

Iran, Bird & Mammal List

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In total, 235 species of bird were recorded on this trip, a very respectable total for late summer. Of particular note, all the target species (Pleske's Ground Jay, Sind Pied Woodpecker, Iraqi Babbler, Grey Hypocolius, Spotted Little Owl and Crab Plover) were seen, along with many other specials, such as Egyptian Nightjar, Radde's Accentor and Dead Sea Sparrow. Of the bird groups, waders and herons were particularly well represented, with 32 and 11 species respectively, as well as wheatears (seven species), raptors (14 species) and warblers (22 species). By contrast, wildfowl were prominent by their overall absence, just one species of duck seen - a trip later in the season would remedy this lack of records. A later trip would also considerably increase the number of raptors seen, in absolute numbers if not species.

Bird List. Little Grebe. 16 on pools at Andemeshik. Great Cormorant. Only recorded on the Caspian Sea, single at Chaboksar and Anzari and a further two near Ramsar. Pygmy Cormorant. Three birds on Anzali Lagoon. A boat trip would certainly result in large numbers of this species. Little Bittern. Two seen, both males - one at Arzhan, another at Anzali. Night Heron. Abundant at Anzari, at least 250 per day, including many flying over the river bridges in the city itself. Also recorded in south-west Iran, with two at Ahvaz, three on the Dez River and three at Andemeshik. Striated Heron. Three in the mangroves at Bandar-e-Khamir, a single on the small stream at Bandar Abbas. Indian Pond Heron. All along the Gulf coast, two at Minab, four at Soorgalm and about 15 at Bandar-e-Khamir. Cattle Egret. Not overly abundant, the only records being 50 in rice paddies below Persopolis, at least 20 along the Dez River, a single at Andemeshik and about 30 at Anzari. Little Egret. Recorded along the rivers in the south-east (three at Dez and about 40 at Andemeshik), at Esfahan (about 20) and in the Caspian lowlands (40 at Anzari and at least ten near Ramsar). Additionally, a single was seen at Arzhan. Western Reef Heron. Common on the Gulf coasts, particularly in mangrove areas. Records included six at Minab, at least 25 at Soorgalm, up to five daily at Bandar Abbas and approximately 30 at Bandar-e-Khamir. Great White Egret. Recorded at three localities: three birds at Soorgalm, four at Bandar Abbas and six at Bandar-e-Khamir. Grey Heron. A single at Minab and two at Soorgalm, then four at each Bandar-e-Khamir, the Dez River and Anzari. Purple Heron. Recorded only around Anzari Lagoon, where up to 20 were seen daily. White Stork. A flock of six seen, soaring over Andemeshik drifting south. Glossy Ibis. From the beach, a flock of approximately 180 were seen flying east at Anzari. A boat trip on the lagoon would certainly produce more of this species. Spoonbill. Four birds at Soorgalm, a single at Bandar-e-Khamir. Greater Flamingo. After 15 at Soorgalm, a further eight were noted at Bandar-e-Khamir and two at Bandar Abbas. Mallard. The only duck recorded, a mere three seen at Lake Arzhan on the first day, with a single the following. Black Kite. Two birds were seen over the hills near Ramsar. White-tailed Eagle. One adult at Anzari Lagoon. Marsh Harrier. Total records consisted of two birds at Arzhan and four both days at Anzari. European Sparrowhawk. One confirmed record - a single harrying Bee-eaters at Polur. Shikra. One bird recorded, an individual at Reynah. Levant Sparrowhawk. The very beginning of autumn passage, a trickle of birds from 26 August onwards - two at Gazor Khan, singles over the Salambar Pass and at Reynah, then a total of three at Polur. Two unidentified accipiters, on Mount Damavand and in Tehran, were probably also this species. Common Buzzard. All in the Alborz mountains or foothills, records consisted of a single near the Salambar Pass, up