

Spain

Extremadura & Andalucia

Tue 18th – Tue 25th April 2017



Trip photos (clockwise, from top left): Black Stork at Monfrague • Purple Heron • Nesting White Storks • Glossy Ibis • Eurasian Spoonbill in summer finery • European Bee-eater © Gary Elton/Limosa

**Report compiled by tour leader:
Gary Elton**

Spain | Extremadura & Andalucia

Tour leader: Gary Elton

with Jane Beazley, Nicola & Julian Hunt, Martin Savage, Gillian & David Smith

Tuesday 18th April

Our flight arrived on time and after collecting our bags and organising the minibus we set off on the first part of the trip, travelling from Madrid into Extremadura. Successfully skirting Madrid in the early afternoon traffic we started birding from the bus, enthusiastically noting the more common species as we drove along. A stop for coffee and a snack plus views of a dark morph Booted Eagle were welcome after which we carried on to our first proper birding spot. This was a short loop around a roadside village with several stops to view the surrounding area, which produced views of species such as Corn Bunting and Crested Lark - both numerous in Extremadura - and both Red and Black Kites. A welcome find was our first Turtle Doves, found on a grain silo in amongst the commoner and numerous Collared Doves. A smart male Montagu's Harrier was followed by five Black-bellied Sandgrouse, the latter frustratingly choosing to take off as soon as the scopes were trained on them! Iberian Magpie and Sardinian Warbler greeted us as we arrived at our hotel, which was followed by a welcome evening meal and a chance to discuss plans for the days ahead.

Wednesday 19th April

With sunrise relatively late in this part of Spain, an early walk was foregone and we instead opted for an early breakfast and a swift departure. Our destination today was the Santa Marta de Magasca Road to visit the plains. Several scenic stops were made on route, giving views along riverbeds and meadows, which resulted in a nice selection of the commoner birds in the area. We arrived at the plains to find the road was being upgraded with a sign in Spanish appearing to direct us around the sign, through a small gap and onto the shale road surface. After a degree of should we, shouldn't we, we decided we should and proceeded along the road. This was a good move it transpired, with an 'open access' policy clearly adopted by the Spanish in these circumstances! We made regular stops as we travelled along, with highlights including numerous Calandra and a few Short-toed Larks, Bee-eaters, Hoopoes, Montagu's Harrier and Southern Grey and Woodchat Shrikes. Several Great Bustards were seen, the most impressive being a flock of twenty, all males and all clearly impressed with themselves, what can I say, "men!"

Lunch at Santa Marta de Magasca surrounded by singing Serins and a surprise fly over Hobby, was precluded by an unscheduled tour of some of the smaller streets by Gary until he found the central square. A suitable bar was visited where a swift beer was enjoyed by several of the group and use of the facilities was appreciated by the remainder. We took the road towards Caceres, driving along a nest box-lined road, hoping to see the species they have primarily been erected for - Roller. As with all trips, a surprise in any shape or form is always appreciated and today was no exception with an encounter with David Lindo, the Urban Birder! Well, when I say surprise Gary had been in contact to say we were in the area and to David's credit he had come along to say hello and add another pair of eyes to our afternoons birding, proving a popular addition to the day.

The Rollers performed on cue, with several found sat on or near the nestboxes, a large percentage of these also occupied by Lesser Kestrels. Whilst scanning these a protruding head was noted from one box by Nicola and on closer inspection found to be a Little Owl! As we returned back along the road this individual chose to leave the box and give nice views perched on a nearby fence. We continued along the road scanning nearby fields and enjoying the birds on show. A scan across one such field revealed a dark head and neck protruding from the long grass, Little Bustard! A species we were hoping for and, with the grass on the long side this year, one we were particularly pleased to see. David's previous position of 'event of the day' for one of group was quickly replaced! The light was just right and we enjoyed some nice views. Shortly after this point we said goodbye to David and started to make our way back towards the hotel. More treats were to follow though as a section of the road has a small colony of Montagu's Harriers nearby and, as we passed, at least six birds could be seen in the air together.

