

SPRING BIRDING IN CENTRAL & NORTHERN SPAIN

May 3-May 13 2007

Leaders Eustace Barnes and John van der Dol
with

Bob and Margaret Brooks, Chris Dyett, Jim Law, Pauline MacKenzie, Vida Madell, Sue Morton,
Margaret Plowright, Alan and Sandy Roman and Val Thompson.

ITINERARY

3rd May.

Arrival at Madrid airport. Drive to Trujillo stopping at a midway point to see typical plains birds.
Night near Trujillo.

4th May

Early morning departure to a nearby plains area to see Great Bustard and sandgrouse Night near
Trujillo.

5th May

Visited Montfrague to see Imperial Eagle and Eagle Owl. We then continued to Alamaraz wetlands
for the afternoon. Night near Trujillo.

6th May

Early morning along Santa Marta de Magasca road to see Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse.
Afternoon spent looking at waders at rice fields south of Trujillo near Madrilejos. Night near
Trujillo.

7th May

Departed for Miguel Esteban to see White-headed Duck. Then drove north to Turegano north of
Segovia. A long day. Night Turegano.

8th May

Early morning spent at Canyon del Duraton looking for Dupont's Lark. Afternoon spent in Sierra
de Guadarrama. Night Turegano.

9th May

After an early morning visit to Canyon del Duraton we headed off to Berdun in the Pyrenean
foothills. Night Berdun.

10th May

Morning along Gabardito trails looking for Wallcreeper and Lammergeier. Afternoon at Belagua
pass looking for Alpine Accentor and Citril Finch. Night at Berdun.

11th May

Morning spent at San Juan de la Pena looking for Black Woodpecker. Afternoon at Riglos admiring
the scenery and Fos de Binnies in the late pm.. Night Berdun.

12th May

Day spent at the Portalet pass looking for Snowfinch. Night at Berdun.

13th May.

Drove to Bilbao for our afternoon flight home.

DAILY DIARY

Spain has long been an extremely popular destination for European birders, offering as it does a wide range of typical Mediterranean habitats, along with easy, safe, and excellent birding. Many sites are in beautifully scenic settings featuring Romanesque architecture and ancient, fortified hilltop villages. Despite its appeal as a "sun and sand" holiday destination, much of interior Spain is

very rural and way off the tourist trail. This is the finest region to sample a large array of southern European species and is especially good for raptors. Spain has more birds of prey than any other European country and it was our intention to see as many of these as possible. Our itinerary was especially designed to cover a number of habitats to provide a great diversity of birds. We concentrated on two major habitats: the semi-arid steppes and cork-oak dehesas of central interior Spain and the scenic Sierras and the high, alpine Pyrenees to the north. In spring the many resident breeding birds of these regions are joined by migrants en route from Africa to breeding areas in the north and the Arctic.

May 3rd

It was with this intention that we flew from London to Madrid and picked up our transport in the form of a minibus and a people-carrier. Eustace drove the former and Jim the latter. The whole journey was uneventful and we were soon out of the airport and on our way to Trujillo. It was raining at Madrid but as we ventured west the skies cleared and we were able to make a couple of birding stops on the way.

Raptors were immediately obvious with both Griffon and Black Vulture seen as well as Short-toed and Booted Eagles, Montagu's Harrier and Common Buzzard. The power lines provided perches for Common and Lesser Kestrels while Hoopoes and Bee-eaters were also present. Southern Grey and Woodchat Shrikes were added to the list and the first Azure-winged Magpies were recorded. And all this before we had even arrived at our first accommodation. If this was a sign of things to come, we were in for a good time.

Eventually we arrived at our accommodation Pago de San Clemente, just 11 km south of Trujillo, and were welcomed by our hosts Martin and Claudia Kelsey. Only four people stayed here and the rest of us were just down the road at Hotel Rural Vina las Torres. We quickly sorted out our rooms and sat down to a traditional Extremaduran dinner with local wine. A very pleasant ending to the day. Most had an early night in anticipation of a long day ahead in search of some of the specialities of the area.