to three daily at Masuleh and a total of three at Polur, the latter migrating through the valley. Long-legged Buzzard. After one bird in the desert near Shahr-e-Babek, the remaining records were on Mount Damavand, where a single was seen on one day, a pair on the next. Golden Eagle. A total of eleven seen in the Alborz mountains - a single and pair at Gazor Khan, four on the trek over Salambar Pass and another four around Mount Damavand. Bonelli's Eagle. One distant bird at Soorgalm. Osprey. Only recorded along the Gulf coastland - two at Soorgalm, one at Bandar Abbas. Honey Buzzard. Four migrating birds at Polur. Kestrel. Other than two at Arzhan, all records were from the northern mountains - at least 20 at Gazor Khan, 25 on the trek over Salambar and up to six daily in the Damavand/Polur areas. Hobby. Single birds were seen at Gazor Khan and near Salambar Pass, then three at Anzari and two roosting in the city park in Tehran. Chukar. Common in the Alborz mountains, coveys seen daily in the Gazor Khan, Salambar and Damavand areas, totals typically up to 45-50 birds per day. See-see Partridge. A single bird was seen at Minab and a pair at Shush. Grey Francolin. Recorded at Minab and in the Jegen woodlands, a couple seen, more calling. Black Francolin. Two birds seen at the Dez River, one on the road just after dawn, the second in the scrub growths. Quail. One bird flushed at Soorgalm. Water Rail. Only recorded at Arzhan, several calling birds, one seen. Moorhen. Records consisted of at least ten at Arzhan, 15 at Andemeshik and about 40 daily at Anzari. Coot. The only record was two birds at Andemeshik. Purple Gallinule. A total of four birds seen at Anzari. Oystercatcher. One bird seen at Bandar-e-Khamir. Black-winged Stilt. Up to 40 birds seen daily on the small creek at Bandar Abbas, another 20 at Andemeshik. Crab Plover. Records totalled two at Soorgalm and eight at Bandar-e-Khamir. Greater numbers would be seen in the mangroves on Qeshm Island were visited. Great Stone Plover. Three birds at Minab. Cream-coloured Courser. Three distant birds seen in flight at Shahr-e-Babek. Little Ringed Plover. Singles recorded at Bandar Abbas, the Dez River and Shush, eight on the pools at Andemeshik. Ringed Plover. One record, six birds at Anzari. Kentish Plover. All on the Gulf coast, minimums of ten birds seen at Soorgalm and five at Bandar Abbas. Lesser Sand Plover. Only a few recorded, confirmed birds including six at Soorgalm and one at Bandar Abbas. Greater Sand Plover. Rather more numerous than Lesser Sand Plover, records included two at Minab, at least 30 at Soorgalm, one at Khamir and up to five daily at Bandar Abbas. Grey Plover. Four birds at Soorgalm. Red-wattled Plover. From four to six birds at each locality, Red-wattled Plovers were noted at Minab, Jegen, Bandar-e-Khamir, the Dez River, Shush and Andemeshik. White-tailed Plover. At one of the best localities for this species in Iran, a pair was seen on a dry oxbow adjacent to the River Dez. Lapwing. Only recorded at Arzhan, a single on one day, two on the next. Sanderling. Five birds seen on the beach at Soorgalm. Little Stint. Small numbers seen at various localities - about 20 at Soorgalm, two at Bandar Abbas, 12 at Andemeshik and four at Anzari. Temminck's Stint. One record, a single on the

pools at Andemeshik. Curlew Sandpiper. Four birds at Bandar Abbas. Common Snipe. Two birds recorded at Arzhan, eight at Anzari. Bar-tailed Godwit. A single record, one bird at Soorgalm. Whimbrel. A total of five recorded, singles at Minab, Soorgalm and Bandar-e-Khamir, plus two at Bandar Abbas. Curlew. Moderately common on the Gulf coastlines - upward of 25 at both Soorgalm and Bandar-e-Khamir, along with three at Minab and four daily at Bandar Abbas. Ruff. Three birds on the pools at Andemeshik. Spotted Redshank. A single bird recorded, a moulting adult on the pools at Andemeshik. Common