

# Wingspan Bird Tours

## Extremadura

May 21st - 28th 2005

### Leader:-Bob Buckler

### Participants:

Janice Shipway, Rita and Ernie Parker, Pamela Mason, Brian and Mary Chilcott.

### Weather:

Overcast skies and cold winds dominated the first two days, then the wind dropped and the clouds cleared, the temperatures on the plains soared to 30 degrees. The last two days were spent in the mountains where it was a few degrees cooler and the breeze returned to take the edge off the unpleasant heat. Early morning excursions always required fleeces but towards the end of the week it was very pleasant, even at 6:30 am.

### Itinerary:

#### Day 1.Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May

After a long delay we eventually left Madrid airport and headed Southwest for Trujillo. Our first birds were **Common and Pallid Swifts** hawking the terminal buildings quickly followed by **Spotless Starling** and **Collared Dove**. As we approached Trujillo bird sightings became more frequent and we added **White Stork**, **Cattle Egret**, **Black & Red Kites** and **Crested Lark** to our list. After settling into our rooms at Finca Santa Marta we toured the wonderful court yards and annexes and then onto the gardens. We quickly became acquainted with the sight and sound of **Azure-winged Magpie** and after a short walk we found **Woodlark**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Bee-eater**, **Melodious Warbler**, **Red-rumped Swallow** and heard both **Golden Oriole** and **Hoopoe**. After dinner we sat on the patio and we could hear **Scops Owl** and **Red-necked Nightjar**.



#### Day 2. Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May



An early start found us on the plains near Belen at 6:30 am. and what a great start, within half an hour we had sorted out the larks, after watching **Crested**, **Thekla**, **Calandra** and **Greater Short-toed Lark**. We saw numerous parties of **Great Bustard**, a group of 8 were feeding not far from the roadside and showing very well. Male **Little Bustard's** were blowing raspberries at us from the longer grass and everywhere the sky held, raptors, larks and hirundines.

We found 2 **Great-spotted Cuckoos** along a fence line, we had numerous sighting of **Hoopoe**, **Stonechat**, **Black Kite**, **Common Buzzard**, **Red Kite**, **Common Kestrel**, **Lesser Kestrel**, **Cattle Egret**, **White Stork** and the ubiquitous **Corn Bunting** sang from every conceivable song post.

But the real highlight was the appearance of 2 **Black-winged Kites**, both giving wonderful displays as they hovered, glided and dropped like stones onto some unsuspecting prey. Later they both perched, giving us ample time to admire their wonderful plumage, red eyes and yellow legs, what an elegant bird. Another beauty was a melanistic **Montagu's Harrier**, instead of the usual black, grey and white plumage this bird was completely black. A **Little Owl** stared at us from a pile of stones as we set off back for breakfast.

After being fed and watered we toured the steppe around Santa Marta de Magasca setting off via the pond in Trujillo. At the pond we found 150+ **Cattle Egrets**, **Little Grebe**, **White Wagtail** and lots of Pond Terrapins.

On the steppe we saw many raptors, in fact, the sky was full of them! **Montagu's Harriers** were everywhere with a total of 16 found in one small area. Other sightings included both **Kites**, **Booted Eagle**, both **Kestrels**, both **Common** and **Honey Buzzard** and innumerable **White Storks**.

Driving a little further on we saw the two Shrikes of the area, **Woodchat** and **Southern Grey**, giving good views as they perched on the low power lines, a distant **Roller** was also found, again on the power lines, but the heat haze distorted our view and lessened our enjoyment of this gem.

At the bridge over the Rio Almonte near Monroy we patiently waited for a sighting of our star bird of the day, **Black Wheatear**. It kept us waiting for quite a while but meanwhile we were entertained by, **Crag Martin**, **Red-rumped Swallow** and we had very close encounters with **Alpine Swifts** that were breeding below the bridge. A party of **Serins** fed on the abundant flower heads across the river from us.

We headed back to the Finca, taking the scenic route via Trujillo because the driver took a wrong turning, however this route proved fruitful as we stopped at another bridge and found **Little-ringed Plover** and a party of **5 Pallid Swifts** that were wheeling and calling in and around the bridge. We returned happy, hot and tired.

