

Spain: Extremadura and Andalucia

Sat 21st- Sat 28th April 2012



*(Photos, clockwise from top left): We had lovely views of beautiful and dainty **Black-winged Kites** • A group of majestic **Great Bustards** takes flight • Always splendid to see, we had a number of displaying **Montagu's Harriers** • **Male Dartford Warblers** gave us good views • **Short-toed Eagles** are a feature of Extremadura, notably on Cáceres plains • Noisy parties of **Azure-winged Magpies** were seen almost daily © Stephen Daly/www.andalucianguides.com.*

**report compiled by tour leader:
Stephen Daly**

Trip Diary

Tour Leader: Stephen Daly

with Bob & Judith Armstrong, Tom & Jane Cox, and Ray & Pam Gooding

Highlights of the tour were many and varied, but it was largely agreed that the following were **the** 'moments of the trip'. Firstly, the superb views of Spanish Imperial Eagle in Monfragüe National Park, closely followed by the Great Bustard 'bonanza' on the Cáceres Plains. The perfectly sunlit Lesser Kestrels over the bull ring in Trujillo are always memorable, but so too the Little Bitterns, Purple Herons and Great White Egrets on the wetlands of the Coto Doñana. Finally, the amazing sight of a Purple Heron taking on a large snake at the Dehesa de Abajo, and the sight each morning of Greater Flamingoes and Spoonbills in front of our hotel.

Saturday 21st April

After an on-time arrival at Madrid Airport, we drove to Extremadura stopping for a *tapas* bite and a drink at a motorway restaurant. During our drive along the motorway we picked out Booted and Short-toed Eagles, a lovely Marsh and male Montagu's Harrier, Great Spotted Cuckoo and lots of Cattle Egrets and White Storks. A short time later, we made a halt at Almaraz to stretch our legs and see if there were any wetland birds around. We quickly picked up three Purple Herons, Purple Swamphen and three male Little Bitterns flying from one reed bed to the other. Bob picked up a lovely male Bearded Tit in the bottom of a tamarisk bush and a pair of Kingfishers were seen, one putting on a fantastic and prolonged hovering hunting act! A European Terrapin sat out on the flattened reeds, as Cetti's and Great Reed Warblers and the Little Bitterns called with Corn Buntings sitting on the nearby fences, 'jangling' almost continuously. We also saw Little Egret, Jackdaw, Moorhen, Coot, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Red and Black Kites and Kestrel.

We arrived at our lovely hotel just outside the Medieval town of Trujillo late afternoon and walked around the gardens and surrounding lanes. The hotel was previously a country home built by a Belgian family now owned by a lovely family and run as a hotel since 1991. The setting is quite beautiful and its position commands a good vantage spot across the surrounding countryside. We later ate a good dinner at the hotel and retired happily for the night.

Sunday 22nd April

A cold and windy day met us as the sun came up, but our pre-breakfast walk along a country stone-walled lane, close to the hotel, produced good views of Nightingale and Azure-winged Magpies. A Woodchat Shrike sat on top of a Holm Oak and both Spanish and House Sparrows flew around. Hoopoes, Hawfinch, Cuckoo and Corn Buntings called - a lovely dawn chorus!

We left after breakfast and spent most of the day exploring the Cáceres to Santa Marta de Magasca road, picking up a small group of five Great Bustard off the old road. Groups of nine and 11 were soon seen and three Montagu's Harriers displayed closely overhead. Black and Griffon Vultures came past as did lots of Black Kites and a Short-toed Eagle. Two European Rollers were seen as were 20 or so Lesser Kestrels and a Little Owl. Black Storks were soon picked up in flight and Red-rumped Swallows, Crag Martins, Bee-eaters and a Booted Eagle came passed at a stop over one of the small rivers. Southern Grey Shrikes, Red-legged Partridges and Raven were seen as we headed towards several more Great Bustards groups. In between these, one displaying male Little Bustard was seen, as was a very confiding Great Spotted Cuckoo tucked in low at the side of a *Tamarisk* bush. Calandra Larks, more shrikes and Crested Larks were seen and one Thekla Lark was identified before it displayed and sang his happy song for us on the wing. Blue and Great Tits, Pallid and Common Swifts and a few migrating Northern Wheatears passed by along the way as the sun tried to warm the countryside up! Other wildlife included a Banded Centipede, Rhinoceros Beetle, Oil Beetle, Marsh Frog, Schreiber's Green Lizard and European Terrapins.