Redshank. Flocks of about 30 seen at Bandar Abbas, with smaller numbers at Minab (one bird), Soorgalm (four), Bandar-e-Khamir (five) and Andemeshik (two). Marsh Sandpiper. All in the south, three at Soorgalm, four daily at Bandar Abbas and two at Andemeshik. Greenshank. The only records were single at Minab and on Bandar Abbas seafront, then three on the creek at Bandar Abbas. Green Sandpiper. Widespread. Recorded at all sites in the south, generally in ones or twos, but with counts of four at both Bandar Abbas and Andemeshik. Elsewhere, three were also seen at Anzari and singles at Polur and the Salambar Pass, the latter on a small pool at an altitude of about 3150 metres. Wood Sandpiper. Other than three at Andemeshik, the only records were at Anzari, where five were seen one day and about ten the next. Terek Sandpiper. Common on the Gulf coasts, the best counts being at least 15 at Soorgalm and eight at both Bandar Abbas and Bandar-e-Khamir. In the north, a single was also seen at Anzari. Common Sandpiper. Records in the south included singles at Minab and Soorgalm, up to five daily at Bandar Abbas, one at the Dez River and two at Andemeshik. A single was also noted at Anzari. Turnstone. Eight birds were seen at Minab, four at Soorgalm. Little Gull. Three seen on the beach at Anzari. Black-headed Gull. One record only - a single bird at Anzari. Slender-billed Gull. Flocks of up to 150 seen off Bandar Abbas, but otherwise just four at Bandar-e-Khamir. Lesser Black-backed Gull. One bird at Bandar-e-Khamir. Caspian Gull. Small numbers off both the Gulf coasts and the Caspian Sea, best numbers about 25 at Minab, 10 at Bandar Abbas and at least 40 off Anzari. Armenian Gull. On the Caspian Sea, at least 15 noted at Anzari. Additionally, large numbers of distant gulls were present in Anzari harbour, either this species or Caspian Gull. Gull-billed Tern. Best numbers were at Bandar Abbas, where up to ten were seen daily. Elsewhere, four were seen at Soorgalm and Bandar-e-Khamir, another four at Andemeshik and three at Anzari. Swift Tern. Up to six daily at Bandar Abbas, eight at Bandar-e-Khamir. Lesser Crested Tern. One record, a single at Bandar-e-Khamir. Sandwich Tern. Total records consisted of five at Soorgalm, eight at Bandar Abbas and two at Anzari. Common Tern. Only recorded on the Caspian coast, where at least 35 were seen at Anzari. Saunderson's Tern. A total of six birds seen - one at Minab, six at Soorgalm and one at Bandar Abbas. Whiskered Tern. Abundant at Anzari, with at least 200 noted per day. Elsewhere, six also seen at Bandar Abbas. White-winged Black Tern. One bird at Andemeshik, up to 20 each day at Anzari. Black Tern. One bird at Bandar Abbas, about 15 at Andemeshik, at least 50 over the sea at Anzari and a further 25 over the Anzari marshes. Crowned Sandgrouse. Only recorded at Shahr-e-Babek, four on the first day, about 30 on the next. Black-bellied Sandgrouse. In the Shahr-e-Babek area, six birds seen on one day, four the next. Rock Dove. Recorded in many areas, typically small numbers, eg in Minab, Arzhan, Andemeshik, Anzari and Polur. Feral pigeons were common in Tehran. Wood Pigeon. Abundant along the Dez Rivers, where many hundreds occurred in the riverside thickets. Two also seen in the nearby Shush and a single bird in the Alborz mountains at Gazor Khan. Collared Dove. Numerous along the Dez River, moderately common at several other localities - totals of up to 20 in Minab, Shush and Anzari. Also two in the Jegen woodlands. Turtle Dove. A minimum of 20 along the Dez River, two at Gazor Khan. Laughing Dove. The most abundant dove, particularly common in the south, but recorded at virtually all localities in the country, bar the open deserts and the high altitude areas. The highest concentrations occurred in the Minab-Jegen areas, where many hundreds were present. Ring-necked Parakeet. A total of four seen