### Day 3. Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>

An early walk around the Grounds of Finca Santa Marta produced some interesting sightings. A small group of **Hawfinches** was the highlight, unfortunately they did not show well enough for all the group to have good views of them. A **Sardinian Warbler** sang from a dead tree for all of us to enjoy, (not the song, just the bird) whilst family parties of both **Blue** and **Great Tits** moved along the hedgerows in pace with us. An **Egyptian Vulture** flew over and we all had great views of a singing **Hoopoe** just before returning for breakfast.



The rest of day was spent roaming the rice paddies south of the Finca, we had excellent views of a female **Great Bustard** and we all enjoyed closer views of **Calandra Lark**. We stopped at the dam of the Embalse Sierra Brava and spent a fabulous bird watching hour. There were large flocks of distant **Mallard**, groups of both **Black-necked** and **Great Crested Grebe** and many **Common Coots**. A very distant pair of **Little Terns** and one or two **Black-headed Gulls** lingered in the far distance. Below the dam on the outlet side we heard **Great Reed Warbler** and had fantastic views of a male **Marsh Harrier** as it quartered the fields below us. Two **Egyptian Vultures** gave a low fly pass, whilst **Jackdaws** and **Ravens** mobbed any raptor in sight. As we left the dam 4 **Gull-billed Terns** gave a fly – pass as if to say farewell and thanks for coming.

The rice paddies just south of Madrigalejo offered roadside views of feeding **Spoonbills**, **Little Egrets**, **Black-winged Stilts** and **White Storks**. Distant **Collared Pratincoles** dozed on the embankments but the heat haze hampered our viewing of these spectacular beasts. We continued south and spent an hour on top of a disused bridge to view a reed-strewn river, as we unloaded from the bus a loud, a very close, **Great Reed Warbler** sang out, drowning out all other bird song., we all got full views of this ‘megaphone-mouthed’ bird.

Eventually we added **Nightingale**, **Reed Warbler**, **Cetti’s Warbler** to our day list and we all had a glimpse of a flying **Little Bittern** as it dived for cover 50 meters upstream. The sky was pretty good too, **Roller**, **Golden Oriole**, **Hoopoe** flew over us and a stunning **Short-toed Eagle** hovered nearby, it landed on the hillside and spread its wings as if ‘anting’ but was probably mantling to cover the prey it had pounced on.



Moving onto the fields around Vegas Altas we got good close views of a **Roller** as it perched on the power lines, we watched a **Hoopoe** singing from a chimney pot, characteristically nodding its head as it uttered its 3 notes, it was as if the bird was using the chimney to amplify the sound. A bird in the bush turned out to be a **Tree Sparrow** and roadside “bouncing birds” were the fairly common **Zitting Cisticola**. By now the temperature approached 30 degrees so we retreated to our haven and enjoyed an afternoon siesta.

## Day 4 Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>

We assembled in the darkness at 6 am for our early excursion to the famous Montfrague national park, **Scops Owls** called as we left the Finca grounds and a **Black - crowned Night Heron** flew past the bus a few kilometers into the journey. We arrived at Portilla del Tietar just as the sun came up, in great anticipation we searched the rock face hoping to catch the **Eagle Owls** before they went to bed. Alas we missed them, **Griffon Vultures** were everywhere and a suitably placed **Black Stork's** nest allowed us to observe the two chicks inside. **Nightingales, Blue Rock Thrush, Subalpine Warbler, Serin** and **Rock Bunting** were the pick of the rest of our sightings.

We drove back into the centre of the park and had brunch at the Mirador de la Tajadilla, there we saw a “flying barn-door” – the **Black (monk) Vulture** - it gave excellent views as it soared alongside the smaller **Griffon Vultures**, a flyby **Hawfinch** and a pair of vociferous **Ravens** were other birds of note. As we headed towards Villareal we stopped along the road when someone in the back of the bus spotted a **Black-eared Wheatear** and later, a timely break at a known **Bonelli's Eagle** nest site was very fortuitous. In very windy conditions the distant eagle was located and an adult bird was in attendance, after a few minutes this magnificent eagle flew off, within seconds it gained incredible height on the thermals and was lost to sight. If we had arrived a few minutes later we would have missed it completely.