Monday 23rd April

A pre-breakfast along tracks leading from hotel was quite chilly and again really strong winds were coming in from the north. A single Great Bustard was seen flying across the fields fairly high up, while Hoopoes and Woodchat Shrikes flew across the fields and wooded landscape while the calls of Common Cuckoos and Golden Orioles kept us searching for them, but alas we couldn't find them.

After breakfast we drove to Monfragüe, stopping at a site before Torrejon del Rubio where Golden Oriole was heard calling, then a lovely male flew over towards the group. Red-rumped and Barn Swallows flew around a nearby *finca* and adjoining lake. Bee-eaters called as they passed overhead and just added to the magic of

exploring such a huge landscape. As we drove towards the huge formation of rock of the gorge at Peña Falcon that loomed in the far distance within Monfragüe's National Park, the passing countryside started to change into a thicker woodland pasture rising through sloping hills and riverine valleys as we got closer to the Castillo de Monfragüe.

At Peña Falcon we saw an amazing group of mixed larger birds with Griffon and Black Vultures taking to the air and surprising us with stunningly close views. Egyptian Vulture, Black Stork, Peregrine Falcon, a pair of displaying Bonelli's Eagles came overhead while Rock Bunting, Blue Rock Thrush, Black Redstart, Serin, Crag Martin, Common and Pallid Swifts and Red-rumped Swallows all flew overhead or even beneath us. Black Kite were watched fishing and Blue Tit were nesting below the viewing platform. Our trip up to the Tietar Reservoir was equally good, with Red Deer being seen as we stopped to watch another low adult Egyptian Vulture. Travelling on, we saw a Black Stork on its nest and found two fluffy grey-coloured Eagle Owl chicks huddled at the back of an overhang on the far side of the cliff line.

Our prize bird of the day was a wonderfully cooperative adult Spanish Imperial Eagle that hung in the air across the reservoir. The bird landed on its nest, glided and wheeled above us, landed to collect more nesting materials of branches and some stones, presumably to weight down the nest? The eagle also tried to take a young Red Deer fawn and dive-bombed passing Griffon Vultures. A truly splendid spectacle and everyone had great views of this very rare and most impressive raptor in the air and perched. We lunched opposite a Black Stork's nest, hearing Nightingale, Cetti's and Spectacled Warbler through the wind! On our descent from the reservoir networks of the Tajo River, we stopped to watch Crested Tit before a walk at the Castillo de Monfragüe where we picked up Subalpine Warbler, Chaffinch and another Black Redstart - this time a lovely male bird. The wind had given us a hard time finding smaller passerines that all of the group could see, but all in all we were very happy with our day at Monfragüe National Park.

Just to top it all, we were invited to a very palatable wine tasting back at our hotel, kindly put together by Juan Pedro a real wine buff! We heard about the three different Spanish wines we were about to taste, describing their colour, nose and the viscosity or 'tears' as the Spanish describe what we call the 'legs' on the inside of the glass. The tasting went well and with no surprise we had a really lovely end to the day over another sumptuous meal prepared by Belén, Juan Pedro's most hospitable and hard-working wife.

Tuesday 24th April

Our pre-breakfast walk was in a biting cold wind from the north and kept most of the birds well hidden. We did see the usual good numbers of Hoopoes and Azure-winged Magpies as well as a Short-toed Treecreeper. Nightingales had been calling during the night as had a Scops Owl. It was still very cold with increasingly strong winds from the north as we left the hotel after breakfast, heading for Capo Lugar. Collared Pratincole and Whiskered Terns were new birds and we were soon picking up the first of many Great Bustards at various locations along the country roads. We stopped to watch one male displaying - turning himself 'inside out' in front of a group of watching females. Calandra, Short-toed and Thekla Larks were also calling and seen flying past. Black Vultures came in low and there was lots of Griffon activity over the rolling steppe. Lesser and Common Kestrels were watched hunting across the windswept countryside.