at Minab, two at Anzari and a minimum of 30 in Tehran. Eurasian Cuckoo. All in the north, singles were seen at Chaboksar, Anzari and Polur. Spotted Little Owl. A speciality of the south-east, four were seen in the date palms at Minab - a single on one day, a family of three on the next. Eagle Owl. One bird noted at Gazor Khan, calling at dawn from the rock massive below the castle. Egyptian Nightjar. Surprise of the trip, a single bird found roosting on the ground in the bushland adjacent to the Dez River. Common Swift. Scattered records across the country - one at Shahr-e-Babek, six at Arzhan, at least 20 at Gazor Khan and a single with Alpine Swifts on Mount Damavand. Alpine Swift. A flock of 15 noted at Arzhan, then a single at Gazor Khan and flocks of at least 35 and 55 on Mount Damavand. White-breasted Kingfisher. Across the south, a total of three seen at Minab, along with singles at Bandar-e-Khamir, the Dez River and Andemeshik. Pied Kingfisher. Only recorded in the far south-west of the country - one in the city of Ahvaz, five along the Dez River, three in Shush and at least 12 at Andemeshik. Little Green Bee-eater. Common in the far south-east, records including up to 25 each day at Minab, six at Jegen and about 20 at Khamir. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater. Scattered records across the south, including a flock of ten at Minab, about 40 en route to Shahr-e-Babek and up to ten at the Dez River, Shush and Andemeshik. European Bee-eater. Flocks of 35-40 seen at Arzhan, then widespread in the north - records including flocks of 40 and 20 at Gazor Khan, 30 at Masuleh, 15 on Mount Damavand and at least 70 at Polur. European Roller. A migrant seen flying across the desert south of Shahr-e-Babek, then more frequent in the north - at least nine in valley below Gazor Khan, one at Chaboksar and two at Anzari. Indian Roller. Common on the coastal strip from Bandar Abbas to Minab, and westward to Bandar-e-Khamir. Up to 15 seen daily, including in the Minab date palms and even on traffic islands in the centre of Bandar Abbas. Hoopoe. Widespread. Two seen at both Minab and Arzhan, three at Andemeshik, then singles at Gazor Khan, Anzari and on Mount Damavand, the latter at an altitude of almost 3000 metres! Wryneck. One bird seen, a single in a small gully at an altitude of over 3100 metres on Mount Damavand. Green Woodpecker. Calling birds were noted at Gazor Khan and in the Masuleh area, up to three daily at the latter locality. Great Spotted Woodpecker. Only recorded at Masuleh, up to four a day. Sind Pied Woodpecker. A speciality of the far south-east, the only reliable localities are the date palms at Minab and the woodland at Jegen. Failed to see any at Minab, but found a pair at Jegen. Syrian Woodpecker. All in the southern foothills of the Alborz, two were seen at Gazor Khan, one at Reynah and three around Polur. Bar-tailed Desert Lark. One bird at Shahr-e-Babek. Desert Lark. A single at Shahr-e-Babek, three at Persopolis. Calandra Lark. Six seen at Arzhan. Short-toed Lark. Flocks of eight and seven seen on

subsequent days at Anzari. Lesser Short-toed Lark. A flock of eight birds seen at Shahr-e-Babek. Indian Sand Lark. A speciality of the south-eastern coastal strip, six were seen at Minab. Soorgalm is another reliable area for this species. Crested Lark. Common at sites along the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf and northwards to Shahr-e-Babek, up to 35 typically seen per day in these areas. Additionally, occasional birds were noted at Persepolis, Arzhan and Shush. Skylark. Six birds in the lower slopes of Mount Damavand. Sand Martin. All with Barn Swallows, a single at Arzhan, three along the Dez River and two at Shush. African Rock Martin. Five seen at Bandar Abbas airport, four at Jegen and two at both Bandar-e-Khamir and Shahr-e-Babek. Crag Martin. Only confirmed records were in