THE OBSERVATION OF BIRD DURING THE AUTUMN MIGRATION IN THE VICINITY OFBASRAH CITY IRAQ

by

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The bird study in Iraq and the Arabian countries depends, for a long time, on those studies done by amateurs and some researches such as Shape (1886), Meinerzhagen (1914), Thornhill (1918), Ticehurst et al. (1922) and Ticehurst (1927). During the fiftees, Allouse (1953, 1957) shows mnch attention to the Iraqi birds when he pnblished his book «Birds of Iraq». In that book he put the principles for a future studies. Latter on few workers take the lead in bird study in Iraq, (Kainady 1976, Kainady and Al-Dabbagh 1976, Kainady and Al-Joborae and Atti 1977), but unfortunately, the study is still at its starting stages. The present study presents an additional information to those already at hand in Iraq.

Study area:

The observation area is located among differrnt geographicl environments; desert, marshes, swamps, riverine and date-palm roves. Each environment has its own birds species which live, migrate to or pass on.

The preliminary investigations pointed out that these environments encourage the birds to live in temporarily or permanently. the encoursgements are represented by plant roots, shcells (snails), reeds, Papyruses, other aquatic vegetations and water surfaces, which have a lot of small fish and water insects. Moreover, these water surfaces are prehibited against the hunters and fishers. The factors above make these environment safe for the birds. Therefore, it is argent to study the birds from the point riew of species, numbers, movements in this area.

Methods

Four trips a week have carried out by special car. Two of them at the morning- an hour before sunrise even two hours after and the other at the evening two hours before sunset. The total of 276 hour have carried out regularly during the period from 10.7.86 to 10.12-86.

Birds have been observed carefully by eye and field glass in order to be classified, accounted, and to know their movements. Therefore, the Auther had to hunt some samples from them for further investigations on their species. These samples have classified and studied in the Basrah Natural History Museum and showed, but some of them have rare skins. The samples have kept in the Museum. Also, the bird environment have photographed. The study area (figl) have been divided into four sections as follows:-

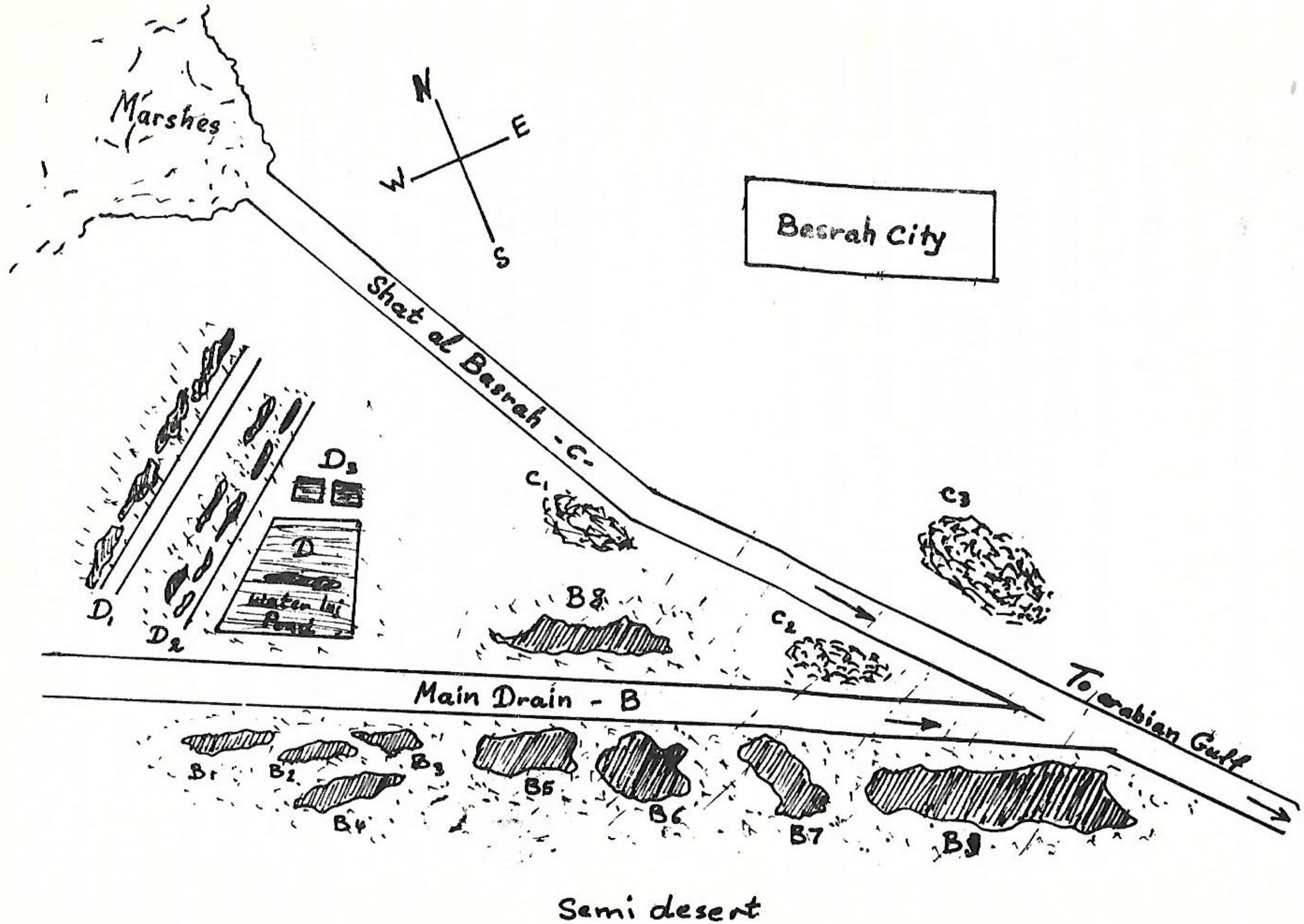
Semi-desert area(A): It has shape of 12 Km^2, Nearly dense vegetations are separated in this area particularly in the shallow depressions which filled by water after the rainfall. These depressions are formed ponds which attract some birds.