A flock of sixteen Little Bustards came speeding along an elevated ridge and landed quickly in a lower part of a field, just out of sight of our position on the roadway but we picked up single, distant birds later that day. Our search along through Vegas Altas was hard work looking for Stone Curlew and sandgrouse. We did, though, have wonderful views of Marsh Harrier with one bird, an adult male, displaying close to his nest site. There was a lot of agricultural activity and we didn't see very much along the dusty tracks in such windy conditions. Yellow Wagtails were seen as were lots of Zitting Cisticolas. A little further on we saw and heard Great Reed Warbler and Common Waxbills. Cetti's Warblers and Nightingale were heard. We took our picnic lunch back along the Campo Lugar road, sheltering behind a large gate entrance watching butterflies and ladybirds that were also trying to get out of the wind! Groups of Pallid and Common Swifts came past as did one Alpine Swift and some Ravens were seen and heard; also Red Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Common Buzzard and more Marsh Harriers.

After lunch our quest for sandgrouse was rewarded when we spotted a group of thirteen Black-bellied feeding on a hillside. They took off and a short time later we saw another group wheeling across the landscape being accelerated by the strong winds. Changing location to the Santa Marta de Magasca track on the other side of Trujillo, we searched for more sandgrouse. We found more Great and Little Bustards, Southern Grey Shrike, Common Buzzard that looked very different in so much that it had all the immediate appearance of a Long-legged Buzzard but later examination of the photos Stephen took revealed that it was a very unusual ochre-coloured Common Buzzard. We saw a lovely melanistic form of Montagu's Harrier hunting and later another

three Montagu's, two adult males and a single older female. We came across another pair of Southern Grey Shrikes feeding on Banded Centipedes, a dangerous brightly colored orange and black striped insect that was dispatched rather quickly by the birds! Our last stop of the day was at Trujillo, first on the edge of town where the afternoon light was just perfect to take some photos of the medieval old town silhouetted against the sky. Then down to the bullring to watch and attempt to photograph the very fast Lesser Kestrels that were coming in with food in their beaks and talons.

Wednesday 25th April

We said farewell to the family at Vina Las Tores and started our journey south to the famous Coto Doñana. It's a fairly long journey south on the motorway and travelled along the old road to Cáceres to have a last chance at seeing the Great Bustards. Just as we were approaching Trujillo a Great Bustard flew past! Continuing on, we managed to find a group of six birds close to the road and had great views. After a tedious exploration in the town trying to find our way out to the motorway we were quickly heading south and into the sun. We took a coffee stop and made good progress and stretched our legs around some cork-oak woodland, where the famous black Iberian Pigs seemed numerous, feeding on the acorns on the woodland floor. Some Black Storks were seen in two different locations *en route* as we passed perfect mixed woodland and riverine habitat that these elegant birds prefer.

A short time later we drove into a small town and had a great *tapas* lunch, sitting outside on the pavement and watching the world go by. *En route* we picked up some waders that included Marsh, Common and Green Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, Redshank and Kentish Plover. Yellow Wagtails were also around as were Ravens and lots of Bee-eaters. We weren't too far off from our destination in the Coto Doñana and pressed on arriving at our hotel with a fantastic view of the large lake or laguna right at the front door. Although sunny on our arrival in front of the *laguna* at El Rocio, the wind from the south west was very strong and most birds out on the lake were sheltering on the west side.

We walked from the hotel and found many birds that included Greater Flamingo, Great White Egret, Spoonbills, Glossy Ibis, Whiskered Tern, Little and Cattle Egrets. There were lots of Mallard, some Garganey and a few Gadwall and Northern Shoveler. Coots were numerous and Sand Martins mixed in with House Martins, Red-rumped and Barn Swallows. Goldfinches and House Sparrows were seen nesting in the palm trees and *Eucalyptus* on the edge of the *laguna* and Common and Pallid Swifts fed higher above. We even spotted some Greylag Geese, the symbol of the Doñana Natural Parks. A lovely dinner was taken in the town and we all retired to our comfortable rooms at the Malvasia.

Thursday 26th April

Most of us took a look at the laguna at the front of the hotel before breakfast, although it doesn't get light down in this part of Spain until 7:45am! The usual suspects were picked up out on the water from the day before and we took breakfast at 8.00am. Setting off after breakfast, we travelled the short distance to the *Acebuche* (Wild Olive) Centre with its lakeside hides and walkways: Greenfinches, Nightingales and Cetti's Warblers called around the woodland, and Glossy Ibis, plus Night, Purple and Squacco Herons moved away from the edge as we came past. We managed good views of Savi's and Reed Warblers, although a quick flypast of from a Cetti's Warbler was better than no view at all! Purple Swamphen, Gadwall, Garganey, Red-crested and Common Pochard swam and fed with many Mallards. Bee-eaters flew past calling, their bright rainbow colours flashing in the morning light.

