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The Status of Birds in the Proposed Rum Wildlife Reserve, Southern Jordan

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Abstract: The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature officially proposed the creation of the Rum Wildlife Reserve, in the extreme south of Jordan, in 1979. We present the first review of the birds of the proposed reserve and its environs, drawing upon published and unpublished records as well as a short field survey from June, 1996. A total of 142 species have been recorded, of which at least 34 species actually breed and another 14 probably do so. Most breeding species are (a) Saharo-Arabian desertic species, or (b) non-desertic species which have colonised the area due to the advent of irrigated agriculture since the 1970s. The area is rich in breeding birds of prey, and this is the main ornithological justification for the proposed reserve. Major potential threats to these raptors, unconfirmed as yet, include intensive pesticide use on irrigated farms, the poisoning of scavenging species, and human disturbance at nest sites. If proven to be operating, these threats should be addressed by the competent management authorities.

Key Words: Avifauna, wildlife, reserve, conservation, Rum, Jordan

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