May 4th

Breakfast at 7 was perhaps a little later than some of our other trips, but there really is no need to get up at the crack of dawn in Spain. We set off just before 8 towards Trujillo with the intention of exploring the Extremaduran steppes today. After just twenty minutes or so we turned off the main road and drove up a rough track. Our first sighting was of a male Little Bustard and a pair of Stone Curlews. A little further up the track in a very large grassy field, 13 Great Bustards, 11 of which were males, all strutting their stuff. There were two females present and what attention they were getting. Lovely displays of these bizarre looking but very beautiful birds. We watched them for a while before they flew further into the field showing just how much white they have in the wings. A fantastic sight to see more than a dozen of these birds in flight. We stayed here for a while, caught a few butterflies including Green-striped and Dappled Whites.

We moved on along the main road to another track which actually ran parallel with the first. We could still see the Bustards but here we were looking for sandgrouse. It was not long before a party of 8 Pin-tailed Sandgrouse flew by and a total of a dozen were seen today.

Other birds of interest included Tawny Pipit, lots of Calandra Larks doing their display flights and pretending to look like pratincoles, 3 Black Vultures a couple of Short-toed Eagles and at least 20 Booted Eagles. Montagu's Harriers were doing their best to impress and 15 or more were counted while Lesser Kestrels adorned most telegraph wires. More Little Bustards totaling about ten birds and the only 4 Pallid Swifts of the trip flew past the bus. A beautiful Black-eared Wheatear was new for many.

We finished the day off with a cool beer in the wonderfully architectural square in Trujillo courtesy of our friend Chris aka "the Spanish Bush-Rhino" or the "the Montane Scrub-Hippo."

Another lovely meal was a welcome end to the day. An early night in anticipation of another successful day tomorrow. It would be difficult to match today's birds but we will give it a try.

May 5th

Well, we did not have to try too hard. Eustace's knowledge of the area ensured another excellent day was in store. We set off for the Monfrague National Park. Our first stop was at a reservoir with a large rocky outcrop where a fair percentage of western European birders were gathered although I am not sure what they were actually looking for. There were Griffon Vultures on the ledges and a couple of Black Stork nests were visible. Good views of the beautiful Egyptian Vultures were had and Eustace and I were able to get distant scope views of a White-rumped Swift. Unfortunately it did not hang around and we were unable to get the group on to it.



We moved on a few miles up to the road to another set of cliffs. We parked the vehicles in a lay-by, got out and immediately were confronted by our target, the Spanish Imperial Eagle. An adult sailed directly over our heads and excellent views were obtained for a couple of minutes or so before it disappeared back over the ridge from where it had come. Not only were the views superb, it probably saved us an hour or two or may be even a return visit. What a bit of luck! A minute's walk

up the road and we were staring at the cliff face looking for our next target. Another birder who had got there before us showed us exactly where to look and there in the scope was the Eagle Owl. We watched that for about twenty minutes before that disappeared too. The groups which were following us were in for a long haul. We had not done an hour and already the two target species were in the bag.

Onwards then through the flowering Cistus covered mountains. What a sight. One thing we have all been impressed by during our first couple of days in Extremadura was the sheer volume of wild flowers and their vibrant colours. If you can imagine the poppy fields in Southern England, well they were there too but also there were fields in white, bright yellow, blues and purple and then a mixture of all these. This was to carry on right through our trip and especially in the Pyrenees which were covered in orchids. It just shows what lack of pesticides etc. can do for a landscape.

We carried on through the mountains and stopped at a couple of gorges and bridges in the hope of some more White-rumped Swifts but no luck. It still was a little early. However good views of Blue Rock Thrushes and the ubiquitous Serins were had and an adult Great Spotted Cuckoo was seen well from both vehicles on the side of the road.

Another lay-by and another raptor! In fact it was a pair of superb adult Bonelli's Eagles which spent a good views minutes soaring over our heads. Not always an easy species to get and here were two together. We followed the road out through the eastern end of the park through cork oak groves and added Woodlarks and Thekla Larks to our list. Other interesting Mediterranean species such as Hoopoe, Chough, Sardinian and Melodious Warblers were noted in reasonable numbers and Nightingales were just everywhere to the point of sometimes drowning out other bird song. What a problem to have!

