

# Wingspan Bird Tours

## Trip Report

**SPANISH PYRENEES -  
ZARAGOZA PLAINS -  
PICOS DE EUROPA**



**JUNE 17TH - 25TH 2012**

**LEADER:**

**BOB BUCKLER**

**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Jason Leifester,  
Steve Sawyer,  
Roz Bates,  
Paul Edlin,  
Mike Schaefer,  
Ross Schaefer,  
Geraldine Schaefer**



**Alpine Accentor – Picos de Europa June 24<sup>th</sup>**

**SUMMARY.**

*A great tour with a great 'team' of birders, everyone contributed and everyone found something for the list. This was the first attempt by **WINGSPAN** to combine these 3 contrasting and unique habitats, it really worked well. We amassed an incredible sightings list of 170 species and heard **Common Quail** so we actually recorded 171.*

*If I listed all the great sightings this summary would go on for ages but here are just a few of the goodies: **Snow Finch, Alpine Accentor, Lammergeire, Wallcreeper, Citril Finch, Black Woodpecker, Ring Ouzel, Water Pipit, Wryneck, Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Black Bellied Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo & Golden Eagle.** A mouth-watering list indeed!*

*The varying landscapes, the majestic limestone peaks, the colours of the plains, the lush green alpine meadows were absolutely fantastic and a wonderful sight to behold. We had superb weather for 90% of the time, clear blue sky, very little wind and it rained on only one day. As well as birds we also watched many butterflies, wild flowers, lizards and mammals.*

**DAY 1 - JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup> 2012**

The tour started like a dream, everyone turned up on time raring to go and the weather was smashing!

I collected Mike, Ross, Geraldine, Jason, Steve and Roz from their hotels in Barajas near Madrid Airport at 9am, then we set off for a morning excursion to a local country park on the north side of Madrid. We had to be back at the airport by 1pm to pick up Paul our last remaining group member.

We stopped first near the town of El Pardo, for a walk along the river, but before we even got there we had logged: White Stork (a pair were breeding in the plaza in the centre of Barajas), Collared Dove, Serin, Common Swift, Eurasian Magpie, Carrion Crow and Wood Pigeon.

Our walk started and ended in a flourish: we quickly found Serin, Golden Oriole, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Greenfinch, Goldfinch and we heard several Nightingales. Further along the walk we found Cetti's Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Eurasian Nuthatch, Blue Tit and Great Tit.

Above us several vultures drifted over, Griffon and Black Vultures were quickly identified, they were joined by Black Kites and hundreds of swifts, both Common and Pallid.

On the return journey we ventured into a copse of pine trees and enjoyed good views of a passing flock of birds, these included: Short-toed Treecreeper, Long-tailed Tit, Crested Tit, Coal Tit and we got glimpses of a Great Spotted Woodpecker.

We drove to another spot on the other side of El Pardo and spent our last hour looking for eagles. We did find Booted Eagle and we also added Song Thrush, Hawfinch and Linnet to our list.

We collected Paul at the airport, he arrived right on time, and by 1:30pm we were on our way to Zaragoza. Birds seen along the route were few and far between but we added Red Kite, Crested Lark, Woodchat Shrike and Short-toed Eagle. A couple of stops produced Northern Wheatear, Marsh Harrier and Spotted Flycatcher.



We checked into our hotel around 6pm and went out almost immediately to look for new species on the steppe near Belchite. It was raining, a light shower of those big thunder-storm spots, but it was still 30C. The rain shower quickly ended and we drove to La Lamazas steppe Natural Park. We had only 40 minutes there before dinner so we didn't see much, it was a little windy but we managed to find several Lesser Short-toed Larks and a couple of groups of Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, all of the group saw them in the scope, a good result. A Little Owl and a Red-legged Partridge were seen by me, the driver, but no-one else got onto them.

We got back to the hotel for dinner at 8pm which, after some confusion with translation, was enjoyed by all.

## **DAY 2 - JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup> 2012**

### **EL PLANERON – QUINTO (RIO EBRO) – LOS MONEGROS – HECHO VALLEY**

An early start today, wet met at 6am in the car park of the hotel and soon we were on our way to the Belchite Steppe. It was still dark when we set off, but as we arrived at the reserve, morning light was beginning to show and larks could be heard.

