

### **Status of Conservation Projects**

We at NatureSomaliland have been working on a grand plan to have the government (through the Ministries of Range and Fisheries and Marine Resources) to designate two special IBA (Important Bird Areas) sites as protected areas. They are the Sacada Ad-Diin/Ceebaad Island complex just outside Zeila village on the border with Djibouti as a Marine Protection site and the tri-district area between Ga'a'n Libaah Mountain and the series of plains to the west all the way to almost the outskirts of Hargeisa. There are five species of bustard, at least eleven endemic or near-endemic larks and six varieties of courser in this expansive area.

### **Conservation Concerns**

There are a plethora of conservation concerns in Somaliland ranging from poaching of birds (and other unique wildlife) for exportation to the Middle East, alien plant and bird (Indian House Crow along the coast all the way to Berbera) invasions and tree and forest clearance for charcoal and subsistence cultivation. There is desertification going on at such a fast scale because large swathes of acacia woodland disappear by the month.

The ministries and the folks technically tasked and paid to protect our Marine and land resources hardly get out of towns to even look around. They even issue hunting and collecting permits to any one able to pay a few hundred dollars.

### **Significant Bird Sightings / Discoveries**

There is a confusing and a POSSIBLY new taxon of Scops Owl found on Ga'an Libah Forest Reserve by the BirdQuest birding group we hosted here last September. There is still uncertainty as whether it's an ssp of the African, *Otus senegalensis*, Eurasian, *Otus scops* or may be even related to an Arabian bird.

The same birding group found Collared Lark near Balli-Calanle/Tuula-Buur red sand country south east of Burao.

Around the Tuuyo and BaCade Plains, there is confusion as to whether the *Somalicus* ssp of Somali Lark is not actually what has been proposed as Sharpe's, a ssp of Chestnut-naped.

The phenomenon of the rare and hence vulnerable Warsangli Linnet is rare no more on and around Daallo Forest Reserve and the northern face of the escarpment. Apparently, this species comes up to the almost 3000mm site in large flocks when it's 'flocking' outside the breeding season.

### **New Contacts with other Bird Clubs**

We have contact with Mr Houssein Rayalle of DjiboutiNature. We at NatureSomaliland would love to collaborate with DjiboutiNature on the Indian House Crow menace.

### **5. Promotional Activity for ABC (e.g. talks)**

I make it a point of responsibility to proselytise on the important link birds form in the hierarchy of life especially to younger people in our community and that for anyone interested in learning about the magic of birds, the ABC site is one of the most important resources in the web to learn about African birds.

### **6. Other Concerns or Issues**

I and Houssein Rayalle may get a chance to go join Dr Kavanagh of the Middle East Bird Club in April to learn to tag migrant birds in Bahrain so we could do it on our side of the Red Sea / Gulf of Aden.