We made our way through the Almaraz marshes to a small reserve at one end of a reservoir whose water is used by a small nuclear powerstation. What a place this was. On arrival we noted Great Reed Warblers and Savi's Warblers singing and eventually we had good views of both. About six Purple Herons flew in and out of the reed beds, some of which must have been migrants. Two Spoonbills flew in and then out again, a male Little Bittern was seen by all and a Kingfisher was added to the list. A Sedge Warbler was an unexpected and perhaps quite an unusual find.



Round the other side of the reservoir two Gull-billed Terns were seen but apart from a load of Bee-eaters, little else.

We took a long way home and eventually after a very long day we were back at our accommodation. A quick wash and brush up and another lovely evening meal. We did the list and

retired fairly early again.

May 6th

Today we decided to do the steppes again and have another look at the bustards and look for some more sandgrouse. We still needed Black-bellied. We drove up the same rough track and had good views of a dozen Great Bustards. We carried on into Trujillo and then back out again on to a different track. A couple of Little Bustards were seen well, a few more Rollers although we suspect that many have not arrived yet from their winter quarters, three Little Owls and some Quail heard but as usual not seen. A few mixed flocks of both Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse put in an appearance and the steppe target list was complete.

We had our packed lunch, another beer in Trujillo, courtesy of Alan this time, and an opportunity for people to take some photographs of the square and have a wander up to the castle for the energetic ones.

After our liquid break we decided to do the rice fields which are south of our accommodation. This did not prove too productive, but some nice waders such as Little Ringed Plovers, Ringed Plovers and three Temminck's Stints were seen. Turnstone and Dunlin were rather bizarre records but some obviously migrate up through Central Spain. Amongst the 70 or so Gull-billed Terns were a couple of Black-headed Gulls which were the only ones of the trip. More interesting was the small flock of Red Avadavats, one of which showed some signs of the spectacular adult male plumage.

Unfortunately no full adult male was present.

A slightly earlier return to base, followed by another lovely traditional meal and a trip out for Red-necked Nightjars. We had a site and no sooner had we arrived when we heard two birds calling. It took a while but eventually some of the group had good views of a perched bird in an Olive tree whilst the others got just flight views. A barking dog was stopped in its tracks for a short period with the playing of a Panther tape. I wonder what went through his mind!

May 7th

With sadness in our hearts we had to leave Extremadura (What a load of rubbish!). We had had a fantastic time here. Both accommodations were superb.

Today we traveled up to Segovia but not before a major detour for another target species. We drove back towards Madrid with the intention of coming off the motorway at Oropesa in order to look for Black-winged Kite which we had missed so far. The exit road was closed, but at that exact point there was a Kite hovering by the side of the road. We were able to stop briefly and all had short but excellent views. How lucky can one be?

No need to stop. Onward to Embalse de Azutan which can be quite good for waders etc. However the water level was very high so there were no birds. However some saw a Golden Oriole and we had great views of Sub-Alpine and Sardinian Warblers as well as Nightingale, so all was not lost. We did not stay that long and moved on to Miguel Esteban in La Manche. A reserve here is known as one of only two sites in this area for White-headed Ducks. A total of about 15 birds including some stunning drakes were seen. Excellent views of these and may be a 100 or more Black-necked Grebes in full breeding plumage with young were scoped. A wet scrape beside the main lake held about 250 Greater Flamingos, which are always good value when you have not seen them for a while, and Whiskered Terns were abundant. Three Little Stints were amongst the waders which also included Kentish Plovers. A lovely little spot with Reed and Great Reed Warblers singing away and Zitting Cisticolas bouncing around all over the place. Two Savi's Warblers were present as well.

Bob found the only Spotted Flycatcher of the trip but failed to get the rest of us on it. Beers on you next, Bob! We ate our packed lunch and unfortunately had to set off for the long drive ahead.

On the road again to the steppes of Segovia. Back to Madrid, round the ring road the long way round although it makes little difference and off to our next accommodation in Turegano via the Sierra de Guadarrama

We arrived at Turegano in the late afternoon and settled into our rooms. A nice family run hotel

split on to two sites and the four boys had a whole hotel to ourselves. Shortly after we met up in the bar and had a welcome drink before our very rich evening meal, which was washed down with copious amounts of local red wine and acorn liqueur. I was to pay the price for this over indulgence and was unable to make the early start the next morning. There were only two new birds I had hoped for in Spain. I got the duck earlier today and.....