We quickly found Thekla Lark and Short-toed Lark and a couple of Hoopoes. We made several stops in search of Dupont's Lark but came up with nothing. Over the next hour we enjoyed great views of the following: Little Owl, Red Legged Partridge, Stone Curlew, Lesser Short-toed Lark, Bee-eater and

more Thekla Larks. During our return journey to the hotel we found a perched Booted Eagle, a Honey Buzzard and several Black Kites.

After a nice spread for breakfast we set off for the Pyrenees Mountains but we had an agenda and we planned to make stops at the Rio Ebro and Los Monegros before we finally set off for the mountains.

At the river Ebro we found lots of species for the list, the best of which was: Wryneck, Great Reed Warbler, Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Kingfisher, Little Ringed Plover, Green Sandpiper, Tree Sparrow, Cetti's Warbler, Nightingale and lots of White Storks.

Our visit to Los Monegros was fantastic. We had several target species which included Dartford Warbler, Spectacled Warbler, Black-eared Wheatear and Golden Eagle. We saw all of them!! The Golden Eagle was especially good as it sat on a pylon very close to the road and as we were watching the eagle a family party of Dartford Warblers showed up. One bonus bird for us was a Great-spotted Cuckoo which we discovered as soon as we got out of the bus, the bird flew from one bush to another not too far away from us, and we all had great views of it in the scope.



The afternoon was spent travelling to the mountains, a couple of impromptu stops found us watching: Egyptian Vulture, Red Kite, Marsh Harrier and we made a visit to a supermarket in Jaca to buy provisions.

At our hotel high up in the Hecho Valley we found a Red-back Shrike and a European Robin before a rainstorm set in.

### **Day 3 - 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

#### **Aragon Valley – Arres – Alastuey – Monasterio San Juan de la Pina – Hecho Valley**

What an absolute wash out! It rained all day with about 3 small gaps where we were able to get out of the bus! We abandoned our pre-breakfast morning walk and changed our plans for the day, instead of staying in the mountains we decided to head down the valley hoping for lighter rain and better visibility, we got some of both, for some of the day.



Towards Puente de Reina the valley opens up and fields of wheat and barley stretch out on either side of the road and a long line of telegraph poles run parallel to the road. On these poles we saw lots of sodden birds of prey, mainly Black Kites but some Red Kites and Common Buzzards too along with Ravens and Crows. On the wires we saw Corn Buntings and Red-backed Shrikes.

Once across the bridge (Puente de Reina) we turned along a small road towards Arres and our first stop produced nothing!

Driving on we stopped near some open fields and the rain eased off, there we found some new species for the list. Tawny Pipit, Stonechat, Cirl Bunting, Skylark and a family party of Subalpine Warblers was added along with a female Yellow Wagtail.

Encouraged by this stop we drove further along a track to the next bridge over the river near the town of Berdun. It was raining again but not too bad. On the approached track we saw our first **Black Redstart** and had closer views of **Tawny Pipit**. At the bridge there were several species to look at. Two or three Grey Herons sat forlornly on the far bank whilst a pair of **Common Sandpipers** flitted about on the shingle banks and islands. There was also **Little Ringed Plover** and a good number of **White Wagtails**. Many **House Sparrows** were nesting in the old bridge walls along with **House Martins** and we also saw a few **Rock Sparrows** doing the same. A superb find was a dashing **Eurasian Hobby** which flew below us chasing the martins.

We took lunch under the shelter of a wooden picnic area back on the Arres road and whilst eating we found another couple of **Cirl Buntings** and our first **Wren**. Above us a good number of vultures circled over the ridge.

A short stop on the road to Alastuey produced good views of **Bonelli's Warbler**, a family party of **Firecrests**, a **Common Cuckoo** (seen only by me), **Blackcap** and **Common Nightingale**.