the Alborz mountains, where at least 35 were noted at Gazor Khan and about 20 at Mount Damavand. Additionally, several birds were seen over the city of Esfahan that were either this species or African Rock Martin. Barn Swallow. Widespread and fairly common, small numbers recorded at most localities visited. A small roost of about 40 birds occurred in the reedbeds at Arzhan. House Martin. Two birds seen near the city of Rasht. Tawny Pipit. Pairs seen at Arzhan and Gazor Khan, a total of ten seen over three days on Mount Damavand. Tree Pipit. Two birds at Polur, presumably migrants. Water Pipit. All in the Alborz mountains, three near the Salambar pass and two on Mount Damavand. Citrine Wagtail. One record, a single on the creek in Bandar Abbas. Yellow Wagtail. All of the local race where identified, total records consisted of a single at Bandar-e-Khamir, a minimum of 30 each day at Arzhan, one at the Dez River, at least 16 at Shush, ten at Andemeshik, about 15 below the Salambar Pass and five both days at Anzari. Grey Wagtail. Common on streams in the Alborz mountains - record including four at Gazor Khan, at least ten on the trek over the Salambar Pass, up to three daily at Masuleh and two at Polur. Elsewhere, singles were also noted at Arzhan and Andemeshik. White Wagtail. A minimum of 20 per day at Anzari were the best counts of the trip. Elsewhere, birds were scattered across the country, single figures recorded at Bandar Abbas, Bandar-e-Khamir, Esfahan, near Salambar, at Masuleh and at Polur. White-cheeked Bulbul. Abundant at sites in the south of Iran, including Minab, Jegen, the Dez River and Shush. In the north, four were also seen in the town park in Tehran, these probably descendants of escapees. Grey Hypocolius. An Iranian speciality, 12 were seen adjacent to the Dez River and another six in nearby Shush. Wren. Common at Masuleh, up to 20 seen or heard daily. Radde's Accentor. A bird of the Alpine zones, two were seen just below the Salambar Pass and another on Mount Damavand, all birds above 3000 metres. Rufous Bush Robin. Recorded at three localities - four birds at Jegen, one at Arzhan and eight along the Dez River. Robin. Only seen at Masuleh, where up to 15 were noted per day. Common Nightingale. Across the country, one was seen at the Dez River, two in scrub at Chaboksar and a last in the unlikely setting of a Tehran city park. Thrush Nightingale. Recorded only in the last days of the trip - a total of three birds at Polur. Black Redstart. In the Alborz, three at the Salambar Pass, one at Base Camp on Mount Damavand. Common Redstart. A single bird noted in a side valley at Polur. Stonechat. One record, a female at Shush. Pied Stonechat. Three birds on the saltmarshes at Minab. Isabelline Wheatear. Common on the grasslands at Arzhan, at least 25 in the small area I explored. Additionally, one at Andemeshik, five on the plateau below Salambar Pass and about four on Mount Damavand. Northern Wheatear. Abundant in the Alborz mountains - counts including at least 40 in the Salambar Pass area, up to 40 a day on Mount Damavand and five at Polur. Away from the mountains, four were also seen with the Isabelline Wheatears at Arzhan. Black-eared Wheatear. Small numbers in the Alborz mountains, including three at Kazor Khan, ten on the trek over Salambar Pass and about five on Mount Damavand. Desert Wheatear. Abundant at Shahr-e-Babek, a total of about 45 at the northern site, with another ten or so at the western spot. Finsch's Wheatear. A total of eight seen, all in the Alborz mountains - six around Salambar Pass and singles at Gazor Khan and Mount Damavand. Persian Wheatear. Formerly part of Red-tailed Wheatear, this species was moderately frequent in the Alborz mountains. Records consisted of three at Gazor Khan, three below Salambar Pass and a total of thirteen on Mount Damavand. Eastern Pied Wheatear. Largely restricted to