We lunched at the information centre at Villareal and then returned to Portilla del Tietar and was immediately rewarded with fantastic views of **Spanish Imperial Eagle** as an adult bird fed its chicks, the male bird chased off prospecting vultures and perched on the cliff face in full view. At a spruce plantation just above the Tietar dam we heard and saw a **Great-spotted Woodpecker** as it responded to imitation drumming. Many **Turtle Doves** were calling and a **Blackcap** eluded us as we failed to locate it but **Golden**

**Orioles** were eventually tracked down.

Our final destination of the day was Pena Falcon and the Castillo de Montfrague. At the Pena we saw another **Black Stork's** nest with two chicks and there were many **Griffon Vultures** soaring above the impressive rock formation. After climbing the dreaded steps up to the Castillo we were rewarded with stunning panoramic views of the surrounding park. A singing **Black Redstart**, close up **Crag Martins** and an obliging **Rock Bunting** entertained the group. Our star bird was however, the **White-rumped Swift**, we managed to see 5 of these sought after rare breeding birds. Another excellent find was the Two-tailed Pasha, a very large butterfly which was holding territory around the Castillo. The late afternoon heat eventually drove us back to bus for our return home and a well deserved siesta.

Back at the finca we were treated to very close views of a number of species as they came to a puddle in the garden. They either drank, bathed or collected mud for nest building, Swallows, two varieties, would arrive with their beaks filled with dried grass, they then mixed this with mud and carried the mixture off for nest building. **Serins, Crested Lark, Azure-winged Magpie, Linnet, Goldfinch, Corn Bunting, Chaffinch, Blackbird, House Martin, Spanish & House Sparrow** and **Great Tits** also enjoyed the little oasis.

At 6 pm some of the group made a dash to the Belen Plains to seek out an extremely rare visitor to Spain – a **Northern (Waldraap) Bald Ibis** (*Geronticus eremita*). After taking a short cut, we arrived half an hour later than we would have, had we taken the long way round (so much for Spanish Maps). However we had a great time watching the **Ibis** as it flew off mobbed by **Jackdaws**, it later returned with an entourage of about 40 birds all intent on making life for the **Ibis** uncomfortable. It eventually settled at the roost site, perched high in full view, a great sight silhouetted against a setting sun.



The **Northern Bald Ibis** is globally endangered, with a wild population falling as low as 50 pairs in 1997. Today, following successful conservation efforts the population stands at approx. 100 pairs and during 2004, 98 pairs raised 115 chicks. The main population breeds in Morocco in the Souss Massa National Park so we were very privileged to see such a rare bird in central Spain (even if the bird is so ugly).

We had a marvelous hour seeing most of the plains specialties again, **Great Spotted Cuckoo**, both **Bustards, Calandra Lark** and many raptors filled the sky. We decided not to take the short cut back.

After dinner we ventured down the entrance track of the Finca to look for the calling **Scops Owl**, some of us got a brief view of one. As we stood listening to the Scops a **Long-eared Owl** began calling from a copse behind us.

## Day 5 Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>

Another early start, we made a pre-breakfast visit to the Steppe near Casares. As the sun rose it banished the chill from the air and the colour came back to our faces as well as to the landscape. We saw at least 5 **Rollers** and had good views of **Great Bustard**, there



were 30+ **Montagu's Harriers** in the vicinity with another melanistic bird, this one much darker than the previous bird seen on the Belen plain. After a short while we caught up with our target species, a group of 9 **Pin-tailed Sandgrouse** were found feeding just off the track, when they took to the air it was obvious that there were 2 **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** with them. During the next 30 minutes we found several parties of both species of Sandgrouse giving us all exciting views, we saw **Red-legged Partridge** and both Bustards in flight before returning for breakfast.



