

OMAN 2016

During December 2017 I spent 2 weeks in Oman birdwatching and mammalwatching. The birdwatching was excellent (800 Crab Plover on Masirah island, 500 Steppe Eagle at Salalah rubbish dump, 550 Egyptian Vultures at Muscat rubbish dump, 3 Grey Hypocolius at Mudhay, 2 Desert Owls wadi Ashawq...

Mammalwatching provided some interesting species:

-Arabian Gazelle: early morning 1 at the top of wadi Ashawq gorges near Al Mughsail; a lot of footprints and droppings Oasis Muntasar (1 at dusk came 20m from me as I was pishing foxes; south east Muscat between Dibab and Fins: 8, 2, 1 and 2 in a reserve where they are apparently common.

- Nubian Ibex: early morning 7 including 2 large males in wadi Ashawq gorges near Al Mughsail.

-Striped Hyanea: 1 spotlighted by night Djebel Saman.

-(Arabian) Red Fox: 3 Wadi Ashawq, 3 Djebel Saman (plateau) north Mirbat and 1 Djebel Saman (plateau) south Jinawt, 3 Muntasar oasis in the middle of the desert where you can expect Rüppel's Fox, 1 Ash Shuwaymiyah.

-(Feral?) Cat: Several people have claimed to have seen Gordon's Wild Cat or African Wild Cat in the south part of Oman. But Gordon's Wild Cat is said to occur only in north Oman and UAE. When I have seen the photo of Hanne and Jens Eriksen (on the net) I have immediately recognized the cats I saw several times by night in the southern part of Oman (in wadi Ashawq or Djebel Saman) but I think they are feral cats. If you have more knowledge tell me!

-Rock Hyrax: 5 Djebel Saman; 1 killed by hunter in front of me wadi Ashawq.

-Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins: 3 during the crossing from Masirah island.

I looked hard for Blanford's Fox without success, but 1 great thing is that contrary than in Israël you can spotlight (which allowed me to see 2 Desert Owls). They are, but the density is surely very low.

For Arabian Tahr I wanted to visit Wadi Sareen Reserve in the Al Hajar mountains but never received any answer. Some people have complained for that, and apparently you have to go to the office of protection of wildlife if you want to get a permit.

I didn't go to Jaaluni looking for Arabian Oryx. Due to poaching they are now very few free ones. Ten years ago as I was there, I saw 1 escaped trying to find a way to return inside the enclosure where they were plentyfull . The guide I got didn't want to try to look for wild ones. But in spring 2016 after several attempts in 2014, 2015 and 2016 I finally saw one in Israël.

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