the south-east coast, up to six a day were seen in the Minab, Jegen and Bandar-e-Khamir areas. Otherwise, the only records were singles midway between Bandar Abbas and Shahr-e-Babek and at the historic site of Persepolis. Rock Thrush. A total of 21 birds seen - six on the trek over Salambar Pass (including a family group), 15 on Mount Damavand. Blue Rock Thrush. One bird only - seen from the bus north of Andemeshik in the area of the Pol-e-Dokhtar gorges. Blackbird. Up to four daily at each of the following localities: Arzhan, the Dez River and Masuleh. Song Thrush. One bird at Masuleh. Dipper. A single Dipper was seen on the stream at Gazor Khan, another two on the stream near the village of Yuj (beyond the Salambar Pass). Cetti's Warbler. One bird seen and photographed at Anzari. Fan-tailed Cisticola. Three birds in sedge growths behind the historic sites at Shush. Graceful Prinia. All records in the south, six were noted at Minab, one at Khamir, two at Dez, at least 15 at Shush and four at Andemeshik. Moustached Warbler. Noted in the reeds at Arzhan, minimums of three on the first day, five on the second. European Reed Warbler. At least 15 noted at Arzhan, about ten at Anzari. Clamorous Reed Warbler. Fairly common on the pool at Andemeshik, at least ten seen, including a pair feeding fledged young. Great Reed Warbler. A total of eight birds seen, three at Arzhan, five at Anzari. Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. In the south, one bird was seen at Jegen, four at Arzhan and a single at Dez. Additionally, one was seen at Polur in the north. Syke's Warbler. Seven birds seen - two at Minab, two at Jegen, a single at Bandar-e-Khamir and further two at the Dez River. Upcher's Warbler. One bird at Arzhan. The hills surrounding Arzhan are reported to hold some of the highest concentrations of this localised bird anywhere in Iran. Menetries's Warbler. One bird in scrub at Chaboksar on the Caspian coast. Barred Warbler. Two birds at Chaboksar, inhabiting the same scrub as the Menetries's Warbler. Garden Warbler. One bird at Gazor Khan. Blackcap. Three birds seen at Masuleh, one at Polur. Lesser Whitethroat. One bird in scrub at Chaboksar. Hume's Lesser Whitethroat. In a gully at an altitude of approximately 2200 metres, one bird was seen. Common Whitethroat. All identified as belonging to the icterops race, the best numbers were seen in the far north of the country - at least 15 at both Chaboksar and Anzari and up to ten daily at Masuleh. The only other records were two at the Dez River and singles at Gazor Khan and Polur. Green Warbler. Widespread in the forests flanking the Alborz mountains - at least eight at Gazor Khan, up to 15 daily at Masuleh and four at Polur. Greenish Warbler. Presumably a migrant, one seen at Masuleh. Plain Leaf Warbler. Six birds seen - four in the oasis at Arzhan, one in a gully beside the road beneath Mount Damavand and a

last at Polur. Chiffchaff. Common in northern Iran. Records included about 15 at Gazor Khan, ten at Chaboksar, up to five daily at Masuleh, singles on Mount Damavand and a total of 15 at Polur. Willow Warbler. One bird seen at Chaboksar. Spotted Flycatcher. With the exception of the south-east coast and Shahr-e-Babek area, common and recorded at most localities. Best numbers were about 15 in the Arzhan oasis and about four daily at Masuleh, elsewhere generally ones or twos. Red-breasted Flycatcher. All in the north, records consisted of about six daily at Masuleh and singles at Gazor Khan and Polur. Semi-collared Flycatcher. One bird seen, a female in a side valley at Polur. Afghan Babbler. Common in the south-east, with counts of between ten and 25 daily in the Minab, Jegen and Bandar-e-Khamir areas. Several flocks also seen along the Dez River, where the species overlaps with Iraqi Babbler. At this locality, there is a clear habitat differentiation - Afghan Babblers occupying