

Confirmed breeding of the Lichtenstein Sandgrouse, *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, from the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract. The discovery of a Lichtenstein Sandgrouse nesting site is the second confirmed record from the United Arab Emirates and confirms this species as a resident although elusive breeder. Notes on the nest and eggs are also presented.

Kurzfassung. Der Fund eines Nestes des Wellenflughuhns stellt den zweiten Brutnachweis für die Art in den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten dar und bestätigt die Art als schwer zu erfassenden Brutvogel. Angaben zum Nest und zu den Eiern werden mitgeteilt.

Key words. Arabia, Middle East, breeding, nest, eggs.

Introduction

Lichtenstein Sandgrouse, *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, has a widespread breeding distribution throughout north Africa, Sinai, Israel, Jordan, Iran, Pakistan (ASPINALL 1996, HOLLOM et al. 1988, PORTER et al. 1996) and the rocky areas of western, southern and eastern Arabia (JENNINGS 1995). In the United Arab Emirates (UAE) it is rarely seen, except when flushed, although generally described as a common resident of hillsides, stony wadis and gravel plains (RICHARDSON 1990). According to RICHARDSON & ASPINALL (1998) it is a “scarce and elusive breeding resident” to the UAE. ERIKSEN & SARGEANT (2000) describe them as a “fairly common breeding resident” from the neighboring Sultanate of Oman. Although described as sedentary, no information exists on nests from Arabia (JENNINGS 1995). This note confirms the breeding season and describes the nest and eggs of the Lichtenstein Sandgrouse from the UAE.

The record

Location. A breeding bird was located on the golf course in the grounds of the Hatta Fort Hotel, Hatta (Dubai Emirate) at 24°49'09"N, 56°07'53"E – elevation 313 m, on 9 July 2001 shortly after 08h00. The ambient temperature at the time of the sighting was 26°C, which increased to a maximum of 40°C later during the day. The general area can be described as rocky barren opheolite hills and mountains with sparse vegetation dominated by *Euphorbia larica* and *Acacia tortilis*. The Hatta Fort Hotel golf course is located within the fenced off grounds with natural fairways and grassed greens.