May 8th

The day dawned brightly for some. The group set off after breakfast to check out the Lark sites near Pedraza. It was intended to check the site out and to return this evening to find my other new bird!

It was not to be, they found the Dupont's Lark there and then. Reasonable views were had by most but as I suspected, not by all. Could I persuade some that a return visit was necessary?

The group returned at lunchtime full of spirit. If only I had left the stuff alone.

After lunch I was feeling a lot better and we all set off to the Sierra de Guadarrama.. Here we had our first sightings of Citril Finches, Short-toed Treecreeper and Crested Tits.

After a picnic dinner high in the sierras we returned to Pedraza to search for Nightjars. Sometime into the search we were all expecting to be crushed by what we surmised must be the mythical 'Spanish Bush-Rhino' as it crashed through prime nightjar habitat towards us. Thankfully it turned out to be certain landscape gardener from the Isle of Thanet. Attempts at another site proved more rewarding and we did see a displaying male Nightjar. After this we then packed up and headed for Turegano for a well earned rest.

A successful day again, at least for some.

May 9th

Well I did persuade some of the group that good views of Dupont's Lark were compulsory on this trip, so anybody having not seen them well was obliged to rise early to try again. We arrived at the site as dawn was breaking. It was still very cold and contrary to popular belief, these birds did not start singing until it was virtually light. As things warmed up the birds became more active and by remaining on the road and being patient (we discovered that that is the way to do it) we were able to get excellent scope views of this rare and enigmatic species. They sat on rocks, singing, then jumping off and running through the vegetation only to re-appear on another rock. Display flights were also seen and song was only uttered on the very fast and short downward flight. They dropped like bullets. Two pairs were seen. A fascinating hour or so was spent, also watching Short-toed Larks before returning to the rest of the group at the exact arranged breakfast time of 0830. A close shave but what a result!

The theory that they only sing at night and for just half an hour after dawn was disproved. We feel that with patience they can be seen throughout the morning and I have since heard of people seeing them at 11 am. They do sing at night, but not exclusively so.

After breakfast we packed the vehicles and set off in the direction of the Pyrenees. A stop on the way in some nice scrubby habitat produced a number of Bonelli's Warblers, a couple of beautiful Firecrests and some Green-winged Orchids.

At our lunch stop at a non-existent river we bagged Green Hairstreak and Moroccan Orange Tip but few birds.

It was a long drive but as we entered the "bad lands" south of Yesa Reservoir a couple of stops produced Golden Eagle, Orphean Warbler, some superb views of Short-toed Larks and Great Reed Warblers.

We eventually arrived at Berdun and met up with Vivien and her son John Boucher at the Painting School. Their absolutely charming accommodation was something I had been looking forward to since my last visit some years ago. I was not disappointed and the rest of the group immediately felt at home, not least because of our hosts' warm welcome.

Again we settled into our rooms and eventually met up in the bar at Emelio's where we were to have our meals for the next four days.

After dinner I left the table and walked to the edge of the village where I knew that if I whistled the

Scops Owl call, there would be a good chance of attracting one up from the agricultural area down below the village. It took no longer than two minutes. I returned to the group and Eustace got his tape and torch and after being given the run-around, it finally surrendered and sat on the church allowing us fantastic views. What a way to finish a good day.

May 10th

Two of the main target species in the Pyrenees are Wallcreeper and Lammergeier and it was with this in mind that we set off after breakfast to the wonderfully scenic Hecho Valley. One of my favorite places in the world.

We drove through Hecho village and Siresa after which there is a small turning on the right posted to Gabardito. We followed this until you can go no further and walked up the trail. A long climb, although not steep, it does appear to go on for ever. The whole group eventually made it to the top which for some of us was quite an achievement. Everybody had great views of a pair of Wallcreepers as they flew to and from what we assumed was their nest hole in a crevasse. What a start to the day. We returned back down the same trail where a couple of us were lucky to see a male Black Woodpecker cross the path. At one point a loud shout of Lammergeier emanated from Bob as it flew over his head. Some of us saw it but it was not until a little later that the rest of the party connected with a group of three adult "Lams" high in the sky over the ridge on the other side of the valley. Not terribly satisfactory, but at least it was on the list for the time being and we would have to hope for another one.

