

Kfar Ruppin, Jordan Valley, Israel, Autumn 1997

Janne Kilpimaa

e-mail: kjilpim@jyu.fi

I worked as a volunteer ringer in Kfar Ruppin International ringing station in September-November 1997.

The dates I was present in Kfar Ruppin were 2.9.-17.10., 29.10.-21.11., 28.-30.11. In the mornings I worked at the ringing station and thus most observations are by-products of my work there. In the afternoons there was also time to check the fishponds and nearby fields. Many other birdwatchers participating in Soaring Birds Migration Study and work at the ringing station made also records in Kfar Ruppin during this period. Thus, some records included in this report were first made by other birdwatchers. Especially Chris Dunn, Rami Lindroos and Barak Granat made some good observations. However, bulk of the data of this report is from my notebook and the estimations of numbers of different species is more or less my personal view. I include some records of particular interest made solely by others but in those cases names of the observers are included. Most records refer to kibbutz Kfar Ruppin but some interesting records from nearby areas are also included.

In this report I also use the ringing data of Kfar Ruppin International Ringing Station. Data is collected by many volunteer ringers who were Janne Kilpimaa (September-November), Chris Dunn (September-October), Hans Martens (mid October-mid November), Karl-Heintz Reiser (second half October), Judy Sabo (October), Nadya Zelenova and Igor Reutov (second half November). Ringer in charge was Koby Meyrom from Nir David. This data is especially informative in many passerines which are either scarce or difficult to see or identify in the field including Savi's warbler, Marsh warbler and many Sylvia-warblers. In the ringing data I include also the dates when I was not working at the ringing station or present in Kfar Ruppin in September-November 1997. Monthly totals are from September and October. November is excluded since birds were trapped in two different locations in November and data is not comparable with the two previous months. However, some interesting ringings from November are mentioned in the report.

One must notice that many species of birds leave their breeding grounds already in July-August and passage of many species of birds (Olivaceous warbler, Bonelli's warbler, Swift and Pallid swift etc.) had already passed or ceasing when I arrived to Kfar Ruppin 2.9. Some species of wintering birds (Cormorant, Little bustard, Great black headed gull etc.) were just starting to arrive when I left 30.11. It was interesting to notice how rapidly some migratory species passed through the study area. Turtle dove was the most numerous dove in September but totally absent later in October-November. The passage of Hortolan and Gretchman's bunting was compressed to a few weeks in September.

The abundance of many waders was heavily related to the condition of the ponds and reservoirs of the kibbutz. They were numerous when there were some empty ponds or reservoirs and almost absent when all the ponds were full. Thus it is very difficult to say anything about the timing of their passage. The occurrence of gulls and ducks was also more or less influenced by the condition of the ponds.

Many species of raptors migrate in good numbers through Northern valleys. Raptors and other soaring birds are observed at different stations along Bet Shean valley in Soaring bird migration study. In this report I refer only to records made in Kfar Ruppin where raptor migration was not studied. Raptors migrate in high altitudes and are easily ignored. This explains low numbers of several species of raptors in this report.

Little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Daily 5-10 at the fishponds.

Cormorant *Phacrocorax carbo*
Odd birds and small flocks occasionally during the whole period. Increased in numbers the last days of November.

Pygmy cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*
In September up to 80 daily at the roosting place near the ringing station. Less numerous up to 10-20 in October - November.

White pelican *Pelecanus onochrotalus*
Shooting keeps pelicans away from the fishponds but migrating and wandering flocks were seen occasionally during the whole period.

Little bittern *Ixobrychus minimus*
Single birds seen occasionally during the whole period. One ringed at the fishponds.

Night heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Up to 80 in September. Decreased in numbers in October but was seen daily at the fishponds.

Cattle egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Common during the whole autumn.

Squacco heron *Ardeola ralloides*
Up to 10 in September. Last seen early November.

Great white egret *Egretta alba*
Common wintering bird. First seen 17.9. Increased end October. Max. 400 in November.

Little egret *Egretta garzetta*
Common through the whole autumn. Max. 160 in 17.9.

Grey heron *Ardea cinerea*
Common the whole Autumn. Max. 110 13.9.

Purple heron *Ardea purpurea*
Single birds seen occasionally during the whole period. Max. 4 6.9.

Black stork *Ciconia nigra*
Common during the whole period. 25.9. 240 birds migrating.

White stork *Ciconia ciconia*
Massive migration in September. Biggest flocks up to 20000.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Occasional. Max. 150 7.11. in the reservoir near cemetery.

Glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Small parties seen occasionally.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

First two seen 28.11.

