



**TROPICAL
BIRDING**



OMAN: MIDDLE EASTERN INTRO TOUR

**A Tropical Birding Set-Departure
Birding Tour**

November 1-14, 2025

**Guides: Ken Behrens &
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Photos & Videos by Ken Behrens

TOUR SUMMARY

Oman is a wonderful birding destination that flies under the radar, at least for most American birders. It's a great place to have your first experience of the Middle East, although it belies many of the stereotypes of the region. Oman is peaceful and hospitable, and has excellent infrastructure - throughout this trip, we stayed in hotels that were mostly top-notch, and had very good food at pretty much every meal! Geographically, Oman is situated in the southern Arabian Peninsula, which puts it in the transitional zone between Africa and Asia. The eastern side of the country has a strong Asian flavor, while the southwest corner is the easternmost outpost of Africa in biogeographical terms. The east has cultivated plains and the juniper woodlands of the Al Hajar Mountains, while the southwest has a savanna habitat that feels very African, down to the baobab trees! Between lies the vast desert of the "Empty Quarter" replete with oases that are wonderful migrant traps. We recorded 223 bird species on this trip, including two great monotypic bird families: Crab Plover and Gray Hypocolius. When the group voted for their top highlights at the end of the trip they chose: 1) A pelagic trip we did in the southwest, where we recorded Jouanin's

Petrel, Persian Shearwater, and four species of sea turtles; 2) Blanford's Fox, a seldom-seen carnivore that we spotted on a night excursion in the Al Hajar Mountains; and 3) The epic three-day crossing of the "Empty Quarter" where we found sandgrouse visiting oases, lots of migrating birds, and of course the Gray Hypocolius.

For an immersive experience of this trip's highlights, check out the 11-minute video trip report:

VIDEO TRIP REPORT on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7onNQNEozk>

ITINERARY

November 1	Arrival in Muscat. Afternoon birding around city.
November 2	Muscat and Al Fahal Island. Drive to Sohar.
November 3	Morning Liwa. Drive to Nizwa.
November 4	Al Hajar Mountains (Saiq Plateau etc.)
November 5	Nizwa to Al Ghaftain.
November 6	Al Ghaftain to Thumrait.
November 7	Thumrait to Mudday to Salalah.
November 8-11	Salalah and Dhofar region.
November 12	Flight from Salalah to Muscat. Drive to Mahoot (Crab Plover Extension)
November 13	Mahoot, Fillim, Barr al Hikman area.
November 14	Mahoot to Muscat. Departure.

PHOTO GALLERY

A full [Flickr gallery](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kbehrens/albums/72177720330698161/) of photos from this trip is on Ken's Flickr page: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kbehrens/albums/72177720330698161/>

BIRD LIST

The full list, including numbers and many other details, can be see as part of the [eBird trip report](https://ebird.org/tripreport/428646) for this trip: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/428646>

NATURALLY ADVENTUROUS PODCAST EPISODE

Ken and Charley spend a [full episode of their podcast](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/s6e21-oman-top-6-highlights-with-charley-ken/id1525204132?i=1000742189313) talking about Ken's top 6 favorite experiences of this Oman trip, plus some overall reflections and observations about the country. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/s6e21-oman-top-6-highlights-with-charley-ken/id1525204132?i=1000742189313>

MAMMAL LIST

Arabian Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes arabica</i>
Blanford's Fox	<i>Vulpes cana</i>
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Five-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>
Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin	<i>Sousa plumbea</i>
Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>

REPTILE LIST

Hadramawt Sand Lizard	<i>Mesalina adramitana</i>
Oriental Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
Fringe-fingered Lizard	<i>Acanthodactylus</i> sp.
Dhofar Leaf-toed Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus lemurinus</i>
Bar-tailed Semaphore Gecko	<i>Pristurus celerrimus</i>
Eastern Arabian Fan-toed Gecko	<i>Ptyodactylus orlovi</i>
Dhofar Fan-toed Gecko	<i>Ptyodactylus dhofarensis</i>
Green Sea Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
Hawksbill Sea Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
Olive Ridley Sea Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>
Loggerhead Sea Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>



One of the big targets and highlights of this trip was the monotypic family known as Gray Hypocolius.