Our last stop was at the Monastery of San Juan de la Peña and during the drive we drove up along a winding lane where we saw **Jay** and a **Wild Boar**. We were now in the clouds and it reminded me of the cloud forest of Costa Rica, wet, with poor visibility but not cold. We spent an hour walking through the pine forest hoping for woodpeckers but managed only: **Eurasian Treecreeper**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Coal Tit**, **Black Redstart**,

#### **Day 4 - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

#### **Refugio Gabardito – Upper Hecho Valley**

What an absolutely fantastic day a total contrast to yesterday, bright sunshine all day not much wind and some great birding. It was my best ever day in the Pyrenees by far!!

Our early morning walk produced our first 3 target species. We went down to the river Subordon which is a five minute walk from the hotel. Along the way we saw: Serin, Linnet, Dunnock, Jay and Robin. At the river we had great views of a family party of Dippers and a couple of good views of Grey Wagtails, which is what we went to the river to see.

After breakfast we drove the 8km up to the alpine meadows at the Refugio Gabardito in preparation for the walk to the usual 'wallcreeper' site. As soon we got out of the bus we found a female Citril Finch feeding in the car park! We then got on to a couple of male birds and over the next 30 minutes we saw a good half dozen of these colourful little finches.

During this time we also saw: Black Redstart, Serin, Linnet, Mistle Thrush and Coal Tit. Our walk to the cliff face where we hoped to see the



wallcreeper took quite a while because we stopped to watch several species, the best of which was a Lammergeire that was found perched on a distant cliff, what a great find, the bird took off and gave us a great show. In the meantime we found a Coal Tit's nest, Crested Tit and Garden Warbler.

At the Wallcreeper site we were very lucky to find two birds within minutes of arriving, both birds worked the cliff face looking for food and one took off and gave us a lovely flying display, another great result. We then found 2 more Lammergeiers, Red-billed Chough, Alpine Chough, Crag Martin, Alpine Swift, Griffon and Egyptian Vultures.

The return journey was even better, in fact just before we set off we heard a very distant Black Woodpecker calling, it was deep down in the valley below but two of the group managed to see it! As we walked back two more Black Woodpeckers began calling very close to the path, so we waited and suddenly one of the birds broke cover and flew straight towards us. It swerved and perched on a nearby tree trunk, a fantastic sighting.

More sightings came of Crested Tit, Coal Tit and Mistle Thrush and we added Marsh Tit, Crossbill and Green Woodpecker to our day list.

Back at the Refugio we sat and ate lunch whilst watching White Wagtails and Serins, and as we pulled away we found two more Mistle Thrushes.

The rest of the afternoon was spent driving up the Hecho Valley towards France, several stops produced Yellowhammer, Red-backed Shrike, lots of Egyptian Vultures, Stonechat, more Red-billed Chough and a mighty Golden Eagle which we saw perched on a dead tree on the opposite side of the valley.

Well, what a day, it seemed a shame to leave that magical valley but we had to return to the hotel for dinner. Several good butterflies were also seen: Piedmont Ringlet, Amanda's Blue, Dingy Skipper, Mountain Clouded Yellow, Pale Clouded Yellow, both Swallowtail and Scarce Swallowtail and many common species.

## DAY 5 - JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup> 2012

### **HECHO VALLEY TO ANSO VALLEY TO RONCAL VALLEY - PIERRE ST MARTIN & FORET D'ISSAUX (FRANCE) - ASTUN - HECHO VALLEY**

A very large circular route was taken today, the weather was perfect (a little windy at the top of the Roncal Valley and cloudy over the Foret D'Issaux) but overall very good.

We set off after breakfast and drove down to Hecho Village before turning off eastward towards the Anso valley, we made a couple of stops but birding was quiet. We saw a few perched Griffon Vultures, the odd Red Kite and a couple of Jays flew across the road in front of us.

Along the beautiful Anso Valley we admired the scenery, it was stunning. Few birds were added to our list so we drove across from Zurita to the Roncal Valley and hit the high pass near the border with France. It was a little windy but we found a sheltered spot where we found our first **Water Pipit**. The bird was singing from a small bush and it performed its song flight a couple of times before flying off.