M.O.D. CANAL(B):

The main drain which is called the third river has constructed to drain the excess water from the Irrigated landsin central and southern water flows in this drain it expands the water surfaces in the areas as well as the shallow ponds and swamps, between the semi-desert and the main drain. These ponds and swamps withdrew several hundreds of the water birds. These ponds are as following:-

1- Swamp group (B_1-B_4)

Very shallow and saline swamps located adjacent to the M.O.D. canal. they are dried during summer, no vegeatations


Marshes
N
E
W
S
Basrah City
Shat al Basrah -C-
D1
D2
D3
D
Water lui Pond
C1
C2
C3
B8
Main Drain - B
To arabian Gulf
B1
B2
B3
B4
B5
B6
B7
B9
Semi desert

2- Ponds group (B_5,B_6)

These are larger and deeper than the above. The water remains for a long tine., it has mudy Button and it formed through the diging activties of the M. O. D. canal, rain and flew water from the semi-desert. This ponds serve as a overneight places for several bird spieces.

3- Swamp group (B_7,B_9)

Periodical swamps, they have large shallow surface, dried in summer and fill with rainy water soon. In winter attracts many Gulls.

SHAT-Al-BASRAH (C):

This river connects between the Hammar marsh and Khor Al-Zubair (Arabian Gulf). It attracts some water birds. It has been noted that some garbage dumping areas (C1-C3) which attract hundreds of Black kits from these areas these birds move to the surroundings areas.

2- Water injection pond (D):-

The reserve water areas of the industrial facility located northeast of the area and lies within the critical area

The Pond has surface dimensions of 110 m × 90 m having a depth of 50 to 150 cm, which has atendency toward eutrophy, it must be considersd as attractive area to water birds.

The pond is separated into two water surfaces segments by means of a dam, so that two water surfaces of appr, 700 × 900 ha and 500 m × 900 ha are created. The dam has no connection to the land. This water surface attracts thousend of Birds (Furbeth 1985).

ANNEXED PONDS

Ponds Group (D1):-

these are large deep and saline adjacent to the main road, they are surrounded by vegetations, dried in summer. In winter attracts some wade birds for long period.

Swamps Group (D2):-

they are located adjacent to the main pond. These are shallow and saline. They are sustained by seepage and leakage water from the main pond and from the rain. They are dried during summer.

Ponds Group (D3):-

Two large water surfaces, supplied with water by pumps. They are shallow, therefor, vegetations are grow such as reeds, popyruses. Thus it is suitable for wade birds.