Thursday 20th April

After breakfast our first port of call was a short walk along the track opposite the hotel. The wind strength had unfortunately increased considerably overnight and was starting to make birding somewhat difficult in more open and exposed areas. We managed to add Thekla Lark and Woodlark to our lists, but the hoped-for Western Orphean Warbler, whilst heard, could not be seen. A speculative look on another potentially more sheltered track proved little better, though some nice views of Bee-eaters were gratefully received. Our prime destination today was Monfragüe National Park and we walked back to the hotel and headed off. Our first port of call was a

small river, almost immediately on entering the park. A short walk here gave us some nice views of Serins plus a male Subalpine Warbler, with a very brief Garden Warbler seen by Gary on returning to the bridge and a singing Grey Wagtail heard. Our next stop was the viewpoint at Salto de Gitano. The area was already starting to get busy but we found a parking spot and walked back along the road to the viewpoint. There were dozens of Griffon Vultures on the crags in front of us, some on nests with young. Good views of Serins, Black Redstarts, Rock Bunting and Blue Rock Thrushes were had below and above our position on the lookout platform during our stay. A nesting Black Stork was on a ledge lower down the face with a further three seen. As we concluded our visit and walked back to the bus, a pair of Peregrines performed above us, one at times swooping down at phenomenal speed.

A short drive down the road took us to a much quieter viewpoint where we stopped for lunch. Large numbers of House Martins could be seen nesting under a nearby bridge and our first Alpine Swifts and Short-toed Eagles were also noted. Our next stop was Portilla de Tietar where we disembarked and walked to the largely covered watchpoint. A pale morph Booted Eagle flew low over the trees, being replaced almost immediately by an adult Spanish Imperial Eagle!! We were treated to amazing views in the afternoon sun with the bird also reasonably close, literally just over the river. We spent some time at the watchpoint, which was followed by a short drive further into the park that gave us nice views of Short-toed Treecreeper and a singing Nightingale. After a leg stretch along a short section of path at the visitor centre, we headed to our last destination of the day, the Castillo de Monfrague, its elevated position giving us amazing views out over the park. One of the highlights here though, especially for the photographers amongst us, were the Griffon Vultures passing at times at head height, plus two Egyptian Vultures and a Raven. The day had got increasingly windy, blowing at times at over 35mph, but during our time at the Castillo it had dropped to virtually zero. Thinking the wind had finally subsided we returned to the bus at the lower level to find it was blowing as hard as ever, bizarre!!

Friday 21st April

We woke to find the wind still blowing so we chose to visit the plains again. Driving down towards Trujillo we made a brief roadside stop to gain some nice views of Booted Eagle and Hoopoe. We again drove on towards Santa Marta de Magasca, albeit approaching the village from the east rather than the south and making stops along the way. The journey was relatively quiet until we reached the top end, close to the junction where we had seen the harriers the night before. Here, the fields were alive with singing larks, mainly Calandra, with both Little and Great Bustards also seen and both spotted by a sharp-eyed Julian. We stopped at a road junction for lunch, enjoying wonderful views of hunting and sparring Montagu's Harriers. A nearby pair of Short-toed Eagles also entertained us, with one choosing to pose nicely on a large rock in a field opposite. We drove back through the village heading south on the same road as on the earlier visit, again encountering presumably the same large strutting flock of male Great Bustards, plus a Whinchat, a new bird for the trip.

A cultural end to the day saw us visiting the town of Trujillo, where we admired the Renaissance architecture in the town square and the bronze statue of Pizarro. The visit finished off with a walk up to the Moorish castle overlooking the town where an uncharacteristic act of generosity by Gary, both financially and time wise, enabled the group to enter the castle itself and enjoy the stunning views and interesting castle architecture.