Suitably refreshed and attired we set off for Embalse Arrocampo, about an hours' drive along the motorway, in search of some wetland species notably absent from our trip list. As we emerged from the mini-bus we were greeted by the raucous sound of the **Great-reed Warbler** and in very breezy weather we could hear at least 3 **Savi's Warblers** reeling in the reedbed. We located a **Purple Swamphen**, nearby 3 **Purple Herons** were flying in and around the reedbed and we also saw **Reed Warbler**, **Squacco heron**, another **Western Marsh Harrier** and we heard a distant **Water Rail**. We had lunch at the side of the van whilst watching the sky, as usual many raptors were on show, we noted both **Kites**, 3 **Vulture** species, **Booted** and **Short-toed Eagles**, **Western Marsh & Montagu's Harriers** and **Common Buzzard**.

The heat was now quite oppressive so we returned the roadside reedbed where a nice breeze could be enjoyed, there we all had excellent 'in the scope' sightings of a **Savi's Warbler**, we watched it turning its head to maximize the area covered by its reeling song, whilst a **Cetti's Warbler**, using sheer volume as its' strategy to maximize an audience, sang several times before we finally located it.

Other birds of note were our only sighting of **Great Cormorant**, **Gull-billed Tern**, **Woodchat Shrike**, **Long-tailed Tit**, **Stonechat** and **Hoopoe**. After stopping off for ice-cream we returned home for our afternoon siesta.

At 5 pm we set off for a return visit to the rice paddies and watched from the disused bridge south of Madrigalejo. We had a lovely two hours there, **Common Waxbill** showed very well, a pair sat in full view, the female was seen to preen the male in an affectionate manner, how cute. Another (better) sighting of **Little Bittern**, **Nightingale**, **Golden Oriole** and **Roller** added to our enjoyment, whilst the territorial disputes between **Great Reed** and **Reed Warblers** filled in the lulls.

We made a detour just south of the Rio Pizarro on our way home, to look over another area of rice paddies, we had great views of **Collared Pratincole** and we located an **Iberian (Blue-headed) Wagtail**. Fully satisfied with a great day's bird-watching we set off back to the finca looking forward to a glass of complimentary wine that came with our dinner.



## Day 6. Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>

We all had a lie-in, but excited chatter rang from the breakfast table, we were discussing our route to the Gredos Mountains because today we were saying goodbye to the lovely Finca Santa Marta.

So at 10 am with the bus fully laden we set off north for the mountains. We made several stop offs along the way to view rivers, valleys and hillsides. At an old bridge south of Candelada we found a young **Woodchat Shrike** being fed by its parents, a **Mistle Thrush** was a first for the trip when it flew across our view of the Shrike.



The next stop found on an elevated bank overlooking the river Tietar, there we saw both **Grey** and **White Wagtails**, we heard **Bblackcap** and briefly we saw a pair of **Subalpine Warblers**. During our final stop at another bridge over the river Tietar we found the curiously shaped nest of the **Red-rumped Swallow**, a pair of **Cirl Buntings** bathed at the waters edge, they then played piggy-back before flying off with a cheerful chirp.



We arrived at the Parador de Gredos late afternoon, after quickly settling in we then set out to explore the area adjacent to the hotel. **Black Restart**, **Serin** and **Grey Wagtail** were are first sightings, but **Blackcap**, **Green & Great-spotted Woodpeckers** and **Coal Tit** all called but failed to put in an appearance.

A short trip into the valley by minibus found us overlooking some large meadows grazed by horses. **Rock (Sparrow) Petronia** was a surprise there but **Linnet**, **Yellow Wagtail** and **Northern Wheatear** were not. Further down the valley we entered a pine forest near a camp-site, and by a stream we recorded **Coal Tit**, **European Robin**, **Pied Flycatcher** and **Iberian Wagtail**. In the sky **Black & Red Kites** were common, **Booted Eagles** soared and a **Hobby** hawked the tree tops. Happy with our days birding we returned to the Parador for our 4 course dinner.

## Day7 Friday 27<sup>th</sup>

Our last full day – we assembled in the grey light of dawn to continue our crepuscular activities. We headed up the winding road towards the ‘Platforma de Gredos’ stopping many times along the 12 kilometers to the car park. The light was improving as we stopped at a bridge, a **Bonelli’s Warbler** sang incessantly from the only tree in the vicinity and was quickly joined by a **Common Whitethroat** and, at last, a **Blackcap** sang in full view from the top of a bush.