A few **Linnets**, **Serins** and **Goldfinches** kept us entertained until we found a **Ring Ouzel**. We only had brief sightings of this enigmatic thrush before it flew off over a ridge, so we moved on into France. Just

over the border we found a nice flock of **Citril Finches**, some **Alpine Chough** and a couple of **Northern Wheatears**.

At Pierre St. Martin, which is a skiing resort, we ate our picnic lunch surrounded by **Citril Finches**, a few **Crossbills** flew over and lots of **Black Redstarts** flitted about. Our walk up one of the ski slopes produced more of the same plus: **Mistle Thrush**, **Dunnock** and another distant **Ring Ouzel**, we managed to see this one in the scope before it disappeared.

We drove on into France and down the valley into the forest D'Issaux, it had now clouded over and the temperature had dropped significantly. We stopped deep in the forest and tried to find **Black Woodpecker** and even **White-backed Woodpecker** but we didn't see or hear either of them.



Driving back into Spain at Comp de Somport we headed towards Astun, another ski resort found just across the border into Spain. There we found our one and only **Rock Thrush**, a lovely male!! Other birds seen were **Yellowhammer**, **Short-toed Eagle**, **Northern Wheatear**, **Serin** and **Black Redstart**. In the town we found a coffee shop and more **Black Redstarts**.

We passed through Jaca and headed towards our next venue, the lane leading to Alastuey. There we tried for **Orphean Warbler** again without success, so we crawled along the Arres approach road looking for **Montagu's Harrier**, again we dipped. We added **Common Quail** to our list, but only from its call, it was not seen. A farmer was cutting alfalfa and we noticed a mammal writhing in the cut crop and on further investigation we could see that, it was in fact, a **Wild Cat**. This was a 'first' for the entire group, but tragically, the animal was dying as its injuries were so severe.

That finished our birding for this part of the day so we set off back up the Hecho Valley to the hotel for dinner.

After dinner we drove back down the valley at 9:30pm so that we could be at an 'owl' site for 10pm. The evening was perfect, no wind, clear sky and it was warm. We heard **European Nightjar** calling first, then, two appeared over the ridge, we watched them for 10 minutes or so. Next an **Eagle Owl** flew along a ridge on the opposite side of the valley we had great views of it silhouetted against the setting sun. The Owl landed in a tree and sat for a while before flying across the valley and out of sight, a great result for us.

Next we drove round to a small village where a huge church was lit up, it was a wonderful sight but we hadn't come sight-seeing, this was a good place to see the **Scop's Owl**. After 15 minutes of waiting we saw a **Little Owl** fly into a hole in the church wall and at the same time a **Scop's Owl** called from a large tree behind us. After a while the church lights went off and several owls began calling. Over the next 30 minutes we had several sightings, the best was of a **Scop's Owl** calling from a ledge on the side of the church! Another great result, but it was now late so we headed back to the hotel, arriving at midnight!

## **DAY 6 - JUNE 22<sup>ND</sup> 2012**

### **EMBALSE SOTONERA - MALLOS DE RIGLOS**

This was our last full day in the Pyrenees and because we had seen all the specialities of the mountains we decided to drive out to the plains around Riglos, some 70 kilometers south. It was sunny and warm all day but from 1pm it got hot and reached 32 C.

Along the way we saw the usual **Red Kites**, **Common Buzzards**, **Black Kites**, **Griffon Vultures**, **Red-backed Shrikes**, **Woodchat Shrike** and a single **Short-toed Eagle**.

Our first stop was to look at the fabulous village of Aguero, see below, it is a stunning sight. Whilst we were there we saw **Bee-eater**, **Common Swift**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Griffon** and **Egyptian Vulture**.



Next we stopped at the river Sotonera, it was quite dry and the reedbed was dense, we could hear a couple of **Reed Warblers** singing, a **Cetti's Warbler** did the same but we got good views of that one. A single **Melodious Warbler** was seen near the bus and several **Bee-eaters** flew over.