Saturday 22nd April

With this being our last morning in Extremadura and the wind having started finally to ease, we loaded the minibuses with our cases, then made the short drive to the start of the gravel track opposite our hotel for a short post-breakfast walk. Western Orphean Warbler was again our main target here, having heard one singing on the previous visit. We met with a degree of success with the majority of the group gaining a variety of views and a second more distant bird heard too. Our next stop was the Bullring at Trujillo, where we enjoyed good looks at the Lesser Kestrels around their nest sites with a particularly confiding adult male on the roof showing really well. Overflying swifts proved somewhat more problematic with the majority seemingly Commons, though eventually we were all happy we had seen several Pallids in amongst them. We then started our journey south to Coto Donana, detouring slightly to visit more Spanish plain-type habitat along the road to Campo Lugar. Once again stop/start birding largely from the bus produced appreciated views of several more Rollers and another large flock of Great Bustards. We continued our journey south, arriving for a late lunch stop at a large reservoir on the outskirts of Alange. On arrival, almost the first bird seen was a male Sardinian Warbler feeding a young fledgling in a nearby bush; good views were had by all, ironically a species we had seen plenty of but had struggled until now for good views! During lunch we scanned the reservoir, noting a few Great Crested Grebes and Great Cormorants plus several Gull-billed Terns and Alpine Swifts. Scanning the cliff face behind, we located several singing Blue Rock Thrushes, with a female also noted in a nearby tree. A Rock Bunting was seen well and eventually a Black Wheatear was found. A short walk revealed at least one Thekla Lark on the lower slopes and distant Gull-billed Terns and Yellow-legged and Black-headed Gulls on the reservoir shore.

We crossed to the other side of the large dam to watch Alpine Swifts flying below and around us, numbering at least twenty and impressive to say the least! We then continued our journey south to Coto Doñana, arriving early evening at our accommodation for the next three nights - the picturesque and, as it turned out, very comfortable, Ardea Purpurea hotel. Our first evening meal was interesting to say the least with an experience we termed 'speed ordering' plus our bird log had its first official 'step count' from Jane's Apple watch, our daily steps total preceding further subsequent evening's proceedings!

Sunday 23rd April

A warm sunny start heralded our first full day's birding in Coto Donana with no wind, a welcome change from the previous few days! After breakfast, a local walk around the grounds to ease ourselves into 'Donana birding' proved a good move. The highlight undoubtedly was a smart singing Oortolan Bunting with local birds such as Sardinian Warbler, Cuckoo and Iberian Magpie all performing well too. Our planned itinerary today was an exploration of the park itself and lots of water this year meant lots of birds! Roadside-roosting Black-crowned Night Herons and Cattle Egrets, plus the sound of singing Great Reed, Reed and Cetti's Warblers became the backdrop for our drive. Other species seen included Collared Pratincoles, Whiskered Terns, Glossy Ibis and Greater Flamingos - just a few of the dozens of species we saw as we drove along. Our ultimate destination for lunch was the Jose Antonio Valverde visitor centre, which by comparison with the drive to it was relatively quiet.

After lunch we continued along our chosen route and, after no more than a few hundred yards, we approached a bridge with large areas of water either side, giving views out over the flooded marshland; there were birds everywhere! Hundreds of Flamingos were on the marsh plus numerous Black-winged Stilts and Whiskered Terns. A steady stream of herons, mainly Purple and Squaccos, plus Cattle and Little Egrets, passed overhead, while water-filled areas were teeming with ducks, the most obvious being Red-crested Pochard. As we stood and admired the spectacle, the noise from singing Great Reed Warblers was deafening! Nice bonuses here include a reeling Savi's warbler, a brief Little Bittern and the first of what was to be six White-headed Ducks, five of which were males. We continued our journey during the course of the afternoon, enjoying the birds along the way and completing a large loop back to our hotel.

Monday 24th April

We woke to another welcome and unsurprisingly sunny start and, after breakfast, we headed off to another area of the park, The Dehesa de Abajo, a large area of water surrounded by scrub, complete with a visitor centre and trails. We stopped at a roadside bridge en route, enjoying great views of Black-crowned Night Herons, plus several Penduline Tits and, best of all, two Little Bitterns. Our first views of the large water area at the Dehesa de Abajo was from the roadside where we almost immediately honed in on a Black-headed Weaver, which was nesting nearby - a male bird, bright yellow and, to be fair, difficult to miss! Scanning the water, we noted several Black-necked Grebes and Western Swamphens and, again, Red-crested and Common Pochards. In the nearby bushes, several Western Olivaceous Warblers could be heard singing, with at least one popping up briefly to pose for us. We then drove onto the main reserve and visitor centre, choosing to take a walk (seemingly we were now becoming obsessed with Jane's step counter!) along one of the trails at the water's edge. Four Gull-billed Terns and a Common Sandpiper were resting and more Black-necked Grebes and Red-crested Pochards were noted. One of our hoped-for target species here was Red-knobbed Coot and we checked and rechecked every coot we saw, unfortunately to no avail. The numbers of coots were generally much lower than in the previous year, presumably the large amount of water in the park meaning they were more spread out this time.

