us

www.wildlife-travel.co.uk

01954 713575

wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org

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The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH ³²