the arid acacia scrub, with Iraqi Babblers in the more dense riverine vegetation, tending to stay within the depths of the bushes. Iraqi Babbler. One of the key species in Iran, restricted to the far south-west in wetland habitats adjacent to Iraqi border and along the nearby Dez River. Along the Dez, surprisingly common, with six family groups encountered in a single morning, totalling about 30 birds. See notes under Afghan Babbler for habitat requirements. Long-tailed Tit. Flocks seen twice at Masuleh, totalling about eight and six birds. Coal Tit. On the northern flanks of the Alborz mountains, two seen at Yuj and up to six daily at Masuleh. Blue Tit. Masuleh provided the only record, about ten birds seen. Great Tit. Widespread in suitable habitat in the north of the country - small flocks seen at Gazor Khan, Yuj, Chaboksar, Anzari, Masuleh, Polur and in the city park in Tehran. Additionally, at least 20 noted along the Dez River in the south. Penduline Tit. At Anzari, a flock of about 20 was found in bushes at the edge of reedbeds. Nuthatch. Three seen in the northern forests - one at Yuj, two at Masuleh. Eastern Rock Nuthatch. The most abundant of the nuthatches in Iran, with 10-15 seen daily at Persopolis, Gazor Khan, the Salambar Pass and the Mount Damavand area, including Reynah. Western Rock Nuthatch. Small numbers in the Alborz mountains - three sightings at Gazor Khan (probably relating to two birds), three at Mount Damavand and two at Polur. Purple Sunbird. Restricted to the far south-east, where common to abundant in the Minab and Jegen areas, counts exceeding 35 a day in Minab, considerably more in Jegen. Isabelline Shrike. A total of four seen at Arzhan. Red-backed Shrike. Scattered individuals in the north - singles at Gazor Khan, Chaboksar, Anzari, Reynah and Polur. Masked Shrike. One immature bird at Chaboksar, sharing a bush with a Red-backed Shrike. Lesser Grey Shrike. Single birds were noted at Jegen, Persopolis, Arzhan on two occasions and at Polur. Southern Grey Shrike. Occasional birds across the country - two at Bandar-e-Khamir, one at Shahr-e-Babek, one at Reynah and two at Polur. Jay. Up to three each day at Masuleh. Magpie. Not recorded along the coasts of the Gulf of Oman or Persian Gulf, nor in the Dez Valley area. Elsewhere, widespread and fairly common, particularly in the foothills of the Alborz mountains and Caspian coastline, the best daily totals being about 20 at Gazor Khan and 15 at both the Salambar Pass and Anzari. Chough. Common at specific localities - flocks of about 200 both days at Arzhan and, in the Alborz region, 35 at Gazor Khan, 150 over the Salambar Pass and up to 20 a day in the Mount Damavand and Polur areas. Alpine Chough. Only recorded high on Mount Damavand, with a flock of 30 one day, four on another. On both occasions, the birds were circling above the snowfields, then dropping towards Base Camp. Pleske's Ground Jay. The jewel of Iran. Three birds were seen approximately 18 km west of Shahr-e-Babek, very brief views of an adult just north of the road, more prolonged views of an adult and immature about 300 metres south. House Crow. Two singles seen at Bandar Abbas. Hooded Crow. Not recorded on the Gulf coasts, nor in the Dez River area (see Mesopotamian Crow). Elsewhere, widespread and generally common, daily totals frequently up to 40. Mesopotamian Crow. Generally considered an isolated race of Hooded Crow, but possibly a species in its own right. Restricted to the marshlands of Iraq and the far south-east of Iran, the bird differs from Hooded Crow in vocalisations and by an off-white replacing the greys of Hooded Crow, giving the bird an appearance somewhat intermediate between Hooded Crow and Pied Crow. Not uncommon at the Dez River, a total of about 15 seen. Rook. Several hundred flocked into Tehran city centre at dusk, roosting in the town park. Brown-necked Raven. Five