Having seen the Wallcreepers, there was no need to drive further up the valley so we decided to follow the newly re-surfaced connecting road to the Anso Valley and then into the Roncal Valley and on towards the French border at Belagua. This is the highest point one can drive to in these parts. We almost certainly drove into France and were surrounded by stunted Pine Forests set in patches of fresh snow.

We clambered up towards some snow patches and managed to get great views of at least three Alpine Accentors. Citril Finches here were very common and Water Pipits were seen by most apart from Jim who has now seen more Alpine Accentors than Water Pipits. How bizarre is that? It was difficult to tear ourselves away from this spot. It is another of my favorite areas and very beautiful but it was getting late and we had to get back. It is a good hours drive back to Berdun. Another nice meal and another early night.

May 11th

After breakfast we set off to San Juan de la Peña and the Pine woods above the Monasterio. This site is well known for its Black Woodpeckers. A brief play of the tape and a female arrived giving the group brief views. Although she perched on a trunk, it was not easy. Further flight sightings were had and at least two birds were involved. This site has probably been taped out too much and after the initial interest, the birds know the score and go quiet again. Good views of a Great Spotted

Woodpecker was perhaps no consolation.

We dropped back down again and another brief stop produced Red-backed Shrike and Chiffchaff and Goldcrest were found.

We returned via Puente la Reina for fuel and luncheon provisions and then drove towards Riglos. An enforced stop for a pair of Rock Thrushes was made which were to be the only ones of the trip.

Riglos is still as beautiful as ever and I was very pleased to be back again for perhaps my 15th time. We looked around the Mallos and at the back of the church for Black Wheatears but I do not think they are any longer there. Climbing disturbance have ensured that these and Wallcreepers are no longer seen here. It was getting hot and we decided to abandon our original plan of walking up the gorge and so found



somewhere to park in an olive grove and had our lunch and watched a lovely Orphean Warbler as it sat on some dead twigs.

A cup of coffee in the Hostal at Murillo was welcome. We then decided to finish our day off in the Fos de Binnies in the Anso Valley. We were looking for Dipper but without success. However the scenery here is spectacular and good views of Griffon Vultures are always possible here. Some of us were more excited with the fantastic plant life here and many photos were taken including some of Lady Orchid growing on the roadside verge.

We returned to Berdun and again had a lovely evening meal accompanied with much banter. Tomorrow was to be another altitude day with a visit to Portalet so in anticipation we retired again at a reasonable hour.

May 12th

Today our intention was to try and get some of the high altitude species, so after breakfast we drove up to Puerto del Portalet, the high pass between Spain and France. We passed the unsightly ski resort of El Formigal with all its hotels, apartments, car parks, ski lifts etc and arrived in the similarly ugly place of Portalet. At least the mountains were scenic.

After checking out a couple of closed-off tracks we decided we would have to walk up the mountain if we were going to see Snow Finch. Some got not far, others not much further, and some of us watched the brave crew climb higher and higher. Sue and Chris followed the leading group of Eustace, Jim and Pauline, but eventually they too decided enough was enough.

Alan, Bob and Margaret got as far as I did and after a brief rest we all decided to descend looking at orchids on the way down. I found Val, Vida, Margaret, Sandy and the some of the others in a café being very sensible and enjoying some wonderful coffee.

I then got a phone call from Jim asking where are you? They were back in the car park getting lunch ready. We joined them for lunch which in my case included swallowing a crown. A very expensive sandwich indeed!

The three brave climbers were rewarded with three Snow Finches including a pair at the nest site, and another six Alpine Accentors. They deserved it. Just as we were leaving we had a close immature Lammergeier which gave great views and made up for the ones the other day. I think this made Sue's and Pauline's day.

After lunch we dropped down a little and found a track off the main road which we could explore. What a place it was for plants. Orchids, Oxslips etc and butterflies to match. The birds here included a couple of Red-backed Shrikes but not a lot else.