Lunch (and a beer for some) was taken at the visitor centre, after which we drove a short distance from the reserve to view several roadside pools. The first of these was surrounded by a muddy margin, which gave us several new wading species for the trip, namely Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper and Little Ringed Plover. A surprise find here by Nicola was Common Waxbill, a species similar to Black-headed Weaver in that there was now a free-flying and self-sustaining population in this part of Spain. We returned along the road towards the centre, noting a lone duck swimming out into a pool we had already past; closer inspection revealed it was a drake Ferruginous Duck - another new bird for our trip.

We headed across country to our next stop, the visitor centre at La Rocina, where a short walk took us to view the lagoons from the hides, followed by a walk through the pine forests on a purpose-built boardwalk. The lagoons held a nice selection of birds, all of which we were accustomed to by now and we enjoyed an opportunity to relax in the hide, enjoying what ever came along. A walk along the woodland boardwalk took us to a wet, scrubby area, where several Nightingales sang in fierce competition with each other and allowing several birds to be seen well. As we stood on the bridge here numerous Red Swamp Crayfish - a damaging, invasive species from North America - could be seen in the water below. A Savi's Warbler sat in full view on top of some nearby stems was seen by everyone but, as always, it disappeared once the scope was trained on it! Jane and Nicola saw a female Pied Flycatcher briefly and, as we returned to the minibus, a Crested Tit was

found high in the pines by David, with closer inspection revealing a family party of at least four birds. We headed back to the hotel, stopping first at some nearby scrub where we enjoyed some great views of Dartford Warblers.

Tuesday 25th April

Our last day had arrived, though due to flight times it was a longish one, with plenty of time for more birding. After packing our luggage into the minibus and saying our goodbyes we headed off to our first destination, the 'wild west style' town of El Rocio. We parked up and walked through the dusty streets to the paved promenade, which gave us a panoramic view over a large wetland area. The usual spread of species was encountered almost immediately, with the added bonus (if you can call it that!) of our first Greylag Geese of the trip. More Common Waxbills followed, then the morning's highlight - a confiding, perched, male Little Bittern sat in the open on the edge of the reeds. The bird posed nicely for us, allowing prolonged scope views and occasionally stretching itself out in a typical 'Bittern pose'. We then walked to the visitor centre, which gave us slightly better elevated views out over the marsh. We returned to the minibus and, with the day slipping by, headed off to our next destination, the Odiel Marshes and saltpans.

We drove through the industrial part of Huelva, seeing the extensive saltpans ahead of us and, on entering the area, Gary's heart sank, as the initial large salt pans were dry and devoid of birds. There was no need to worry, though, as a turn in the road revealed an area of wet pans teeming with birds! Largely Greater Flamingos and Black-winged Stilts but a quick scan from the road also revealed Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling and Little Stint. We parked at the nearby visitor centre, noting Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit and both Sandwich and Little Tern along the adjacent river. Walking back to the road we scanned the pans adding Slender-billed Gull, Turnstone, Grey Plover and Shelduck to our list. After lunch we continued along the road, viewing the extensive marshes and adding a flock of Greenshanks, two Ospreys and a Great Egret (only the second of the trip) to our lists. We headed back towards the city, pausing at the roadside to pack away scopes etc. before continuing to Seville airport. The journey to the airport was relatively straightforward, though technical problems at the check-in desk meant a somewhat protracted process for the flight. We boarded on time, however, arriving slightly ahead of schedule at Gatwick. We cleared Passport control, collected our bags and said our goodbyes, concluding a very successful and enjoyable trip.