Many groups of Serins and Long-tailed Tits were around the woodland and a pair of Tree Sparrows were also watched. A slow drive to find Dartford Warbler was a success with two birds showing reasonably well although their quick dashing and ducking for cover flight does make viewing these lovely creatures somewhat of a challenge. Sardinian Warbler was also seen, as were many Woodchat and Southern Grey Shrikes. There were also a few raptors around with Booted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Red Kite and Common Buzzard being seen amongst the hordes of Black Kites. Collared Pratincoles were birds that we really managed to get really close views of around the agricultural areas that were being flooded and prepared for the rice planting. Black-winged Stilts were plentiful and a few Mash Harriers hunted low with their heads down over the flat landscape. The wind was still blowing quite hard and there was a lot of dust and debris coming off the other dry fields as we crossed to the Dehesa de Abajo.

Taking our time scanning around the edge of their large *laguna* at the Dehesa de Abajo we saw many Great White Egrets and a huge number of Spoonbills. Many Cattle Egrets, Night Herons and Little Egrets were roosting or simply sheltering from the wind and the lake held hundreds of Great Crested Grebes, duck and Greater Flamingoes. We saw many Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and other waders across the far side, but

couldn't get any closer to them as access is now limited at this vast lake. White Storks seemed to be nesting on every available post, building and rooftop in the area. Creeping along the edge of the lake in the mini-bus we surprised an adult Purple Heron hunting a snake, which had wrapped itself around the heron's bill, in some sort of vain attempt to keep it closed! It flew off on seeing us and we suspect that the heron won this particular battle!

We took a lovely lunch at Isla Mayor, again opting for *tapas* and *raciones* at a bar that had some protection from the wind. Later, we set off to travel along and explore the dusty tracks that lead to the very distant Jose Antonio Valverde visitor centre (JAV). A dusty, parched and pretty much empty landscape greeted us on the southern edge of the huge Coto Doñana National Park. The lack of winter rains this year has had an enormous impact on the wildlife and it had very few birds save most of the lark species that eek out an arid existence. Not surprisingly, we saw a few circling vultures, all Griffons looking for food. The normally verdant spring grasslands and wetlands were burnt and dead-looking, with huge mud cracks across the pastures. The cattle and horses had been moved off to the towns and villages and the only water to be found was around the JAV centre, although problems pumping water here had been fraught with problems...A lovely male Pied Flycatcher was seen on migration on the long drive back and we took the Corredor Verde and found two Black-winged Kites, Spectacled and Melodious Warblers as well as Sardinian and some lovely Common Linnets. Again Woodchat Shrikes were plentiful and we had some great close up views. We later watched Bee-eaters landing close to us on a fence near Villamanrique de La Condesa. Another lovely dinner and fine wines were enjoyed at El Rocio and we waited to see what the weather would be for our last full day in the Doñana. Rain had been forecast...

Friday 27th April

Our last full day out in the field started with a dark and ominous sky as the light came through just before breakfast. Sipping our *Cafe con leche*, we watched dawn darken...Just before breakfast, scanning across the *laguna* in front of the hotel, we picked out the large shape of one of the nesting Spanish Imperial Eagles. The bird took off, did a 360° circle above the large Eucalyptus trees in the distance, then flew out of view. A brief view in gloomy light on the Doñana was nothing to compare with the superb view of the same species in Extremadura. Rain started with a light drizzle as we left the hotel to head towards the Odiel Marshes, and by the time we were on the coast road past Matalascanas, we hit a heavy downpour. We seemed to be heading into brighter skies in the west and after passing lots of Bee-eaters lined up on top of a fence waiting for the rain to stop, we suddenly found ourselves once again in the dry. A stop at the Odiel Visitors Centre gave us a Little Bittern and quite a few duck species; a pair of Melodious Warblers flitted through the tamarisk at the edge of the pool and we had very close views of Greater Flamingoes feeding there as well.

Over on the vast area of the waterways and marshes we quickly picked up a host of waders and wildfowl that included Dunlin, Black- and Bar-tailed Godwits, Black-winged Stilts, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Common Redshank, Knot and Kentish and Greater Ringed Plovers; Greater Flamingoes, Purple Swamphen, Purple Heron and the commoner Grey Herons were very obliging and we had many great views. Little Terns seemed plentiful, diving for fish along the inlets and river's minor estuaries. Ruddy Turnstone, Oystercatcher, and a young Audouin's Gull gave us more new species for the list and Sanderlings, Marsh Harrier and Spoonbills were also seen. We took lunch at a small restaurant or *venta* which by early afternoon was bathed in warm sun and the temperature had already climbed to 19°C. The lunch of some mixed dishes and salad were most appreciated by all and we continued slowly back towards the west, stopping to scan a small lake, finding Garganey, Shoveler, Mallard, Common and Red-crested Pochards and many Moorhen and Eurasian Coot.