The next stop produced several very dark coloured **Dunnocks**, **Dartford Warblers** showed extremely well, **Spectacled Warblers** showed intermittently and **Ortolan Buntings** were very obliging. But the jewel in the crown was the **Bluethroat**, distant however, but showing very well.

We reached the car park at the top of the valley but the wind chill factor curtailed our visit, not before we saw a herd of **Spanish Ibex** and found **Rock Bunting** and **Red-legged Partridge**.



After breakfast we returned to the same valley and searched the lower levels below the tree line. We had stunning views of a flyover **Honey Buzzard**, we saw more **Pied Flycatchers**, **Serins**, **Coal Tits** and **Mistle Thrushes**. Our afternoon efforts were somewhat restrained due to the hot weather but we ventured further into the ‘Reserva Nacional de Gredos’ seeing more of the same species but failing to see **Citril Finch**.

Returning to the Parador some of us explored the pine forest at the back of the gardens. There we found another **Bonelli’s Warbler**, **Coal Tit**, **Green Woodpecker** and had a brief encounter with a **Crested Tit**. During the night several members of the group heard **Tawny Owls** hooting.

### **Day 8 Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>**

The trip was over for most of the group and all that was left was the 2½ hour journey to the airport. But 3 of us were taking a later flight so we had time to explore an area in the Sierra de Guadarma, around the Puerto de Navacerrado. There we added, at last, **Citril Finch** to the list after having very good views of a pair. We also saw **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Short-toed Treecreeper** and **Pied Flycatcher**. To put the icing on the cake and finish off the trip on a high note we found a **Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** singing from a pylon, what an ending, even a delayed flight back did not take the shine off that bird.

The sheer beauty of the magnificent and varied landscapes of Extremadura, with its wide plains, high mountains and deep gorges, quiet roads and peaceful tranquility leaves a lasting impression on the visitor. This year was a particularly dry one so the profusion of wild flowers was not as inspiring as in previous years – however the variety, colour and sheer abundance of its wild birds should be enough to encourage, even the most cynical bird-watcher to return to this magical, unspoiled, haven.

Many fond memories of this tour fill my mind, but the early morning visit to steppe near Carsares has to be my favourite. Seeing so many Rollers, and all those Montagu’s Harriers warming themselves on the track, the superb colours of the Black-bellied Sandgrouse and its ridiculous flight call will leave a lasting impression and one that will be hard to match in the future.

## Species List.

**1. Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

One on Trujillo pond 22<sup>nd</sup> and several on Embalse Sierra Brava 23<sup>th</sup>

**2. Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

Many on Embalse Sierra Brava 23<sup>rd</sup>

**3. Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Many on Embalse Sierra Brava 23<sup>rd</sup> with one party of 10

**4. Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

1 at the disused bridge over the Rio 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

**5. Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 flew alongside the van early morning of 24<sup>th</sup>

**6. Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*

1 at Embalse Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**7. Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

widespread and abundant –seen every day

**8. Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

1 Or 2 seen in the rice paddies with Spoonbill 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

**9. Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

Seen most days

**10. Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

3 at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**11. White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*

Widespread and abundant nesting on most churches and towers.

**12. Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

1 feeding young near Portillo del Tietar rock face, 2 young on nest at Pena Falcon, 1 on thermals in Montfrague all on 24<sup>th</sup>

**13. Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

A flock of 12 seen on 23rd and 25th south of Madrigalejo

**14. Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Fairly common seen most days – large numbers on Embalse Sierra Brava 23<sup>rd</sup>

**15. Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*

2 on Belen Plains 22<sup>nd</sup>

**16. Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

Seen regularly, very common

**17. Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

One or two most days

**18. Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*

2 from the dam at Embalse Sierra Brava 23<sup>rd</sup>. 1 Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup> 1 over Finca 23<sup>rd</sup>

**19. Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus*

Seen daily, with large numbers in Montfrague Park

**20. Black (Monk) Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*

Seen on a few days, 1 in Montfrague Park 24<sup>th</sup> , 2 at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup> , 1 in Gredos 26<sup>th</sup>

**21. Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*

1 over the disused bridge on 23<sup>rd</sup>

**22. Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

1 at the dam on 23<sup>rd</sup>. A pair at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**23. Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

impressive numbers on the plains. With 30+ on track near Casares 25<sup>th</sup>

**24. Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*

1 or 2 most days

**25. Spanish Imperial Eagle** *Aquila adalberti*

1 pair coming to nest at Portilla del Tietar, Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup>

**26. Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*

1 or 2 seen on several days, on the plains and in the mountains, both light and dark morphs.