Ruddy shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Only record 30.11. 3 in the big reservoir.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

First seen end October. Max. 30 in November.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Flock of 4 first seen 16.11.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Small flocks seen during the whole autumn.

Teal *Anas crecca*

First 13.9. Max. 50 in November.

Tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*

Single birds occasionally.

Black kite *Milvus migrans*

Common during the whole autumn.

Aegyptian vulture *Neophron aegyptius*

Two adult birds seen 9.9.

Griffon vulture *Gyps fulvus*

All records: 5.9. 1, 7.11. 7.

Montague's harrier *Circus pygargus*

First year birds seen almost daily September early October. One adult female and adult male seen in September.

Pallid harrier *Circus macrourus*

First record 29.9. 2-3 first year birds. 1st year birds seen daily in October. In November one adult male and 1 1st year bird daily near the ringing station.

Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*

First record 3.11. Max. 4 in November.

Marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Up to 7 birds seen daily.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

First record 5.10. Single birds seen almost daily October - November

Levant's sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipeps*

12.9. one migrating with honey buzzards. Common migrating bird in Bet Shean valley end September - early October. However easily ignored since migrates rapidly in a short period with most birds concentrating in huge flocks up to several thousands.

Honey buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Migrates in massive numbers through Bet Shean valley in September. Flocks seen daily in Kfar Ruppin in September.

Common buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Single birds and small flocks seen occasionally. Max. 11 29.10. All identified birds of race vulpinus.

Long legged buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

1-2 seen during the whole period.

Spotted eagle *Aquila clanga*

31.10. 1 (1 caly), 9.11. 1 ad, 1 immature.

Lesser spotted eagle *Aquila pomarinus*

Migrates in big numbers through eastern part of Bet Shean valley end September early October. Flocks migrating in high altitudes easily ignored and thus only record in Kfar Ruppin 5.10. 3.

Booted eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

Single birds seen occasionally especially in September.

Short toed eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Max. 6 in 9.9.. Last records mid October.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

1-2 birds seen almost daily during the whole period.

Red footed falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Ist record 25.9. Max. 30 early October. No records after mid October.

Kestrel *Falco tinnuculus*

Common.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Single birds in September - early October.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

One 1st year bird ringed 31.10. One 1st year bird seen twice in November.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Adult male 2.11., 1 11.11.

Black francolin *Francolinus francolinus*
Single birds and small flocks up to 6 seen daily.

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*
A flock of 22 seen several days at the end of September.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
Seen through the whole period. Max 15 in October - November. Ringing totals: September 2, October 3.

Corncrake *Crex crex*
Two records: 1 28. - 29.9. and 1 at the ringing station in October (Hans Martens, Karl-Heinz Reiser) .

Little crane *Porzana parva*
Single 1st year bird first seen 2.10.

Spotted crane *Porzana porzana*
One record in October (Rami Lindroos).

Water rail *Rallus aquaticus*
First 23.9. Single birds seen occasionally October - November.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
Seen daily. Increased in October with max. of several tens in November.

Coot *Fulica atra*
First 10.9. Max. 100-200 in November.

Common crane *Grus grus*
All records: 10.10. 4, 3.11. 30.

Little bustard *Tetrax tetrax*
Only record 29.11. 2.

Stone curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*
Max. 29.9. 50. Last records in mid October.

Black winged stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Small flocks seen through the whole autumn.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta*
First 3 8.11. Max. 40 16.11. and 60 30.11.

Black winged pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*
Small flocks up to 30 seen almost daily in September.

Collared pratincole *Glareola pratincola*
Less numerous than Black winged pratincole in September. Often seen in mixed flocks with black winged pratincole.

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Common through the whole period.

Little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*

Common in September - October.

Kentish plover *Charadrius alexandrius*

First 13 29.9. Max. 60 8.11.

Pacific golden plover *Pluvialis fulva*

27.-28.9. 1 adult, 20.11. 1 in 1st winter/winter plumage with Eurasian golden plovers.

Eurasian golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

First 3 3.11. Max. 42 16.11., 60 28.11.

White tailed plover *Chettusia leucura*

No records in Kfar Ruppim but 1 in Tirat Zwi 22.9. and 2 near Newe Etan in 14.10.

Sociable plover *Chettusia gregaria*

Only record: 1 in the turf field 9.11.. In addition one record outside the study period in August (Chris Dunn).

Spur winged plover *Hoplopterus spinosus*

Common through the whole period.

Lappwing *Vanellus vanellus*

First 3 20.9. Max. 400 30.11.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Only record 6.9. 6.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Single birds seen occasionally through the whole period.

Little stint *Calidris minuta*

Seen daily. Max. 300.