Thanks to you all for your good humour, company and enthusiasm. I look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

Gary Elton

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Easily seen at El Rocio.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Five at the saltpans at the Odiel Marshes.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Seen daily during our time in Coto Doñana.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common and widespread and seen throughout the trip.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Only seen in Andalucia at the Jose Antonio Valverde Visitor Centre, Dehesa de Abajo and El Rocio.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A pair seen en route to the J.A.Valverde Visitor Centre.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

Common and easily seen on the wetlands of Coto Doñana.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

As above, easily seen on the Coto Doñana wetlands.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

A smart male on a roadside pool near Dehesa de Abajo on 24th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Four were seen on the main lake by Nicola and Julian at J.A.Valverde Visitor Centre.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

Five males and a female on pools near the J.A. Valverde Visitor Centre.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Fairly common in Extremadura and seen daily.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Surprisingly we had to wait until the latter part of the trip to hear this species with three heard calling on 23rd.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Easily seen and heard in the wetlands of Andalucia.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Noted daily in Coto Doñana.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A pair near the J.A. Valverde centre and at least ten on Dehesa de Abajo.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Numerous on the wetland areas in the Coto Doñana,

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Four at the Salto de Gitano, Monfragüe, with one on a nest. Another was seen the following day over flying the plains with another over flying bird seen at Coto Donana on 23rd.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Very common throughout the trip with many nesting birds observed.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Seen daily and very well in the Coto Doñana.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Common in Coto Doñana.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Seen on three occasions in Coto Donana, the first a single seen in flight by Gary, the second sighting a briefly perched pair and the third extended views of a male at El Rocio.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Regularly encountered and seen well in the Coto Doñana.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Seen well near the J. A. Valverde visitor centre.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Many seen in the Coto Doñana, seemingly scarcer in Extremadura.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Small numbers seen through the latter part of the trip.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Only seen during our day visiting the J.A Valverde Visitor Centre. We encountered single birds throughout the day but were met with a constant stream of over flying birds near the centre itself, presumably feeding birds returning back to their nest sites and young.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Two single birds seen, both in Coto Doñana – this species is still increasing in western Europe.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Two roadside birds on our first day in Extremadura were followed by larger numbers in Coto Doñana.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Only noted on three dates, most numerous at Alanje Reservoir, around 30 birds.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One seen early morning by Jane and David on 23rd, with two more on nests on our last day at Odiel Marshes.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

Noted on two dates in Extremadura, three adults and a 2nd year bird.

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

Very common in Extremadura with large concentrations noted and breeding colonies visited in Monfragüe.

Cinereous [Black] Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

Seen daily in Monfragüe with the opportunity to study individuals side-by-side with Griffons.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

This 'snake-eagle' was seen well, noted on five dates in total with our best day the 21st with six noted.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

As above seen on five dates, with eight on 21st and six on 22nd, the majority 'pale phase' birds.

Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti*

Fantastic views of an adult at the traditional nesting area at Portilla de Tietar. One of Europe's rarest breeding raptors.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

A few seen as we travelled in Extremadura but more in Coto Doñana.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

A few chance individual sightings in Coto Doñana but more numerous in Extremadura. We visited an area with a small breeding colony, there were we saw on occasion up to eight birds in the air together including

some stunning males.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Small numbers in Extremadura, with a single seen in Coto Doñana.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Very common throughout the trip.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Seen almost daily throughout the tour but not particularly common.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

We saw several large groups of mainly males, on the Caceres Plains and Campo Lugar with twenty one the maximum number seen.

Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*

Always a tricky bird to find, a short bird in long grass! We saw two in total, both males, the first particularly memorable with the light perfect and highlighting the birds powder blue almost mauve looking head.

Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

A single near the J.A.Valverde centre, with four more seen the following day at Dehesa de Abajo.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers at the same sites as the above species.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Seen in small numbers in Coto Doñana.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Several pairs noted in Extremadura though common in Coto Doñana.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Two at the Odiel Saltpans.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Seen daily during our time in Coto Donana, with a large flock of a hundred or so noted on 23rd.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Three at a roadside pool near Dehesa de Abajo on 24th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A single bird on the saltpans at Odiel Marshes.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

A single bird was a surprise find at a roadside pool near Dehesa de Abajo.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Noted on two dates in Coto Donana

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

A single bird on the 23rd was followed by eleven on 25th at the Odiel Marshes.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Ten on the wooden pier by the Visitor centre at Odiel Marshes.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Ten alongside the above at the Odiel Marshes.