At the dam we spent an hour or so looking over the extensive area of the lake, the **Great-crested Grebe** delighted our American friends, a single sighting of **Kentish Plover** was missed by them but other species seen included: **Yellow-legged Gull**,

**Grey Heron**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Rock Sparrow** and many **Common Swifts**.

On the 'dry' side of the dam a pine copse held a few species for us: a couple of **Subalpine Warblers** were seen and an **Orphean Warbler** gave us the run-around for quite a while before eventually showing well, much to the delight of the group as this species had eluded us thus far. We also heard **Golden Orioles** calling from the trees on one of the small islands out in the reservoir.

After a short coffee break, during which we saw a pair of **Ravens**, a **Booted Eagle** displaying and another **Melodious Warbler**, we set off to circumnavigate the reservoir. We stopped a couple of times from high vantage points to scan the water but we never found anything new. We pulled over to take a walk to the water's edge and whilst walking along a feeder channel we found the nest of a **Penduline Tit**, the male bird was seen a couple of times but as we sat eating our lunch looking at the nest no further activity was noted.

A **Woodlark** began to sing, so after finishing our picnic we decided to go and find it. The bird showed extremely well, sitting on top of a tree near the bus and continued to sing in the heat of the day, nice bird. A couple of pairs of **Rock Sparrows** were nesting under a nearby bridge and lots of **Goldfinches**, **Serins** and **Linnets** were dashing about.

We drove round to the best part of the reservoir on the west side, we could see lots of birds in the distance so we headed towards them. Along the track we 'put up' a superb male **Montagu's Harrier**, it flew a short distance and put down again, we all got great views of this most wanted



species. As we approached the water's edge in the bus an owl flew out of a road side bush, it landed some 30 meters and away and it was quickly identified as a **Short-eared Owl**, it was a lovely bird, another great find and quite unexpected.

Back at the water, and to our delight, there were several species of note and many new birds for the list. We saw singles of: **Northern Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank and Eurasian Spoonbill**. They were joined by: **Common Coot (11), Little Egret (5), Cattle Egret (19), Little Ringed Plover (2)** and lots of **Mallards**.

Well that was a nice surprise seeing all those species, especially the owl, so after an hour or so we left the area and headed for Los Riglos. Along the way we saw the **Montagu's Harrier** again and a little later we saw a very colourful male **Marsh Harrier**.

At Riglos, in temperatures of 32C, some of the group climb the steep streets and headed on up to the church where the footpath led onto the slope of the towering 'fingers of Riglos'. These 'pudding-stone' gigantic monoliths rise some 300 feet vertically above the village and are an awesome sight. We looked for **Black Wheatear** and **Blue Rock Thrush** but failed on both counts, however we did see: **Black Redstart, Sardinian Warbler, Red-billed Chough, Crag Martin, Egyptian & Griffon Vultures** and a couple of **Ravens**.

After a nice ice-cream we drove back to the hotel for a relaxing evening before dinner was served with chilled wine, lovely!

## Day 7 - JUNE 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012

### **Transfer Day: Pyrenees to the Picos de Europa via Anso valley, Pamplona, & Santander**

After an early morning stroll and our last breakfast at the Hotel Uson we set off for the long drive to the Picos. To break up the long journey we planned several stops along the way, the first of which was just a few miles down the road at Foz de Binies, a beautiful gorge at the base of the Anso Valley. The whole area has terrific scenery, the gorge itself is stunning, not to be missed if you are in the area! We stopped at the head of the gorge and scanned the vertical limestone walls for birds. Within a couple of minutes we had found our target species, the **Blue Rock Thrush**. The male was displaying continuously to a female, it was quite a show.

A long drive of some 3 hours found us on the edge of the Picos south of Santander. We found a lovely picnic spot to eat our lunch. All around us the open hillside of short grass and heather produced a good list of species. We saw all 3 species of Vulture in the air at the same time, using the same thermal, an incredible sight. There was also a **Peregrine Falcon, Black and Red Kites** and several **Common Buzzards** to look at. In the fields we saw **Northern and Black-eared Wheatears, Red-billed Chough, Blackcap and Spotless Starlings**.

Our next stop was the huge Embalse (Reservoir) de Ebro, as suggested in the name this huge body of water is fed by the Rio Ebro. This incredible river, Spain's largest, has its source nearby at Fontibre and flows into the Mediterranean Sea some 925km further south. At first we didn't see any birds on the water but after several stops we logged: **Black-necked Grebe (6), Mallard, Red-crested Pochard (44), Yellow-legged Gulls, Common Coot, Gadwall (4), Little Egret** and a single distant **Whiskered Tern**.