Just as we were leaving I noticed another raptor. It was flying low down the valley and I could not really get to grips with it at first. It started to circle up when I realized it was our first Honey Buzzard which was then joined by another two, and as they drifted north they were joined by another two making five in total. They were migrating north, came across the high pass, could not find a thermal and so returned south, found a thermal to get them high enough to drift over the Pyrenees and into France on their journey north. Visible migration witnessed and you can't get better than that. A perfect ending to a perfect day and for that matter holiday.

May 13th

Our final day saw us heading west to Bilbao for our return flight to London, which was also, thankfully, quite uneventful. Thanks must go to all participants for making the trip so enjoyable and to Jim for doing over 2000 miles of driving, rewarded only with the inimitable conversations of the "Bush Rhino".

There were no birding stops on the way but we did notice a Yellow-legged Gull on Yesa reservoir. We got to the Airport in plenty of time, deposited the vehicles without any problems and waited in the lounge for our flight. It left a little late but nothing to worry about. A little turbulent as we left the coast and headed north over the Bay of Biscay and eventually into Heathrow where our bus back to Sandwich was waiting. We dropped Alan and Sandy, Bob and Margaret and Eustace at

Meopham, Pauline in Dover and the rest of us arrived back at the Observatory in good time, all safe and well.

SUMMARY

This was a fantastic trip. The weather held out and was considerably better than in England with the only daytime rain being on arrival for the first hour of our week. It was not too hot but generally really pleasant and perfect birding weather.

We virtually cleaned up on the important target species, Black Wheatear being the only one missing and had we had more time we would have got that also. Excellent views of all species were had and it would be hard to try and better our list.

All the accommodation was superb, the food great and vehicles perfect for the job.

We had a great team and I would like to thank them all for coming.

I have no doubt that we will run this tour again.

The only disappointment was the lack of butterflies due, I feel, to the weather prior to our arrival. I have never seen so much water in Spain and it was evident that they have more rain in the late spring than is normal, suppressing the butterfly numbers. However the plants and birds were just magic.



TRIP LIST.

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) Up to 200 seen at the SEO reserve near Miguel Esteban on La Mancha south of Madrid. This reserve holds one of the largest colonies in Europe of this pretty little grebe .

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) A few seen at Miguel Esteban.

Great-crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) Seen at the Almaraz reserve.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) A few seen at Almaraz.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) Two pairs at Miguel Esteban.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) Small numbers throughout.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) A few seen throughout.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) Up to 25 seen at Miguel Esteban.

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) 15 seen at Miguel Esteban.

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) About 20 seen at Miguel Esteban. This is a highly localised and rather uncommon species for which we made the somewhat lengthy journey to see at this well known site.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) Fairly common.

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) Up to 10 seen at Almaraz and a single bird at Miguel Esteban.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) Very few seen. A group of 4 near Trujillo.

Cattle Egret (*Bulbulcus ibis*) Very common throughout central Spain.

Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) A single male seen repeatedly at Almaraz.

Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) A single bird at Almaraz.

Spoonbill (*Platalea leucocordia*) A pair seen at Almaraz. A species expanding its range in Spain.
Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) Up to 250 seen at Miguel Esteban. Somewhat unexpected.

Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) Seen at numerous sites on the Meseta near Trujillo.

White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) Common throughout.

Lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*) A single and a group of 3 seen at Gabardito and another single bird seen at Portalet.

Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) Abundant around Trujillo and in the Pyrenean foothills.

Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) Fairly common in Montfrague NP.

Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) Small numbers throughout.

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Singles seen at a few sites in the Pyrenees.

Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*) A single adult watched at length in Montfrague.

Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) A few seen at Montfrague.

Booted Eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*) Fairly common throughout.

Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*) A pair seen at Montfrague and a single immature bird seen at Turegano.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) Common.

Black Kite (*Milvus nigricans*) Very common.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeroginosus*) Seen at several sites from Almaraz to Bardenas Reales.

Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) Fairly common around Trujillo. Seen in small numbers elsewhere.

Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) A single seen along the highway en route to Trujillo.

Another seen near Oropesa on our way to Toledo. In Europe this is a highly localised species, albeit one extending its range.

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) Five seen migrating up the Portalet valley.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) Singles seen in the Pyrenees.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*).

Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) Common in and around Trujillo.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) Seen at several sites throughout.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectris rufa*). Common.