Bird Control

1. Little Grebe Podiceps ruficollis (Pallas).

Winter visitor and is reported by Gumming (Sharpe 1886) in the Fao area as arriving in September and leaving in February. In winter it spreads out to the rivers and swamps where it is not usually found during the breeding seaon.

Through the bird control in Basrah area it was noted as following:-

21/July (25 Burid), 22/7(50), 24/7(100), 27/7(40), 31/7(6), 1/August (20), 4/8(30), 24/8(100), 25/(65), 4/September(15) ,9/9(25, 10/9(100, 14/9(120, 21/9(100),24/(150), 1/October(30), 2/10(20), 8/10(40), 13/10(50), 15/10(150), 19/10(30), 22/10(30) 23/10(15), 28/10(6), 29/10(100), 3/November(50), 9/11(100) 12/11(50), 18/11(100), 20/11(50), 30/11(30) 1/December(50), 3/12(30), 10/12(20)

2. Black-necked Grebe:- – Podiceps n. nigricollis Brehm.

Resident in small numbers, breeding in the marshes, in winter it spreads out to the rivers (Allouse, 1953)24/8(3) 31/7(5) 24/8(8) 8/10(3 15/10/(3) 12/11(7) 1/12(15) 3/12(4).

3. Great Crested Crebe Podiceps. C. cristatus (L.).

Awinter visitor. Breeding birds were reported in August, of the year it was seen on the rivers and flooded areas, from Mosul in the north to Basra and Fao in the South. (Allouse, 1953).

21/7(2) 21/8(5) 31/8(10) 10/9(2) 14/9(3) 18/9(1) 21/9(1) 24/9(1) 29/9(2) 1/10(3) 1/10(10) 13/10(3) 13/10(16) 28/10(16) 28/10(3) 3/11(6) 12/11(10) 1/12(10) 13/12(5)

4. Grey Heron Ardea C. Cinerea L.

Very common in winter and widely distributed. Herons also breed in the small islands at the head of the Arabian Gulf.

Nests and eggs were reported from that area in May (Ticehurst et al 1922)

21/7(2) 24/9(5) 24/9(15) 29/9(8) 2/10(1) 8/10(2) 12/10(8) 15/10(2) 16/10(3) 22/10(3) 9/11(4) 18/11(5) 3/12(20)

5. Little Egret Egretta. g. garzetta (L.)

Common in small numbers during the summer. It breeds in the marshes and in the Fao area.
2/10(40) 16)10(1) 26/10(1) 3/12(4) 10/12(3)

6. White Stork - Ciconia C. Ciconia (L.).

White storks are winter visitors and passage migrants in Flocks of autumn migrants from the north become abundant from mid-september till the end of October, and spring migrations extend from mid-february to early April-(Allouse, 1953). 22/7(3) 1 hanted 2 speaiemens.

7. Flamingo:- Phoenicopterus ruber roseus.

Fairly common and resident. Breeds in the marshes of southern Iraq and the head of the Arabian Gulf.
13/10(20) 15/10(4)

8. Teal:- Anas C. Crecca L.

A very commen winter visitor at the met with on rivers, marshes and irrigation canals from August and leave within the first half of April (Ticehurst et. at.,1922)
24/9(4) 29/9(1) 26/10(5) 29/10(100) 9/11(5)

9. Marbled duck:- - Anas angustirostris Menetries.

Fairly common and resident, there are but few winter records, one from Diala river and another from Musul (Ticeh, 1926)
30/8(6)

10. Wigeon:- Anas penelope (L.)

Very plentiful in winter suitable localities such as rivers, marshes and floaded areas; arriving in September and leaving in March (Ticehurst, 1922).
29/10(150) 3/11(100) 9/11(350) 12/11(400) 18/11(200) 20/11(200) 1/12(200 – 300) 3/12(350) 10/12(50)

1. Gadwall:- Anas strepera L.

Very common. It arrives in September and leaves in March of the year.
29/10(150) 12/11(300) 20/11(300) 1/12(300 – 400) 3/12(350) 10/12(100)

12. Shovler:- Spatula Clypeata (L.)

A very common winter visiter, arriving in late August or September and leaving in March of the year (Allouse, 1953).
29/9(2) 1/10(2) 28/10(150) 29/10(200) 9/10(20) 3/12(10)