**27. Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*

1 at nest in Montfrague National Park 24<sup>th</sup>

**28. Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

Good numbers in both town and countryside, seen most days

**29. Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Seen regularly in town and country.

**30. Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

1 seen hawking over pine woods Gredos national park. 26<sup>th</sup>

**31. Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa*

1 on plains near Casares 25<sup>th</sup> several sightings from the bus, 1 from car park at Plataforma de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**32. Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

1 heard at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**33. Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra*

Widespread, many on Embalse Sierra Brava 23<sup>rd</sup>

**34. Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Common in the Rice Paddies and on most waters.

**35. Purple Swamp-hen** *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Only sighting was at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**36. Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax*

Seen on Belen Plains 22<sup>nd</sup> and Casares plains 25<sup>th</sup>

**37. Great Bustard** *Otis tarda*

Multiple sightings on the plains . A group of eight on the Belen plains 22<sup>nd</sup>

**38. Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

Abundant seen on all bodies of water

**39. Stone Curlew** *Burhinus oedicephalus*

Only sighting was on Belen Plain 22<sup>nd</sup>

**40. Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola*

Several on the rice paddies 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

**41. Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

1 pair on Rio Almonte 22<sup>nd</sup> and Rio Tozo 23<sup>rd</sup>

**42. Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

2 on 23<sup>rd</sup> at Embalse de Sierra Brava

**43. Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*

4 on 23<sup>rd</sup> at Embalse de Sierra Brava

2 at Arrocampo on 26<sup>th</sup>

**44. Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

2 on 23<sup>rd</sup> at Embalse de Sierra Brava

**45. Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Seen daily. Some 'genuine-looking' Rock Doves at Montfrague

**46. Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

2 on 24<sup>th</sup> at Portilla del Tietar

**47. Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*

6 at Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup> several other sightings throughout the week

**48. Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

seen most days in all habitats

**49. Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

4 at Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup> several other sightings throughout the week

**50. Great spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius*

2 on fence posts Belen Plain 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 more same place 25<sup>th</sup> and several other sightings from the bus

**51. Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Heard more than seen in both the Plains and the Mountains

1 seen very well from the bus driving from Parador Gredos to the airport.

**52. Eurasian Scops Owl** *Otus scops*

heard every night at Finca Santa Marta, seen twice by some of the group.

**53. Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

1 early morning on Belen Plains 22<sup>nd</sup>

**54. Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

1+ heard from Parador de Gredos, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>

**55. Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

1+ heard from track at Finca Santa Marta 25<sup>th</sup>

**56. European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

1+ heard from Finca Santa Marta 24<sup>th</sup>

**57. Red-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruficollis*

1+ heard from Finca Santa Marta most nights 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>



**58. Alpine Swift** *Apus melba*

a group of 6 around the bridge over the Rio Almonte near Monroy 23<sup>rd</sup>

**59. Common Swift** *Apus apus*

good numbers seen every day

**60. Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus*

4 around the bridge over the Rio Tozo near Torrejon del Rubio on 22<sup>nd</sup> 2+ over the Plaza Major, Trujillo 22<sup>nd</sup>

**61. White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer*

5 birds seen over the Castillo de Montfrague on 24<sup>th</sup>

**62. European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*

many seen most days, in the gardens of Santa Marta and over the Parador de Gredos.

**63. European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*

good year for this species, seen on several occasions. 5+ on the plains near Casares attending nest boxes. Good views of one on wires near Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup>

**64. Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

Seen almost daily, parties up to 4 seen from the bus.

**65. Iberian Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis sharpie*

1+ heard from the garden at Finca Santa Marta, seen and heard near the Parador 27<sup>th</sup>

**66. Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

1 near the Parador 26<sup>th</sup> heard drumming, 1 seen and heard in Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup>

**67. Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra*

good numbers seen every day we visited the plains, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>

**68. Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calendrella brachydactyla*

2 seen well on a track on the Belen Plains 22<sup>nd</sup>

**69. Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*

Abundant and ubiquitous. Seen daily.