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Another surprise on the roadside pool on 24th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Noted on four dates, far commoner in Coto Donana which accounted for three of those.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Easily seen at Odiel Marshes

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Two on the 23rd and easily seen at Odiel Marshes on 25th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Around twenty, some acquiring summer plumage, on the saltpans at the Odiel Marshes.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Two on the saltpans at the Odiel Marshes.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Around twenty seen on our visit to the Odiel Marshes.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Seen in Coto Doñana, with ten, some gaining ruffs on 23rd.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Two flocks on 23rd, the first around ten birds were distant, the second around fifteen were closer.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Seen at Alange Reservoir then two further sites during our time in Coto Donana.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*

Two loafing birds on the bunds at the saltpans at Odiel Marshes.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Noted at Alange Reservoir and Odiel Marshes.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Easily seen at Odiel Marshes

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Six on the wooden pontoon on the river at Odiel Marshes

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Seen initially at Alange Reservoir, eleven birds, with up to ten noted on two further dates in Coto Donana.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

One of these impressive monsters on the salt-pan bund at Odiel Marshes.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Seen well on three dates during our time in Coto Doñana.

Black-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles orientalis*

Five birds were a fortunate find on the way from Madrid on our first day in Spain.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Seen every day.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Seen daily.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Seen on three dates with best views of perched birds on a grain silo on our first day.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seen every day of the trip.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Seen or heard on five dates.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

Heard by David early one morning near our hotel in Coto Doñana.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Surprisingly only one seen, a good spot by Nicola poking its head out of a nestbox in Extremadura !

Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis*

Heard during the night and early mornings near the Ardea Purpurea Hotel by various members of the group.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

Two at our lunch stop in the Monfragüe National Park and around twenty at the Alange reservoir during our lunch stop en route from Extremadura to Andalucia.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Small numbers on most days in Extremadura and in Andalucia.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

Several were noted near the bull ring at Trujillo.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

Eight seen near nest boxes on the Santa Marta plains, with three more on the road to Campo Lugar.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Recorded on three dates in total during our trip.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Recorded daily, with some nice views enjoyed by all.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Seen regularly in small numbers throughout the week.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

A drumming bird was heard several times at La Rocina but unfortunately could not be located.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Noted on five dates with best views had at the Bullring at Trujillo and nestboxes along the Caceres Plains

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Recorded regularly throughout the tour.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

One over our lunch stop on the outskirts of Santa Marta de Magasca on 19th.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A pair performed admirably for us over the watchpoint at Salto de Gitano, Monfrague.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*

Seen regularly during our time in Extremadura.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

Common and easily seen especially in Extremadura.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Surprisingly scarce and only heard on two occasions by David and Martin

Iberian [Azure-winged] Magpie *Cyanopica cooki*

Great views of one of the regions most enigmatic birds and particularly numerous in Extremadura.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Seen in small numbers every day.

Western Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

Common throughout the tour.

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

Seen on most days of the trip but in small numbers.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Noted on five dates

Great Tit *Parus major*

Seen every day of the tour.

Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*

Several were seen well during our time in Coto Donana with birds also regularly heard.

Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*

A family party of at least four birds were seen in La Rocina on 24th.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*

Two singing along the track opposite our Extremadura hotel with one perching nicely on the telegraph wires for us. A beautiful and often underrated songster.

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*

Seen on our post breakfast walk in Extremadura near our hotel which enabled everyone to note the subtle differences separating this species with the very similar Crested Lark. Several others were noted during the trip, song seemingly being one of the better ways to separate this from the below species.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Common and ubiquitous throughout the tour.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Noted on four dates with some nice views had of perched and singing birds.

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

Locally common on the steppes and plains of Extremadura with smaller numbers in Coto Doñana.