13. Common Pochard: Aythya ferina (L.)

A commen winter visitor. Reported as arriving in October and leaving in March , or as late as the middle of April.
24/9(20) 29/9(4) 1/10(2) 8/10(15) 19/10(400) 22/10(50) 23/10(10) 28/10(200) 29/10(350)
3/11(1000) 9/11(600) 12/11(1200) 18/11(800) 20/11(100 – 1200) 1/12(1500 – 2000) 3/12(1500) 10/12(500)

14. Tufted Duck:- Aythya Fuligula (L.)

A common winter visitor, the species arrives and leaves nearly at the same time as other diving ducks. (Allouse 1953)
26/10(30) 28/10(100) 29/10(50) 3/11(100) 9/11(150) 12/11(250) 18/11(50) 20/11(50 – 100) 1/12(50 – 150) 3/12(50 – 100) 10/12(30 – 50)

15. Black Kite:- - Milvus l. lineatus.

A very common winter visitor, arriving in August and September and leaving in April. (Allouse 1953).
1/8(6) 6/8(5) 4/9(80) 10/9(300) 14/9(350) 17/9(100) 18/9(15) 24/9(4) 29/9(2) 8/10(50) 12/10(55) 16/10(10) 19/10(32) 19/10(40) 22/10(50) 25/10(15) 26/10(180) 29/10(20) 9/11(100) 12/11(120) 18/11(50) 3/12(45)

16. Osprey:- Pandion h. haliaetus (L.)

An uncommon winter visitor. Few nonbreeding birds may stay as late as July and may even spend the summer. 2/8(2) 29/9(1)

17. Coot:- - Fulica a. atra L.

A very common winter visitor. Breeding was reported in June, and many adults and young could be seen from July to September, (Allouse 1953)
21/7(12) 22/7(40) 24/(15) 27/7(30) 31/7(20) 12/8(14) 24/8(15) 25/8(24) 4/9(37) 7/9(20) 9/9(20) 14/9(150) 21/9(40) 24/9(4) 29/9(150) 1/10(6) 8/10(65) 13/10(100) 15/10(160) 19/10(7) 22/10(150) 23/10(50) 26/10(40) 28/10(200) 29/10(120) 9/11(100) 12/11(100) 18/11(1200 – 1500) 20/11(1000 – 1300) 3/12(2000) 10/12(1500 – 2000)

18. White tailed Plover:- **Chettusia leucura (Lichtenstein).**

Very common and resident,
24/7(12) 22/7(7) 4/8(4) 31/8(3) 3/9(40) 4/9(3) 10/9(2) 17/9(10) 17/9(10) 12/9(2) 42/9(2) 13/9(30) 2/10(2) 4/10(5) 15/10(1) 16/10(1) 29/10(4)

19. Red-watted Lapwing:- **Lobivanellus indicus aigneri.**

A common resident and widely distributed. 21/9(3)

20. Spur-winged Plover:- **Hoplopterus spinosus (L.).**

Winter ivsitor. The status of this bird in our area requires investigation.
31/8(3) 4/9(30) 29/9(2) 8/10(1)

21. Grey Plover:- **Charadrius squatarola (L.)**

Probably a passage migrant in the Fao district, as comming reported it in September and October (Sharpek 1891)
12/10(30) 15/10(2) 16/10(30) 16/10(30)

22. Ringed Plover:- **Charadrius hiaticula tundrae (Lowe).**

Probably a passage migrant,
17/9(15) 21/9(10) 29/9(7) 1/10(5) 2/10(3)

23. Little Ringed Plover:- - Charadrius dubius Curonicus Gmelin.

Very common as resident and widely distributed migrating locally where the breeding season is over. Frequently seen in winter along the edges of rivers, canals, and marshes. (Allouse 1953). 12/8 (17) 20/9 (25)

24. Kentish Plover: - Charadrius a, alexandrinus L.

Fairly common and resident throughout our area. Reported as breeding at Fao (Cumming, 1918) at Basrah (Tomlinson 1916). Breeding season is from early April to June.
25/8(50) 14/9(30) 18/9(200) 27/9(50
1/10(30) 1/10(20) 2/10(2) 16/10(10) 3/12(30)

25. Great white Heron

Awinter visitor in small numbers arriving in November and leaving in March
15/10 (7) 21/10 (3) 14/11 (9) 11/12 (5)

26. Common Snipe:- Capella g, gallinogo (L.).

A common winter visitor frequenting suitable places from northern to southern Iraq.