**70. Common Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

seen on the plains at Belen and Casares 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>

**71. Thekla Lark** *Galerida theklae*

3 at Belen 22<sup>nd</sup> and several other sightings on the plains near Casares.

**72. WoodLark** *Alauda arvensis*

Seen and heard in the gardens at Santa Matra 21<sup>st</sup> 1+ at Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup>

**73. Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Seen everyday, many around all the bridges we stopped at and in the mountains.

**74. Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Seen daily in every habitat

**75. Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*

many sightings very common, nests found on trip to Gredos 26<sup>th</sup>. Photographed collecting mud in garden of Santa Marta

**76. House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

Seen almost daily. Up to 50 around around the bridge over Rio Almonte 23<sup>rd</sup>

**77. Spanish Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava iberiae*

1 seen in rice paddies 23<sup>rd</sup> several sightings in Gredos 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

**78. Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

2 on rio Almonte 23<sup>rd</sup> , 2 on Rio Tietar 24<sup>th</sup> Several sightings in the Gredos 27<sup>th</sup> (a pair at the Parador)

**79. White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

2 at Rio Almonte 23<sup>rd</sup>. 2 at Trujillo pond 23<sup>rd</sup> several sightings on journey to Gredos 26<sup>th</sup>

**80. Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

1 at Potillo del Tietar 24<sup>th</sup> 2+ Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**81. Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*

several very dark birds seen on the Plataforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**82. European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

2 seen in Reserva de Gredos 26<sup>th</sup>

**83. Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Heard daily. Good views on 23<sup>rd</sup> at disused Bridge near Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup>

**84. Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

1 seen singing along the Plataforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**85. Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Seen almost daily. A family party seen during early morning garden stroll Santa Marta 23<sup>rd</sup>

**86. Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

2 at Castillo de Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup>. 3 at Parador de Gredos 26<sup>th</sup> , 27<sup>th</sup>

**87. Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

4+ in the meadows of the Reserve nacional de Gredos 26<sup>th</sup> and several sightings along the road to Plataforma de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**88. Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica*

1 at Monfrague 24<sup>th</sup>

**89. Black Wheatear** *Oenanthe leucura*

1 stunning male at the bridge of the Rio Almonte 23<sup>rd</sup>

**90. Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*

1 superb male singing from pylon near Puerto de Navacerrado 28<sup>th</sup>

**91. Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

3 seen in Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup> another in the Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**92. Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

Seen daily.

**93. Cetti's Warbler** *Cettia cetti*

1 seen well at the unused bridge near Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup>

Heard on several days throughout the week

**94. Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*

3 seen along the track at Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup>

2 seen at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**95. Savi's Warber** *Locustella luscinioides*

2+ at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**96. Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

1+ at the unused bridge near Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>  
2 seen at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**97. Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Heard at the Sierra Brava dam and seen later that day at the unused bridge. 1 heard at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**98. Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta*

Single seen briefly along the track at Santa Marta on the first day 21<sup>st</sup>

**99. Dartford Warbler** *Sylvia undata*

3+ showing well along the Plataforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**100. Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata*

1+ singing and showing briefly along the Plataforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**101. Western Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans cantillans*

1 at Portillo del Tietar 24<sup>th</sup> A pair at the river Tietar 26<sup>th</sup>  
1 female along the road to Plataforma de Gredos

**102. Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala*

Seen occasionally, one showed very well along the lane from Santa Marta 23<sup>rd</sup>

**103. Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

1-4 birds along the lower levels of the Plataforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**104. Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

at least 4 heard before we finally got one in the scope at Plataforma de Gredos approach road 27<sup>th</sup>

**105. Western Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus bonelli*

1 showing extremely well on 27<sup>th</sup> and another showing not so well along the Plataforma road.  
1 seen in the grounds of the Parador de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**106. Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

1 along the valley in the Reserve de Gredos 26<sup>th</sup>  
A pair seen in pine woods along the road to Plataforma de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**107. Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

A family party seen at Arrocampo 25<sup>th</sup>

**108. Crested Tit** *Parus cristatus*

heard and 1 brief sighting in the pine woods next to the Parador de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**109. Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

many sightings in the pine woods of the Gredos 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

**110. Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*

Seen most days, fledgings seen along the lane next to Santa Marta 23<sup>rd</sup>

**111. Great Tit** *Parus major*

Seen daily around Santa Marta

**112. Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

1 seen in pine woods at Navacerrado 28<sup>th</sup>

**113. Short-toed Treecreeper** *Certhia brachydactyla*

1 in the garden Santa Marta 25<sup>th</sup>  
2+ in the pine woods at Parador de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>  
2 in pine woods at Navacerrado.