A couple more stops in the valleys near Rieson we saw **Song Thrush, Water Pipit, Stonechat, Greenfinch, Chaffinch and European Robin**.

An hour later we drove into San Vicente and stopped near the large open bay, the tide was high so there were not many species to look at. However a spit of sand held lots of gulls, two of which were new for us: **Black-headed** and **Lesser-black backed Gulls**. On the flooded salt marsh we found: **Common Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Eurasian Curlew and Whimbrel**. A nice surprise was the presence of an **Osprey**, unexpected but well appreciated.

Well it was now 5pm so we headed off to our hotel which is situated near Panes in the Picos. After settling in we had a lovely dinner and then sat on the terrace at the back of the hotel. As it got dark we heard **European Nightjars** and a couple of male **Tawny Owls**, one of which appeared a couple of times, a nice bird to finish the day off with.

## Day 8 - JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup> 2012

### Fuente Dè - Picos de Europa - Arguèbanes

This was the highlight of the whole trip for me and equalled the day out in the Pyrenees when we visited Gabardito to see the **Wallcreeper**.

It was another perfect day, a clear blue sky, no wind, with temperatures in the lower 20's. Some of the group took an early morning walk around the hotel grounds and found a new species for the list in the shape of a **Tree Pipit**. The whole group took breakfast together at 7:30am but Roz and Steve opted to stay around the hotel for the day whilst the rest of us drove to the Cable Car (Telefèrico) at Fuente Dè. This amazing cable car hauls you up some 890 meters in less than 4 minutes, the views from the 'car' are spectacular, awesome, breathtaking and quite good too!

It was a Sunday and the queue was quite long but by 10:15 we were on our way up to the edge of the Central Massif in the Picos de Europa. We were now at a height of some 1,800 meters above sea level and it was unbelievably beautiful.



After about 20 meters from the cable car housing we found an **Alpine Accentor!** The bird fed by the side of the track and took no notice of the passing walkers, hikers, trekkers and bird watchers. It was amazing. Next, after another 50 meters, a **Wallcreeper** flew passed us at eye level. It landed on a small rock face at the edge of the path just 50 meters ahead of us, unbelievable. The bird showed extremely well for a minute or so before flying off to the next rock face, what

incredible luck we were having.

Over the next half an hour we saw several more **Alpine Accentors, Water Pipits, Black Redstarts** and a couple of **Northern Wheatears**, oh, and a **Hobby** flew over just above our heads! After about a kilometer the track splits just below a huge cliff face that rises another 200 meters, we stopped to scan the face and within minutes we located our first **Snow Finch**. For the next hour we sat and watched many **Snow Finches** flying back and forth to the cliff face, sometimes landing close to us but mostly they landed high up and then flew out of sight. Most of the birds were carrying food for their young. In the meantime several more **Alpine Accentors** put in close appearances, one individual walked to

within 2 meters of us, the same thing happened with an **Alpine Chough**, they were extremely confiding too!

Soon it was lunchtime and we decided that after 'cleaning up' we would set off back down in the cable car. We ate lunch at the base of the valley where **Eurasian Jays** and **Common Chaffinches** came to bread, much to the delight of our American group members.



For the afternoon we visited a tiny village just outside of Potes, the village is situated in a steep sided, wooded valley and is known as a good site for woodpeckers. We spent a couple of hours walking the tracks and lanes around the village and discovered a wonderful habitat for many woodland and garden birds.

Despite the high temperature many species were in full song. We saw **Blackcap, Black Redstart, Robin, Long-tailed Tit, Great-spotted Woodpecker, Eurasian Nuthatch, Wren** and we heard **Song Thrush**. We also added some new birds to our list which included **Common Redstart**; a pair was feeding young in a nest hole in a wall. Overhead we also saw a couple of new species; a **Sparrowhawk** sighting was our first of the tour, incredible really. But a much better 'new' sighting was made a little later when a displaying **Goshawk** was seen circling overhead, wow, what a super find. Several **Common Buzzards** were also up there with the occasional **Griffon Vulture**.