A little later we stopped at another freshwater *laguna* at *Parros y Madres* where we watched quite a few of the same duck and wetland species as we had already seen that day. Later we drove back along the coast road to El Acebron where we managed to have stunning views of Dartford Warbler, Serin, Great Tit, Tree Sparrow and Azure-winged Magpies. The magpies were particularly confiding and quite vocal! The sky was darkening once again as we walked across to our restaurant and another fine dinner.

Saturday 28th April

Our last morning of the tour was a wet one. It had rained (much needed too!) during the night and the *laguna* water level had risen quite noticeably. The dry sandy streets were becoming quite water-logged and after breakfast we loaded the mini-bus and said our farewells to the hotel staff. *En route* to Jerez de La Frontera's airport, we saw Montagu's Harriers at a few different locations as were Night Heron, Collared Paratincole, Black Kite, Marsh Harrier and several Booted Eagles. We said our farewells once inside the terminal building.

It had been an excellent and most enjoyable tour and everyone got on well, taking in not just the splendid array of birds, but other wildlife of two very distinct areas with two very special National Parks. We had some excellent views of some of the rarer birds, being set in such dramatic and changing scenery was really the icing

on the cake. Cold north winds during the first part of the tour did little to affect our birding and the rather parched areas in the south held many wetland species in the areas that still had sufficient water. Sadly, many breeding birds were absent as the rains came too late; as I type this report, the rain is coming down in torrents. Regardless, I'll have happy memories of the group and of the happy times we spent on tour. I hope to meet up with you all on some other tour. Thanks for being such good sports and best wishes to you all.

Stephen Daly

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

(total of 134 species recorded by the group)

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Fairly common in Extremadura especially on agricultural areas in the south where they breed them for hunting.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Heard calling around the Coto Doñana

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Seen most days in various ponds and lakes in Extremadura and the Doñana areas.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A common daily sight in Extremadura and on the Coto Doñana.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Only recorded in the Coto Doñana area where it was common. At El Rocío and Dehesa de Abajo. A few were seen at the Odiel Marshes on the 27th

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Two seen at Dehesa de Abajo and El Rocío on the 26th and 27th respectively

Red-crested Pochard *Netta ruffian*

Common on wetlands in the Coto Doñana particularly at La Rocina on the 26th.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Fairly common on and around the Coto Doñana.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A pair seen near Trujillo on the 22th and as expected recorded regularly on the Coto Doñana.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Very common on and around the Coto Doñana.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

One bird seen on the 25th at El Rocío Laguna

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Numerous in specific areas on the Coto Doñana.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

We saw a few birds in the air each day and nesting in Extremadura at Porto del Tietar in the Parque Natural de Monfrague. On the 25th we saw additional birds whilst we were en route to the Coto Doñana

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Very common throughout the week with many nesting birds, the most interesting of which was a traditional breeding site at the Dehesa de Abajo where a colony was nesting on any available structure.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Smaller numbers than usually expected due to the drought in the south. Seen each day in the Coto Doñana and at Almaraz in Extremadura on the 21st

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Very common on the Coto Doñana, lots in front of the hotel

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

A Three males seen at Almaraz on the 21st and nice male briefly at Odiel Marshes on the 27^h.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Huge roost of 50+ birds near the Dehesa de Abajo on a couple of visits and a couple in flight *en route* to the airport on the on 28th

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Seen on the Coto Doñana on 25th and 26th at El Rocío and El Acebron respectively

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Very common throughout the tour.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Recorded in small numbers at Extremadura but common on the Coto Doñana.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Singles were seen at Dehesa de Abajo and at El Acebron on the Coto Doñana on the 26th. One lovely adult hunting and capturing a fairly large snake was most memorable at Dehesa de Abajo!