Temminck's stint *Calidris temminckii*

Up to ten seen daily.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Small flocks seen daily. Max. 50 in November.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Only record 1 6.9.

Black tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*

1 first seen 10.11.

Red shank *Tringa totanus*
Common through the whole autumn.

Spotted red shank *Tringa erythropus*
Occasional. Max. 75 10.11.

Green shank *Tringa nebularia*
12.9. 1.

Wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Up to 10 seen occasionally.

Common sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*
Up to 20 seen daily.

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Common.

Marsh sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
Only record 1 10.11.

Common snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Common.

Black headed gull *Larus ridibundus*
First early November. Thousands end November.

Great black headed gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
First record exceptionally early: 1 adult 10.11., 2 adults 28.11.

Yellow legged gull *Larus cachinnans*
1 adult with Armenian gulls 10.11.

Armenian gull *Larus armenicus*
Scarce in September. Max. 1500 19.11.

Lesser black backed gull *Larus fuscus* subspecies *fuscus*
12.11. 1 adult, 1 1st year bird, 1 adult end November.

Gull billed tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
No records in Kfar Ruppin but 1 adult in winter plumage in Tirat Zwi 3.10.

Little tern *Sterna albifrons*
1 with Whiskered terns 17.9.

Black tern *Chlidonias niger*
Only record 1 st year bird 14.10.

White winged black tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
Small flocks up to 20 in September. Last records mid October.

Whiskered tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

Max 4 adults 2 1st year birds 17.9. Odd birds seen occasionally until 8.11.

Stock dove *Columba oenas*

4 seen 22.10.

Domestic dove *Columba livia*

Common.

Collared dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common.

Turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Up to several hundreds strictly in September.

Laughing dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Common.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Single birds seen in September. First 17.9. One ringed at the ringing station.

Barn owl *Tyto alba*

Common.

Little owl *Athene noctua*

One pair seen daily.

Scops owl *Otus scops*

Max 14 singing males in September. Last records end October.

Eagle owl *Bubo bubo*

One seen end October (Barak Granat).

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

No records in Kfar Ruppin but one near Newe Etan 14.10.

Common swift *Apus apus*

1 6.9.

Alpine swift *Apus melba*

Small flocks seen almost daily in September - early October.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Seen daily at the fishponds, ringing totals: September 14, October 14.

Pied kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Up to 40 seen daily.

Smyrna kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

5-10 seen daily. Ringing totals: September 6, October 2.

Blue cheeked bee eater *Merops superciliosus*
Seen occasionally in September. Max. 15 11.9.

Common bee-eater *Merops apiaster*
Small flocks up to 20 seen occasionally end September early October.

Roller *Coracias garrulus*
Up to 5 seen daily in September.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Common.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
Two ringed at the ringing station, one seen 11.11.

Syrian woodpecker *Dendrocopos syriacus*
Single birds seen daily.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
First seen end October. Max. 300 in November.

Crested lark *Galerida cristata*
Common.

Short toed lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*
First 9 18.9. Max. 49 20.9. Not seen after September. One ringed 26.9.

Calandra lark *Melanocorypha calandra*
All records: 8.11. 30, 9.11 14. and 10.11 1.

Sand martin *Riparia riparia*
Common in September early October. One ringed 28.9.

Red rumped swallow *Hirundo daurica*
Small flocks seen daily in September.

Barn swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Common with max. 1000 29.9. Ringing totals: September 16, October 1.

House martin *Delichon urbica*
Up to 5 Seen occasionally in September.

Water pipit *Anthus spinoletta*
Since first seen 29.10. common with 50-100 daily.

Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*
Common last half of September, first half October. Ringing totals: September 13, October 9.

Meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*
Common since first seen 2.11.

Red throated pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Common since first seen 24.9. mainly early October. One ringed 30.9.

Tawny pipit *Anthus campestris*

First 8 seen 5.10. Up to 20 first half October.

White wagtail *Motacilla alba*

First 3.10., max. 200 in November.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

One ringed 8.10. (Hans Martens, Karl-Heintz Reiser)

Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Hundreds end September early October. All identified birds of subspecies *thundbergi* and *flava*. Ringing totals: September 124, October 5.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

First 5 seen 16.11.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

One ringed in October. Common in November.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

One ringed 29.10. and retrapped 30.10.

Rufous bush robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*

Single birds seen in September. Ringing totals: September 5, October 0.

Blue throat *Luscinia svecica*

Common. First seen 26.9. Ringing totals: September 3, October 149. Most males showed characters of subspecies *volgae*.

Red start *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

First 26.9. Ringing totals: September 1, October 14.

Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

First 9.11. Scarce.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Common September-first half of October with max. 60 29.9. Ringing totals: September 7, October 5.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Ringing totals: September 0, October 12. Race *rubicola*: common second half October and November. Race *maura*: 1 29.10., 2 30.10. Race *armenica* / *variegata*: One 1st year male ringed 2.11. and one seen 3.11.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

1-5 seen daily daily September - October.

Isabelline wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Up to 5 seen daily September first half October. 2 ringed in September.

Black-eared wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*

Single bird in September (Rami Lindroos).

Black bird *Turdus merula*

Common. Ringing totals: September 3, October 2.

Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*

First 5.11.

Savi's warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Rarely seen in the field. Ringing totals: September 45, October 32.

Graceful warbler *Prinia gracilis*

Common. Ringing totals: September 21, October 19.

Fan tailed warbler *Cisticola juncidis*

5-15 seen daily. Ringing totals: September 19, October 13.

Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti*

Common. Increased in numbers in October - November. Ringing totals: September 7, October 17.

Moustached warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*

All records: One record in September (exact date unknown, Chris Dunn), 11.11. 2, 14.11. 1.

Great reed warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Ringing totals: September 7, October 10.

Glamorous reed warbler *Acrocephalos stentoreus*

Common. Ringing totals: September 4, October 9.

Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Common migrating bird in September - October with peak in early October. Ringing totals: September 81, October 280 with 63 1.10.

Reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common. Ringing totals: September 113, October 81.

Marsh warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Ringing totals: September 7, October 64.

Paddyfield warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

1 ringed 10.10. (Judy Sabo, Chris Dunn, Hans Martens, Karl-Heintz Reiser).

Olivaceous warbler *Hippolais pallida*

Seen daily in September. Ringing totals: September 6, October 0.

Lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*
Scarce. Ringing totals: September 4, October 5.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*
Scarce. Ringing totals: September 9, October 2.

Black cap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Scarce. 1 ringed in September and 4 in October.

Garden warbler *Sylvia borin*
One ringed 10.10. (Judy Sabo, Chris Dunn, Hans Martens, Karl-Heintz Reiser).

Sardinian warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*
Scarce. Ringing totals: September 7, October 1.

Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
One seen 3.9. and one ringed 11.9.

Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Very common migrating bird mainly late September early October. Ringing totals:
September 591, October 1032 with 251 1.10.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
First 17.10. Common end October and November. Ringing totals: September 0, October 19.

Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*
Scarce in September. 3 ringed in September.

Penduline tit *Remiz pendulinus*
Two ringed and one seen in November.

Great tit *Parus major*
Single birds seen almost daily.

Palestine sunbird *Nectarinia osea*
Common. Ringing totals: September 52, October 46.

Yellow vented bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*
Very common resident. Ringing totals: September 14, October 15.

Isabelline shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
One seen and trapped end October (Judy Sabo, Hans Martens, Barak Granat). One ringed
3.11.

Red backed shrike *Lanius collurio*
Seen daily September - October. Ringing totals: September 13, October 7.

Lesser grey shrike *Lanius minor*
25.9. 1 adult.

Great grey shrike *Lanius excubitor*
Single birds seen occasionally. 2 ringed in September.

Wood chat shrike *Lanius senator*
1-3 birds seen daily in September.

Masked shrike *Lanius nubicus*
Scarce end September early October. Two ringed in September and 1 in October.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Seen once in September. Common up to 2000 October - November.

Golden oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
One seen 5. and 6.10.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Common.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Common.

Hooded crow *Corvus corone cornix*
Common.

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Very common.

Spanish sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*
Common. Ringing totals: September 24, October 33.

Dead sea sparrow *Passer moabiticus*
Absent in September. Small flocks seen daily October - November. 27 ringed in October.

Indian silverbill *Euodice malabarica*
All records: 5.10. 3, 10.11. 4 and 3 ringed in October.

(**Avadavat** *Amavanda amavanda*)
13.9. 1 near the ringing station. Probably an escape.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
First 29.10. Common in November. 4 ringed in October.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*
First 30.10. Scarce.

Serin *Serinus serinus*
29.10. 1, 19.11. 1.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*
Only record 5.11. 6.

Green finch *Carduelis chloris*

Common. Ringing totals: September 11, October 29.

Gold finch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Single birds and small flocks seen occasionally in November.

Desert finch *Rhodopechys obsoleta*

Common end September - November. Ringing totals: September 12, October 9.

Corn bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Seen rarely in Kfar Ruppin. However in Tirat Zwi a flock of 100 22.9.

Ortolan bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Common chiefly in September. 4 ringed.

Gretchman's bunting *Emberiza caesia*

Chiefly in September. 18 ringed 5.-20.9.