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First documented record of Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* for Libya

Abdulmaula Hamza^a and Jaber Yahia^b

Première mention documentée du Gobemouche à demi-collier *Ficedula semitorquata* pour la Libye.

Un mâle adulte du Gobemouche à demi-collier *Ficedula semitorquata* a été photographié le 31 mars 2010 à Sebkhet Hasila, sur la côte libyenne à environ 90 km à l'est de Sirte. Deux observations précédentes de mâles ont été signalées à deux sites différents entre Ajdabiya et Benghazi, les 29 mars et 1 avril 2006. L'observation présentée ici est toutefois la première donnée documentée pour le pays de ce migrateur paléarctique.

During a field trip to the north-central coastal wetlands of Libya on 31 March 2010, a black-and-white *Ficedula* flycatcher was seen to land on a low sandstone hill, near the beach north of Sebkhet Hasila (31°24'45"N 17°26'65"E), c.90 km east of Sirte. When it moved between shrubs <10 m from us, we were able to photograph it

and notice the incomplete white collar, small white forehead patch and white outer tail feathers (Figs. 1–2). These features suggested the bird was an adult male Semi-collared Flycatcher *F. semitorquata* in breeding plumage. Adult male Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis* in breeding plumage has an all-white collar, a large white





Figures 1–2. Semi-collared Flycatcher / Gobemouche à demi-collier *Ficedula semitorquata*, Sebket Hasila, Libya, 31 March 2010 (Jaber Yahia)

forehead patch and a generally all-black tail, whilst Pied Flycatcher *F. hypoleuca* lacks a white collar (Mild 1993, Svensson *et al.* 1999). Although some male Pied Flycatchers of the North African race *speculigera* (Atlas Flycatcher) possess a half-collar, they can be distinguished by their larger forehead patch and all-black tail (Svensson *et al.* 1999). The identification was subsequently confirmed from the photographs. The bird was observed between 12.30 and 13.15 hrs, during which period the sky was clear, temperature *c.* 30°C and wind speed 15 km/h. Other species observed were two adult Black Wheatears *Oenanthe leucura*, a Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe* and two Crested Larks *Galerida cristata*.

Both Collared and Pied Flycatchers are passage migrants through Libya, but this is the first documented record of Semi-collared Flycatcher in the country (Toschi 1969, Bundy 1976, Clement & Taylor 2006). There are, however, two previous sight records of single males on 29 March and 1 April 2006 at two different sites between Ajdabiya and Benghazi (P. Isenmann & J. Hering *in litt.* 2013). The species breeds from south-east Europe and Turkey to the Caucasus and northern Iran, and winters in east-central Africa from southern Sudan to western Kenya and western Tanzania (Clement & Taylor 2006). Considered Near Threatened, the species is estimated to be undergoing a moderately rapid population decline, mainly because of habitat loss due to forestry practices on its breeding grounds (BirdLife International 2013). Return migration is early and in North Africa it is a regular spring passage visitor in Egypt between mid March and mid May (Goodman & Meininger 1989). Further west,

there is only a single definite record, in Tunisia (Isenmann *et al.* 2005), with none from Algeria and those from Morocco are considered uncertain (Isenmann & Moali 2000, Thévenot *et al.* 2003).

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