Great White Egret *Casmerodius albus*

A total of three on the Coto Doñana that included two in flight on the approach to the Valverde Centro.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Recorded in small numbers in Extremadura but common on the Coto Doñana.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Two birds seen on the 26th on the Corredor Verde in the Coto Doñana. Nowadays these 'nomads' are a scarce bird in Extremadura

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Recorded in good numbers on the steppes of Extremadura with nesting birds at the Bull Ring in Trujillo.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Recorded in quite good numbers throughout the tour.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Seen in small numbers daily throughout the tour.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Very common throughout the tour.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

A total of four birds seen at Peña Falcón and the surrounding area on the 23rd.

Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus*

Very common in Extremadura with some large flocks circling over the plains and as usual the large breeding colony at Peñafalcón was as spectacular as ever.

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

A total of 40+ birds seen in daily in Extremadura with some close views of some birds in flight.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Seen most days on tour in small numbers. Good views on the Cáceres plains and at Campo Lugar area

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Superb views of male over his nestsite Extremadura and fairly common in and around the Coto Doñana.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Singles and pairs seen on the steppes at Cáceres on the 29th, with some excellent views, and other singles seen in the Coto Donana area and also on the last day (28th) en route to Jerez

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Recorded in small numbers daily throughout the tour with one very light coloured bird at the Santa Marta de Magasca track

Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti*

Excellent views of a nesting bird at Tietar Valley in Monfragüe on the 23rd

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Singles Seen on three separate days in Extremadura

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*

A pair were seen displaying at Peña Falcón at Parque Natural de Monfragüe on the 23rd

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata*

Seen mostly as singles in Extremadura and around the Coto Doñana area.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

At least 30 birds, included displaying males, on the Cáceres Plains on the 22nd and over 30 at Campo Lugar area during the early morning on the 24th. Single in flight over Hotel at Trujillo and again on the 25th near Cáceres

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*

Few single males displaying birds seen but larger flock of around 25 birds seen in flight over Campo Lugar area on the 24th

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

A few seen at Almaraz on the 21st and seen regularly in the Coto Doñana and Odiel Marshes at most wetland areas

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Very common in the Coto Doñana area.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

An adult with chicks at Acebuche centre for the Coto Doñana on the 12th.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

Seen near Trujillo on the 21st and then very common in the Coto Doñana area.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

A few seen on pools in Extremadura and a very common site on the Coto Doñana.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Fairly common on the Coto Doñana.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

One bird seen on the 25th at a small pond near El Rocío

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

One on the Rio Almonte below Jaraicejo on the 10th and only a single bird recorded on the Coto Doñana.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A pair seen at a pool near Campo Lugar on the 24th and a single near El Rocío on the 25th. Ten birds seen around the Dehesade Abajo on the 26th and again a few on the Odiel Marshes on the 27th

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

A pair were seen near El Rocío on the 27th

Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

Recorded in quite good numbers on the Coto Doñana.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Large flock around the laguna at El Rocío from the 25th onwards

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

A few with the Black-taileds at El Rocío and singles at the Odiel on the 27th

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

On bird seen on two days (25th & 26th) at a little pool near El Rocío was quite a good find

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Eight birds seen over on the Odiel on the 27th

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Seen on two days with the Marsh Sand on the 25th and 26th

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Seen in the Coto Doñana only once on the 25th.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

A dozen or so recorded in the Coto Doñana area near Dehesa de Abajo on the 26th and again *en route* to the airport in Cadiz province on the 28th

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Common on the Doñana and at the Odiel Marshes

Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*

One young bird was seen on the 27th at the Odiel estuary

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A total of twelve recorded on the Coto Doñana.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Lots at the Odiel Marshes and tributaries on the 27th. Viewed very well.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

A few birds in flight briefly out over the laguna at El Rocío on the 25th

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Good numbers seen on the Coto Doñana with some reasonable at El Rocío.

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocle orientalis*

Two groups totaling 22 birds in the Campo Lugar road on the 24th

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Recorded most days of the tour.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Recorded on most days of the tour but more numerous in Extremadura than on the Coto Doñana.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common throughout the tour.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

In Extremadura two on the Monroy Plains on the 8th, and two on the Magasca Plains on the 10th, and in the Coto Doñana area two along the Coridor Verde on the 13th that included an extremely confiding bird.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Half a dozen birds seen in Extremadura plus others heard calling.