Common Quail (*Cotornix cotornix*) Heard at numerous sites throughout.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) Single near Trujillo and other heard at Miguel Esteban.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chlorops*)

Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) Several seen at Almaraz. This is a species that has rapidly spread throughout Spain since a low point in the 1970's, when it was more or less restricted to the Coto Donana.

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) Several groups of males and single females seen on plains around Trujillo. One site was visited to see a large group of males at a known display site.

Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) Fairly common.

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) Seen throughout.

Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemis*) Several pairs seen around Trujillo.

Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*) A single bird seen from the bus by two people near Toledo.

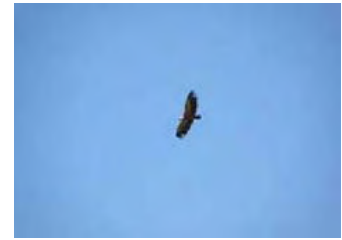
Little-ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) Seen at sites throughout.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) Seen at Madrilejos in a flooded rice field.

Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandinus*) Seen at Miguel Esteban

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) A few seen at Miguel Esteban.

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) Two seen near Madrilejos in flooded rice fields.



Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) Seen in flooded rice fields.
Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temmincki*) 3 seen in flooded rice fields.
Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*) 3 seen near Miguel Esteban
Common Sandpiper (*Nactitis hypoleuca*) Seen in small numbers throughout.
Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) A few seen.
Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) Seen at Almaraz and other sites on migration.
Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) A few seen at Miguel Esteban.
Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) A few at Miguel Esteban.
Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus cachinnans*) One at Miguel Esteban and two on Yesa Reservoir.
Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilocta*) Good numbers seen south of Trujillo and on La Mancha.
Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonius hybridus*) Abundant at Miguel Esteban
Black-bellied Sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) Up to 20 seen near Santa Marta de Magasca. An uncommon species this year
Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (*Pterocles achata*) 12 seen with Great Bustard near Trujillo. Another 35-40 seen with the above species near Santa Marta de Magasca.
Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*).
Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) Common throughout.
Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)
Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) Common.
Eurasian Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)
Great-spotted Cuckoo (*Clamator glandarius*) Several individuals seen near Trujillo. One adult seen by all near Montfrague. Another seen at Trujillo castle in the town. Always an unpredictable species.
Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*) A single adult and a chick seen at Montfrague.
Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) Several seen near Trujillo.
Scops Owl (*Otus scops*) A single bird seen in Berdun.
Eurasian Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) Seen and heard near Pedraza.
Red-necked Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*) A single bird seen well and another heard near Trujillo.
Common Swift (*Apus apus*) common.
Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*)
White-rumped Swift (*Apus caffer*) A single bird seen at Penfalcon by two members of the group.
Hoopoe (*Upupa epos*) Commonly recorded.
Kingfisher (*Alcedo affinis*) One recorded at Almaraz.
European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) Common.
European Roller (*Coracicus garulus*) Several seen around Trujillo. Up to 40 seen on one day near Santa Marta de Magasca.
Black Woodpecker (*Drycopus martius*) Seen and heard at Hecho and San Juan de la Pena.
Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridius sharpei*) Several seen throughout.
Great-spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*) Fairly common.
Common Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) Small numbers at Canyon del Duraton and in the Pyrenees.
Crested Lark (*Alauda cristata*) Common.
Thekla Lark (*Alauda theklae*) Fairly common.
Woodlark (*Lullulla arborea*) Common.
Greater Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) Seen at Canyon del Duraton and others at Bardenas Reales.
Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha clandra*) Common around Trujillo.
Dupont's Lark (*Chersophilus duponti*) Up to 4 seen at Canyon del Duraton. Birds were found to be singing from about 7.45am up to 10.30am. During this time they were watched at length feeding on the ground, singing from exposed rocks and intermittently giving short display flights.
Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) A few seen near Trujillo.
Crag Martin (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) Common.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) Common.
House Martin (*Delichon urbica*) Common.
Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*) Fairly common.
Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) A few seen at sites throughout.
White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) 1 heard along Foz de Binies.
Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) Fairly common in higher mountains.
Alpine Accentor (*Prunella collaris*) A pair seen at Belagua and 6 seen at Portalet.
White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) Small numbers throughout.
Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava ibericae*) Small numbers found throughout.
Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) Small numbers throughout.
Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*) Found in higher mountains.
Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*) Small numbers near Trujillo.
Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*) Several seen in the Pyrenees.
Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) Common.
Orphean Warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*) Several pairs seen and heard in Pyrenean foothills. This species was watched at length at several locations.
Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*) Common.
Subalpine warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*) Fairly common.
Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidius*) Common in open areas.
Savi's Warbler (*Locustela luscinioides*) Two birds seen at Almaraz and several at Miguel Esteban.
Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) common
Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) Several at Miguel Esteban.
Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) Seen and heard at Almaraz and Miguel Esteban.
Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) 2 at Almaraz.
Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglota*) Common.
Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) One seen and heard in the sierra de Guadarrama
Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) Seen and heard in the Pyrenees.
Bonelli's Warbler (*Phylloscopus bonelli*) Found to be common in stunted oak woodlands near Soria.
Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)
Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*) Seen in the Pyrenees and other upland areas.
Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) One at Miguel Esteban.
Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) Common.
Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) Abundant.
Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) Common.
Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) A few seen in the Pyrenees and on migration elsewhere.
Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*) Fairly common around Trujillo.
Whinchat (*Saxicola rubra*) Several seen in Bardenas Reales.
Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) Common.
Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*) Seen at several sites.
Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) A pair near Riglos
Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) Found only in the Pyrenees.
Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) Small numbers throughout.
Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) Several pairs noted at Belagua.
Great Tit (*Parus major*) Fairly common.
Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)
Coal Tit (*Parus ater*) Common in higher mountains.
Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*) Seen and heard at Gabardito.
Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*) Fairly common.
Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*) A few throughout.
Eurasian Nuthatch (*Sitta europea*) Seen in mountains near Pedraza and in the Pyrenees.
Wallcreeper (*Trichodroma muraria*) A pair seen at Gabardito. The favourite bird of the trip.

Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*) See at Gabardito.
 Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*) Common.
 Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius (excubitor) meridionalis*) Fairly common in Extremadura.
Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) Common in the Pyrenees. A lovely bird
 Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*) Common.
 Azure-winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyanus*) Abundant in central Spain
 Common Magpie (*Pica pica*) Abundant.
 Eurasian Jay (*Garulus glandarius*) A few seen throughout.
 Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) Fairly common.
 Red-billed Chough (*Phyrrocorax phyrrocorax*) Fairly common.
 Alpine Chough (*Phyrrocorax graculus*) Common in the Pyrenees.
 Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*).
 Raven (*Corvus corax*) Pairs seen throughout.
 Spotless Starling (*Sturna unicolor*) Common.
 Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*) Heard at many sites. We did not specifically look for this species and it is common in suitable habitat.
 House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).
Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispanicus*) Common around Trujillo.
 Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*) A few seen in the north.
 Rock sparrow (*Petronia petronia*) Commonly seen in suitable habitat.
Snow Finch (*Montifringilla nivalis*) 3 seen at Portalet at 2550m.
 Chaffinch (*Fringila coelops*) Common throughout.
 Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*) Singles and pairs seen near Tervola and Kuusamo.
 Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) Common.
 Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*) .
Citril Finch (*Serinus citrinella*) Seen at Belagua.
 Serin (*Serinus serinus*) Abundant.
 Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) A single bird seen by the leader flying in front of the bus. Again this is a much commoner bird in Spain than indicated here, but no time was expended in looking for it.
 Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) A few throughout.
 Cirl bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*) A few seen in the Pyrenees.
 Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*) Several pairs seen throughout.
 Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*) Abundant
 Red Avadavat (*Amandava amandava*) A flock of 12 seen near Madrilejos. A well established species in Spain now.

MAMMAL LIST

Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) Several seen near Montfrague
 Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) Several seen throughout.
 Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)
 Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*)
 Common Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) Common.
 Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) 1 seen at Gabardito.
 Alpine Marmot (*Marmota marmota*) Common at Portalet.

BUTTERFLY LIST

Black-veined White
 Green-striped White

Dappled White
Red Admiral
Small Tortoiseshell
Brimstone
Cleopatra
Spanish Festoon
Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Orange Tip
Moroccan Orange Tip
Small Heath
Wall
Small Copper
Green Hairstreak
Dark green Fritillary
Ringlet sp
Clouded Yellow sp
Blue Sp

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