

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

BIRD WATCHING DAY TOUR

IN

ANDALUCIA, SPAIN

MAY 25th 2016



TRIP REPORT

ESTEPONA - RIO GENAL - GUADIARO VALLEY - SAN ENRIQUE WOODS - MARCHENILLA TRACK

Today I collected Steve, his son Dan and his son-in-law Lee from their holiday accommodation near Estepona, we had a great relaxed birding day in the valleys around Casares, Gaucin and San Martín.....[see footnote for an amazing find during the day]

We met at 7am outside the Marriott Hotel Complex near Estepona and headed inland towards Casares, it was just getting light as we left, the sky was clear but it was a little windy. Just before we reached Casares we pulled over onto a track that led into the Cork Oak woodlands we were hoping to see a few woodland birds.



My group for the day: L to R - Steve, Dan and Lee (who was out birding for the very first time!)

Common Chaffinch, Blue Tit, European Robin, Short-toed Treecreeper and our main target, **Crested Tit** were seen, a Firecrest called but we never located it. Griffon Vultures, Black Kite and Common Buzzard were seen overhead.

Next we stopped at the visitor's centre in Casares we had much closer views of the Vultures and we saw a couple of Blue Rock Thrushes with plenty of Common and Pallid Swifts flying over the town.

At Sierra Crestellina we searched for Bonelli's Eagle without success, the usual nesting site has been taken over by Griffon Vultures! We were kept busy with close views of Cirl Bunting, Corn Bunting, Stonechat, Crested Lark, Woodchat Shrike and a Melodious Warbler. Up in the sky we noted several Booted Eagles, a single Short-toed Eagle and a couple of Common Ravens.



Cleopatra Butterfly

The track along the Rio Genal gave us shelter and respite from the cold north-westerly wind, we had a magical hour or so, most of it was spent watching a raptor passage. Over 100 Honey Buzzards came up out of the forests and circled above us, many Booted Eagles and Black Kites joined them. It was terrific to see these birds in such good light, an amazing experience. We also had great views of Turtle Dove, European Bee-eater, Long-tailed Tit, Sein and many Golden Orioles called but did not show.



Turtle Dove

We ate our picnic by the side of the Guadiaro after watching a showy Western Olivaceous Warbler, some wonderful Serins and Little Ringed Plovers on the river bank. We saw a couple of Egyptian Mongoose as we drove down the track to the river.



Little Ringed Plover

Our visit to San Enrique woods produced some good sightings, WRYNECK was the main target but we also saw Spotted Flycatcher, Great Spotted Woodpecker and more Serins. We stood on the river viewing some tidal pools from a raised bank on the edge of the woods. A Common Kingfisher showed several times we also had really good views of Little Ringed Plover.



In the White Poplar San Enrique Woods

We watched a Viperine Snake in the water and an Otter was a great surprise to it and to us as it dashed from cover and quickly returned when it saw us just a couple of meters away.

Our last venue was the track at Marchenilla, it is my best local place to see Rufous Bush Robin, we noted a pair of Little Owls along the way. It wasn't long before we were getting great views of the Robin, fantastic, it was the most wanted species by my guests. Our walk along the track also produced Common Nightingale, countless European Bee-eaters and Corn Buntings, Melodious Warbler and lastly a pair of Tawny Pipits.



RUFOUS BUSH ROBIN

The pipit was our last new sighting, we had recorded nearly 60 species, a great day out, with lovely weather and great company. Lee came on in leaps and bounds during the day, a converted birder we hope!

FOOT-NOTE

During a morning coffee break at a venta adjacent to Sierra Crestellina Dan stood taking incidental photos of vultures as they flew over us. On later inspection he realised that one of his subjects was a little different from the others. He had in fact taken pictures of the rare Ruppell's Vulture!! It is an African species that occasionally drifts over to Spain, well done Dan. (it is only the second recorded sighting of this species in the area).



	SPECIES	Scientific name	
1	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	X
2	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	X
3	Eurasian Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	X
4	Ruppell's Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>	X
5	Short-toed Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	X
6	Booted Eagle	<i>Aquila pennatus</i>	X
7	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	X
8	Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	X
9	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	X
10	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	X
11	Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	X
12	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naummani</i>	X
13	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	X
14	Rock Dove/ Feral Pigeon	<i>Columbia livia</i>	X
15	Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	X
16	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	X
17	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	X
18	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus (escape)</i>	X
19	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	X
20	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	X
21	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	X
22	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	X
23	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	X
24	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	X
25	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	H
26	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	X
27	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	X
28	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	X
29	Northern House-Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	X
30	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	X
31	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	X
32	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	X
33	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	X
34	Rufous Bush Robin	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	X
35	European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	X
36	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	X
37	Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	X
38	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	X
39	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapillas</i>	X
40	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	X
41	Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	X
42	Western Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais opaca</i>	X
43	Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	H
44	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	X
45	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithus caudatus</i>	X
46	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	X
47	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	X
48	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	X
49	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	X
50	Woodchat Shrike	<i>anias senator</i>	X
51	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	X
52	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	X

53	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	X
54	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	H
55	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X
56	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	X
57	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	X
58	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	X
59	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	X
60	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	X
61	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	X
62	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	X
63	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	X