Scops Owl *Otus scops*

Heard calling most nights at the Hotel near Trujillo.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

Two chicks seen at Porto del Tietar on the 23rd.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Seen on the 22nd at a Roller nest box on the Cáceres Plains on the 22nd

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

One bird heard and seen fleetingly after dinner in El Rocío on the 25th

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Fairly common throughout the week.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Also fairly common throughout the week. Good comparison in flight with Common Swifts on migration

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two at Almaraz on the 21st and one seen near the Dehesa de Abajo on the 26th

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A few small flocks seen in Extremadura but much commoner in the Coto Doñana area.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Recorded regularly in good numbers throughout the week.

Iberian [Southern] Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*

Recorded in small numbers everyday of the tour.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

Recorded in quite good numbers everyday of the tour.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

A single bird at the Rio Tajo on the Magasca Plains on the 22nd.

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

Very common throughout the tour.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Very common throughout the tour.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Fairly common throughout the tour.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Recorded in quite good numbers in Extremadura.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common throughout the tour.

Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common throughout the tour but a bit less so than the previous species.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Very large numbers on the Coto Doñana with large numbers at a roost site at El Rocío.

Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Good numbers at the Rio Tajo 22nd and very common in the Parque Natural de Monfragüe on the 23rd.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Very common throughout the tour.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Very common throughout the tour. Big nest colonial nest sites at El Rocío and watched collecting mud near our hotel

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Small numbers recorded in Extremadura but common in the Coto Doñana.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

Very common on the plains of Extremadura, less so in the Coto Doñana area.

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

A few birds seen on the Vegas Altas area and Campo Lugar on the 24th and a few seen in the Coto Doñana area on the 27th.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Very common throughout the tour.

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*

A couple of birds seen well, one singing on the Magasca Plains on the 22nd.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

A few birds seen and heard in Extremadura around the hotel but more common in the Coto Doñana area.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Heard singing in the Coto Doñana with fleeting views.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Good views were obtained at La Rocina on the Coto Doñana on the 26th^h where four birds were seen.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Seen and heard at various locations, but best views were at the JAV Centre, Doñana on the 26th

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Seen on two days Donana one nest building at the JAV centre on the 26th and one in pine trees at the El Acebuche centre ponds on the 27th

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

Seen very briefly on the 26th on the Corredor Verde and again on the 27th at the Odiel Visitor's Centre

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Seen twice with good views on the 27th

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*

Tricky to get ant views of a lot of birds due to the high winds and fleeting views of a couple of birds on the Corredor Verde on the 26th.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

Lovely views of a male at Peña Falcon on the 23rd

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

Seen in Extremadura, plus others heard calling and one seen in the Coto Doñana.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Hear only at the Hotel in Extremadura in the mornings

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

One seen on the 24th during our pre-breakfat walk on the 24th

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*

Very common throughout the tour.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common throughout the tour.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A single bird at Jaraicejo on the 10th.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

One seen at the Hotel in Extremadura on the 22nd and heard most days including those on the Coto Doñana.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

A male at Peñafalcón on the 23rd and a female on the Odiel Marshes on the 27th

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A female seen on the 26th at Dehesa de Abajo

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

A fairly common sight in both Extremadura and on the Coto Doñana.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

A total of eight birds recorded in Extremadura and six on migration on the Coto Doñana.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

Six birds recorded in the Parque Natural de Monfragüe on the 23rd.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Very common throughout the tour.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Common throughout the tour.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Good numbers in certain locations in both Extremadura and the Coto Doñana.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Few seen in small numbers on the Coto Doñana of the form *iberiae* (Spanish Wagtail).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Recorded in small numbers mostly in Extremadura, slowly moving north but held up by the cold N winds.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common throughout the tour.

Serin *Serinus serinus*

Common throughout the tour.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Lots of birds recorded in Extremadura and very common breeding birds in the Coto Doñana area.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Abundant and seen every day throughout the tour.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Small numbers recorded in Extremadura and on the Coto Doñana.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Only heard once during the tour

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Very common throughout the tour.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

Four birds recorded in the Parque Natural de Monfragüe on the 23rd

MAMMALS

Red Fox (dead cub on the road)

Rabbit

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

BUTTERFLIES

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Wall Brown

Cleopatra

Orange Tip

Large White

INSECTS

Seven Spot Ladybird

Oil Beetle

Rhinoceros Beetle

Banded Centipede

Paper Wasp (nest)

HERPS

Horseshoe Whip Snake

Ladder Snake

Moorish Gecko *Tarentola mauretanic*

Marsh Frog

Ocellated Lizard

Schrieber's Green Lizard

Iberian Wall Lizard

Pipistrelle Bat