The majority arrive in the second half August and leave by early May.
4/8(1) 18/9(1) 29/9(2) 15/10(5) 19/10(10) 19/19(10)

27. Little Stint:- Calidris minuta (Leisler).

A passage migrant, reported by Ticehurst (1922) as common in the marshes in autumn and spring migrations.
24/7(10) 27/7(1) 3/8(30) 4/8(20) 21/8(40) 24/8(10) 30/8(40)
3/9(100) 3/9(120) 7/9(5) 9/9(40) 21/9(20) 12/9(80) 24/9(10)
29/9(100) 30/9(80) 31/9(20)
1/10(10) 1/10(120) 2/10(12) 2/1(20) 3/1(100
12/10(12) 15/10(50) 15/10(70) 16/10(30) 19/10(15)
18/11(180) 30/11(40) 1/12(20)

28. Dunlin:- Calidris a. alpina (L.).

A common winter visitor, arriving in early August and leaving by the middle of May.
24/7(1) 26/7(19) 3/8(20) 21/8(10) 24/8(200) 25/8(20) 29/8(30)
3/9(70) 4/9(51) 10/9(15) 17/9(8) 21/9(25) 24/9(3) 29/9(8)
29/9(30) 1/10(5) 1/10(50) 2/10(20) 3/10(70) 12/10(5) 16/10(100)
19/10(190) 22/10(20) 9/11(15) 12/11(2) 18/11(80) 30/11(40)
1/12(50) 3/12(300)

29. Curlow Sandpiper:- Calidris tastacea (Pallas).

Reported by Memnertzhagar (1914) in winter and reported at Fao on April.
26/7(10) 4/8(20) 3/9(60) 4/9(20) 7/9(30) 17/9(30) 24/9(10)
24/9(5) 29/9(30) 4/10(20) 16/10(70)

30. Ruff:- - Philomachus pugnax.

A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant, frequenting marshes and rivers.
3/8(30) 25/8(50) 9/9(30) 21/9(1) 24/9(15) 27/9(50) 1/10(5) 12/10(15) 16/10(15) 19/10(30) 19/10(30) 22/10(10) 29/10(3) 12/11(1)

31. Black-winged Stilt:- Himantopus h. himantopus (L.)

Common and resident in the marshes of central and southern Iraq.

In winter it spreads out to shallow water and river banks
15/7(15) 16/7(21) 24/7(44) 26/7(7) 25/8(10) 7/9(140) 9/9(20) 14/9(20) 17/9(20) 21/9(10) 1/10(60) 16/10(10) 19/10(7) 22/10(5) 15/10(1)

16/7(8) 21/7(3) 24/7(40) 4/8(25) 21/8(8) 24/8(40) 25/8(4) 3/9(80) 4/9(15) 7/9(50) 10/9(30) 21/9(40) 24/9(20) 29/9(10) 1/10(200) 4/10(22) 15/10(60) 16/10(20) 19/10(15)

32.Blacktailed Godwit:- Limosa L. limosa.

Acommon winter visitor frequenting the muddy marging of marshesand flooded places from central to southern Iraq. It is reported as arriving in August and leaving in April.
12/10(10) 15/10(50) 19/10(100) 22/10(12) 24/10(50) 15/10(80) 16/10(100) 9/11(100) 18/11(7)

33. Common Redshank: Tringa totanus (L.).

Winter visitor. It mostly arrive in mid-August and leave in mid-May.
26/7(6) 4/8(5) 21/8(15) 25/8(150) 30/8(50) 7/0(60) 14/9(40) 21/9(20) 12/9(35) 29/9(20) 30/9(150) 1/10(60) 2/1(50) 8/10(2) 13/10(8) 15/10(45) 16/10(120) 19/30(95) 22/10(4) 3/11(40) 9/11(20) 18/11(330) 20/11(300) 30/11(1) 1/12(10) 3/12(100) 10/12(30)

34. Marsh-sandpiper:-

A fairly common winter visitor 2/10(3)