**114. Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

good views of fly over birds 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> heard most days in the garden at Santa Marta

**115. Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*

Up to 8 seen daily around the plains and finca.

**116. Southern Grey Shrike** *Lanius meridionalis*

1+ on power lines every time we went to the plains.

**117. Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

1 in pine woods at the Parador de Gredos.

**118. Iberian Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus*

very common in all areas of dehesa and around the finca

**119. Common Magpie** *Pica pica*

Fairly common around the finca and in dehesa. Replaces Azure winged in the Gredos

**120. Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

up to fifty seen near the Egret roost site on the Belen Plains 22<sup>nd</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>  
small parties around the villages in the Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**121. Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

very common in the Gredos 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

**122. Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

4 at the Belen Plains 22<sup>nd</sup>

2 at Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup>

**123. Spotless Starling** *Sturnus unicolor*

Seen daily. Flocks up to 40 on the plains outside Belen 22<sup>nd</sup>

**124. House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Widespread and abundant

**125. Spanish Sparrow** *Passer hispaniolensis*

breeding colony in most storks nest in town and country. A few pairs at Santa Marta

**126. Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

1 at Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup>

**127. Rock Petronia** *Petronia petronia*

A small colony along the valley to Reserva de Gredos 27<sup>th</sup>

**128. Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild*

4+ seen around the bridge near Vegas Altas 25<sup>th</sup> + 23<sup>rd</sup>

**129 Red Avadavat** *Amandava amandava*

2+ seen in flight over the bridge near Vegas Altas 23<sup>rd</sup>

**130. Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

2-3 seen Montfrague 24<sup>th</sup>, more common in the pine woods of the Gredos

**131. Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

A party of 4 seen at Finca Santa Marta. 23<sup>rd</sup> ! flyby in Montfrague park 24<sup>th</sup>

**132. Serin** *Serinus serinus*

Seen daily. Up to 5 coming to drink in the garden puddle at Santa Marta.

**133. Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

1's or 2's around the ground of Santa Marta. Family parties in the rice paddies and disused bridge 23<sup>rd</sup>

**134. Goldfinch** *Carduelis Carduelis*



Seen daily.

**135. Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

2 at the finca puddle, small flocks on the plains around Casares.

**136. Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*

2 at Monfrague 24<sup>th</sup> 2 on the journey to Gredos 26<sup>th</sup>

**137. Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia*

1+ Castillo de Montfrague, 2+ at Portillo del Tietar, several on the approach road to Plaforma 27<sup>th</sup>

**138. Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulanaus*

Several seen very well along the Plaforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**139. Corn Bunting** *Miliaria calandra*

Seen daily, very common.

**140. Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus ermita*

Avery special sighting in the Belen Plains. 22<sup>nd</sup>

**141. European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis aviporus*

Seen on a number occasions, but 1 excellent sighting near the campsite along the Platforma road 27<sup>th</sup>

**BUTTERFLIES**

Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
Bath White	<i>Pontia daplidice</i>
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>
Scarce Swallowtail	<i>Iphiclides podalirius</i>
Orange Tip	<i>Anthocaris cardamines</i>
Moroccan Orange Tip	<i>Anthocaris belia euphenoides</i>
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>
Spanish Festoon	<i>Zerynthia rumina</i>
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>

**REPTILES**

Viperine Snake	<i>Natrix maura</i>
Iberian Wall Lizard	<i>Podarcis hispanica</i> .
Moorish Gecko	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i>
European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
Spanish Terrapin	<i>Mauremys leprosa</i>

**AMPHIBIANS**

Iberian Waterfrog	<i>Rana perezi</i>
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**MAMMALS**

Common Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>