Lesser Short-toed Lark *Alaudala rufescens*

Heard by Fernando in Coto Doñana, but unfortunately not seen.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Several hundred were noted on 23rd in Coto Doñana, with smaller numbers noted the following day.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common and seen daily throughout the tour.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Good numbers in Parque Natural de Monfragüe and easily seen around our hotel there.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Seen every day with huge numbers by the dam in Monfragüe.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Seen well daily.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Recorded on every day; much easier to hear than see!

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Seen and heard on five dates in total.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Noted on two dates in Coto Donana

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

Heard in Extremadura on our first full day there, with another seen briefly at Alange Reservoir.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Seen and heard at many sites: good views in Coto Doñana, with the sound of roadside singing birds near the J.A.Valverde centre deafening!

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

One singing sporadically at El Rocio wetland.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Common, easily seen and heard in Coto Doñana.

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca*

Several noted singing at Dehesa de Abajo with one seen well

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

Maximum of two birds, seen and heard on four dates, with some nice views had.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

One seen singing from the top of reed stems at La Rocina. At least three more individuals were heard during our time in Coto Doñana.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

Seen in Extremadura and Coto Doñana, but seemingly more common in the latter region.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Recorded on just three dates during the tour.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

As above recorded on three dates.

Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*

Up to two, heard on the visits we made to the track near the hotel, with a male finally showing on the last.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Two birds at a site near La Rocina on our last full day in the field, both showing well for everyone.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

Only one seen, a male, at Arroyo de la Molina

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

Seen or heard daily with patience finally paying off with some nice views achieved in the end.

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Recorded on two dates in Extremadura.

European Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*

A vocal pair were watched around their nest hole at a roadside stop on the 21st.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

Three individuals heard during our time in Monfragüe, with one seen particularly well, others were heard near our hotel in Donana and at La Rocina both on our last full day.

Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*

Very common seen throughout the trip.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common throughout the tour, seen most days.

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Common in both Monfragüe and the Coto Doñana, unsurprisingly heard with only a few seen, invariably remaining hidden deep in the undergrowth.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

A female type, seen at La Rocina by Nicola and Jane

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

Several around Monfragüe at Salto de Gitano and the Castillo, also seen at Trujillo Castle.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A rather smart male was seen on our first full day.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

Splendid views of at least four in Monfragüe and three at Alange Reservoir on the way to Coto Doñana.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Seen on three dates with a maximum of four on 23rd.

European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Seen every day of the tour.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Birds were noted on three dates, with a maximum of ten on 21st.

Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucura*

One high on the outcrop at Alange Reservoir.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout the tour.

Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*

Common throughout the tour though commoner in Extremadura.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Perhaps over looked with only four seen in Coto Doñana.

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus*

A pair near their hanging nest at Dehesa de Abajo. Now breeding in small numbers in Spain and Portugal.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

Five briefly at a roadside pool near Dehesa de Abajo, with two more seen the next day at El Rocio.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Common in Coto Doñana. Most birds seen appeared to be *iberiae*.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Several in Monfragüe.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Recorded on four dates but nowhere numerous.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Two roadside birds in Coto Donana

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common, seen on at least five dates.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Noted daily in small numbers.

Common Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

Small numbers seen during our time in Coto Donana.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Common again seen daily.

European Serin *Serinus serinus*

Common throughout the tour.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

A singing male was a nice surprise on our local walk on our first morning in Coto Donana.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Arguably the most noticeable, if not common bird in Extremadura seen on almost every available post, wire or bush. Fairly abundant in Coto Doñana too.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*

One seen at the Salto de Gitano and one seen at our lunch stop at Alange reservoir.

BUTTERFLIES

Spanish Marbled White *Melanargia ines*

Small White *Pieris rapae*

Cleopatra *Gonepteryx cleopatra*

Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea*

Common Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*

Knapweed Fritillary *Melitaea phoebe*

Southern Brown Argus *Aricia cramera*

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*

DRAGONFLIES

Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope*

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*

Common Bluetail *Ischnura elegans*

MAMMALS

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

OTHER WILDLIFE

European Pond Terrapin *Emys orbicularis*

Red Swamp Crayfish *Procambarus clarkii*

Moorish Gecko *Tarentola mauritanica*

Iberian Green Frog *Pelophylax perezi*

Red-striped Oil Beetle *Berberomeloe majalis*