birds near Jegen, one in the gorges at Pol-e-Dokhtar. Common Raven. Fairly common in the Alborz mountains, records including three at Gazor Khan, six over the Saambar Pass and up to 20 daily at Masuleh. Only two single birds were noted on Mount Damavand however. Common Starling. Best numbers were at Arzhan where an estimated 800 roosted in the reedbeds. Elsewhere, 60 were seen in Shahr-e-Babek town, up to 40 both days at Anzari and a single bird with Bee-eaters (!) at Polur. Rose-coloured Starling. Two records, both in the far south-east - 16 birds at Jegen, four in Soorgalm village. Common Mynah. One record, a single in Bandar Abbas city. House Sparrow. Abundant in towns and villages across the country, including in desert areas and the mountains. Also seen in some rural areas in the north, particularly along the Caspian coast. Dead Sea Sparrow. Restricted to the Dez River and neighbouring areas of the far south-west. At least 40 were seen along the Dez, inhabiting dense riverine vegetation. House Sparrow were also noted in the area, but only around the river bridge. Yellow-throated Sparrow. Moderately common at Jegen, with at least 20 seen in the single morning. Additionally, singles were found at Minab and the Dez River. Rock Sparrow. Frequently seen in the Alborz mountains, records including 30 at Gazor Khan, eight at the Salambar Pass, up to 25 or more per day on Mount Damavand and 16 at Polur. Indian Silverbill. Only seen at Minab, where a total of 12 were encountered - some in the dry river valley, others in the date palms. Chaffinch. Inhabitant of the northern Alborz foothills - one seen at Yuj, minimums of 30 a day at Masuleh. Red-fronted Serin. All in the Alborz mountains, total records consisted of 12 at Gazor Khan, at least 20 over the Salambar Pass and about 60 on Mount Damavand. Goldfinch. Scattered records across the country - about 30 at Arzhan, several calling birds at Masuleh and a total of eight at Polur. Linnet. Abundant in the Alborz mountains, even at altitudes approaching 3000 metres. Generally recorded in flocks of 30-60 on a daily basis in the following localities: Gazor Khan, Salambar Pass, Mount Damavand and Polur. Twite. Surprisingly, only recorded once - five birds on the slopes above Gazor Khan. Crimson-winged Finch. A flock of four birds were seen on my last day at Mount Damavand. Expected more observations at this locality. Desert Finch. Coming to drink at the stream and feeding in nearby fields, a minimum of 35 were noted at Arzhan on the first day, about 15 the next. Common Rosefinch. Several records in the north - seven birds at Gazor Khan, one at Yuj, two at Anzari and two singles at Mount Damavand. Bullfinch. Two birds each day

at Masuleh. Rock Bunting. Only recorded on Mount Damavand, where up to eight were noted per day. Ortolan Bunting. At least 45 were seen daily on Mount Damavand, the area around Base Camp particularly favoured. Additionally, two seen at Gazor Khan. Grey-necked Bunting. Speciality of Mount Damavand, a total of 11 birds seen during my three days on the mountain. Black-headed Bunting. Recorded at two localities, both in central Iran - two flocks (of five and six birds) were seen at Shahr-e-Babek and totals of over 40 on both days at Arzhan. Corn Bunting. Abundant at Arzhan, at least 60 feeding in rough grass beside the stream. Mammal List Golden Jackal. Family of four at Anzari. Ruppell's Fox. Two seen - one in the dry river at Minab, the second on wasteland near the historic sites at Shush. Red Fox. Several seen, all in the north of the country - singles at Gazor Kahn, near the Salambar Pass, at Masuleh and on Mount Damavand. Indian Grey Mongoose. Six seen at Persopolis, living beneath the toilet block beyond the historic site. Brown Bear. Fresh tracks and scuff marks found at Masuleh. Brown Rat. Common at night on the streets of Bandar Abbas. Cape Hare. One at Shahr-e-Babek.