Spring birding at Azraq: a migration stopover for African-Eurasian flyway

March-April brings migrating waterfowl, harriers, eagles, and warblers to the Azraq Wetland — a critical stopover on the African-Eurasian flyway. Practical guide for visiting birders.

Anas Hu · May 5, 2026

For two months a year — March through April — the Azraq Wetland Reserve is one of the busiest places on the African-Eurasian migratory flyway in the Middle East. Waterfowl, raptors, warblers, and waders that have wintered in East Africa stop here on their way north to breeding grounds in Eurasia. The wetland is much smaller than it once was, but the species count during peak migration is still remarkable: 200+ species recorded in a typical spring season. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) runs the boardwalk, the visitor centre, and a small observation hide for serious birders.

Plan March 25 to April 20 for the peak.

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1Why Azraq for spring birding

The African-Eurasian flyway is one of the world's major bird migration routes. Birds that winter in East Africa fly north through the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant in spring; they return south in autumn. Azraq is one of the only natural wetlands along the dry inland portion of this route — the next significant water sources are the Sea of Galilee (north) and the Jordan River (west). For exhausted migrants, Azraq is a refuelling station they have to use. For birders, it's a concentration point.

2Species checklist

Reliable species during spring migration (March–April):

3Access + the hide

- **Boardwalk.** 1 km loop with several observation points. Free with reserve entry.
- **Birder's hide.** RSCN-managed observation hide at the wetland edge — small fee for access. Best for photographers.
- **Guided tours.** RSCN can arrange a 2-hour guided birding session — ~25-35 JD per person.
- **Stay at Azraq Lodge.** RSCN-managed eco-lodge in the wetland for overnight birders. Dawn and dusk access from the lodge.

> For two months a year, Azraq is one of the busiest places on the African-Eurasian flyway.

> **For solo travellers**
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> The boardwalk is easy. Birding by yourself with a good field guide is satisfying. RSCN guided sessions add depth.

4Practical tips

- **Best dates.** March 25 – April 20 for peak spring migration; September 25 – October 25 for autumn.
- **Best time of day.** Dawn (highest activity); secondary peak 4-6 pm.
- **Binoculars + field guide.** 8×42 binoculars; "Birds of the Middle East" (Porter et al.) is the standard field guide.
- **Camera.** Long lens (300+ mm) for the wading birds; tripod welcome at the hide.
- **Reed warblers.** Heard more than seen — bring an audio app to identify by song.
- **Combine with.** Qasr Azraq + Shaumari + Eastern Desert castles for a 2-3 day stay.

References

1. Wikipedia — Qasr Azraq (oasis context)

Verified by locals: TBD — this article will be reviewed by an RSCN-affiliated ornithologist before final publication. Drafted from RSCN published descriptions and birding-community guides.