35. Greenshank:- Tring nebularia (Gunnerus).

Common winter visitor, the majority arrive in August and leave by the end of April.
26/7(4) 21/8(8) 25/8(80) 30/8(150) 3/9(20) 4/9(25) 29/9(10) 15/10(120) 15/10(20) 16/10(100) 19/10(120) 22/10(30) 25/10(16) 3/11(20) 9/11(4) 12/11(4) 18/11(130) 20/11(150) 30/11(20) 1/12(5) 3/12(30) 10/12(30)

36. Avocet:- Recurvirostra avosetta L.

Fairly common and resident, In winter it spreeds out to the rivers and marshes.
21/7(50) 21/8(300) 25/8(100) 27/8(300) 30/8(20) 31/8(300) 3/9(120) 4/9(200) 4/9(320) 7/9(140) 9/9(100) 17/9(2) 21/9(90)

27/9(330) 29/9(20) 30/9(2) 1/10(3) 2/10(10) 3/10(90) 4/10(30) 12/10(30) 15/10(2) 16/15(24) 19/10(3) 22/10(7) 26/10(3) 18/11(2)

37. Pratincole:- Glareola nordmanni Fischer.

This bird is summer visitor. Reports show that this bird arrives in late March and leaves in early September and there are no records in winter (Allouse, 1953)
24/7(2) 1/10(5)

38. Black-headed Gull:- Larus r. ridibundus L.

A common winter visitor, According to Ticehurst (1922) Some may arrive by mid-July, or stay to the end of May.
15/7(25) 21/7(50) 27/7(100) 3/8(100) 21/8(110) 25/8(25) 27/9(12) 3/9(20) 19/10(2) 10/12(25)

39. Slender-billed Gull:- Larus genei Breme.

Common and resident, with wider distribution in winter.
15/7(150) 16/7(200) 21/7(190) 3/8(180) 25/8(150) 3/9(60) 7/9(300) 9/9(50) 14/0(200) 21/9(6) 27/9(100) 1/10(20) 12/10(10) 15/10(10) 19/10(3) 3/11(25) 3/12(15) 19/12(30)

40. Common Tern:- Sterna hehirundo L.

The majority of common. Terns are Summer visitors. Breeding places were reported from the vicinity of Basrah in early June. (Allouse 1953)

27/7(30) 16/7(20) 21/7(4) 4/8(10) 17/9(1) 1/10(1) 2/10(15) 10/10(20).

41. Little Tern:- Sterna a. albifrons Pallas.

Probably a summer visitor or resident, The majority arrive in late April and leave by the end of September.
22/7(50) 7/9(5)

42. Red-crested Pochard:- Netta rufina (pallas).

Winter visitor, main flocks arrive in October and leave in March, but some may leave as late as the end of April.
26/10(100) 12/11(300) 20/11(300) 1/12(300) 10/12(100)

Discussion

During the observation of birds in the area of study a number of species appeared to be very distinctive from those species, the diving ducks show a greater density in the Water injection lake. During December 1986 the numbers of this species varied between 1000-3000. such as Wigeon, Cadwall, CommonPochard, Tufted duck.

The numbers of Common Pochard increased during December, 1986 and reached 2000. The present study shows that the Tufted duck has ahigh density especially during November, 1986 where its numbers reached (250) bird. This density remains high till the end of December 1986. This result contradicts with the past observations about this bird in Iraq where it shows a low

density. The Coot reaches its highest number (2000) during December 1986.

Little Grebe on the other hand Starts to increase in number from July till october 1986. Then their number drops until reaches its lower level in December 1986. The same results is true for Great erested Grebe.

In spite of that the Marbled duck is a resident in Iraq, the present study did not shows alarge number of this species and for a short period only.

During the begining of August 1986, the Black Kite starts to appear in the area of study and their numbers reached its peak in September 1986 (350 bird).

The results shows that the numbers of White storck were so low in spite of the previous observations that showed a large numbers in this area.

Summary

The present Work includes bird control and Surveying for fourty two species of some birds, mostly aquatic, from the vicinity of Basrah city. This information consider as a first record for the area and an addition to the previous information published.

الخلاصـــة

يتناول البحث تسجيل ٤٢ نوع من الطيور اغلبها من الطيور المائية للمرة الاولى في منطقة مجاورة لمدينة البصرة وهذا التسجيل اضافة جديدة للتسجيلات السابقة .

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