It was soon time to leave, this superb day had flown by so quickly, just before we got into the bus we had prolonged views of a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**.

After an early dinner we watched the England football team lose a game on penalties, nothing new there and later we listened for the Owls but only got distant calls from the **Tawny Owl**.

## Day 9 - JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup> 2012

### Picos to Madrid via Burgos

An early morning stroll at 7am was taken by several of the group to try to relocate the **Tree Pipit**. Instead we found: **Serin, Red-backed Shrike, Jay** and best of all we saw not one, but two, **Wrynecks**. One bird was calling from a small bush just a few meters from the hotel, it showed really well. It was a most welcomed sighting by the Americans as our first sighting on day 2 was rather brief.

At 9am we set off for Madrid, we saw many species along the way and searched an area near Sepulveda for **Azure-winged Magpies** without success. So the tour ended at Madrid Airport around 3pm and everyone went their separate ways.

I drove back home to Andalucia arriving at 10pm, and yes I saw several **Azure-winged Magpies** along the way and a couple of **Collared Pratincoles**, both of which would have been new species for the list!

|    | <b>SPECIES</b>            |                               |          |
|----|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| 1  | Great Crested Grebe       | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>     | √        |
| 2  | Black-necked Grebe        | <i>Podiceps rufficollis</i>   | √        |
| 3  | Little Grebe              | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> | √        |
| 4  | Great Cormorant           | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>    | √        |
| 5  | Black-crowned Night-Heron | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>  | √        |
| 6  | Little Egret              | <i>Egretta garzetta</i>       | √        |
| 7  | Cattle Egret              | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>          | √        |
| 8  | Grey Heron                | <i>Ardea cinerea</i>          | √        |
| 9  | Purple Heron              | <i>Ardea purpurea</i>         | √        |
| 10 | Little Bittern            | <i>Ixobrychus minutas</i>     | √        |
| 11 | White Stork               | <i>Ciconia ciconia</i>        | √        |
| 12 | Eurasian Spoonbill        | <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>    | √        |
| 13 | Mallard                   | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>     | √        |
| 14 | Gadwall                   | <i>Anas strepera</i>          | √        |
| 15 | Red-crested Pochard       | <i>Netta rufina</i>           | √        |
| 16 | Lammergeier               | <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>      | √        |
| 17 | Egyptian Vulture          | <i>Neophron percnopterus</i>  | √        |
| 18 | Eurasian Griffon Vulture  | <i>Gyps fulvus</i>            | √        |
| 19 | Black Vulture             | <i>Aegypius monachus</i>      | √        |
| 20 | Opsrey                    | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>      | √        |
| 21 | Honey Buzzard             | <i>Pernis apivorus</i>        | √        |
| 22 | Common Buzzard            | <i>Buteo buteo</i>            | √        |
| 23 | Black Kite                | <i>Milvus migrans</i>         | √        |
| 24 | Red Kite                  | <i>Milvus milvus</i>          | √        |
| 25 | Booted Eagle              | <i>Aquila pennatus</i>        | √        |
| 26 | Golden Eagle              | <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>      | √        |
| 27 | Short-toed Snake-Eagle    | <i>Circaetus gallicus</i>     | √        |
| 28 | Eurasian Sparrowhawk      | <i>Accipiter nisus</i>        | √        |
| 29 | Northern Goshawk          | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>     | √        |
| 30 | Western Marsh Harrier     | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>     | √        |
| 31 | Montagu's Harrier         | <i>Circus pygargus</i>        | √        |
| 32 | Eurasian Hobby            | <i>Falco subbuteo</i>         | √        |
| 33 | Lesser Kestrel            | <i>Falco naumanni</i>         | √        |
| 34 | Common Kestrel            | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>      | √        |
| 35 | Peregrine Falcon          | <i>Falco peregrinus</i>       | √        |
| 36 | Common Quail              | <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>      | <b>H</b> |
| 37 | Red-legged Partridge      | <i>Alectoris rufa</i>         | √        |
| 38 | Common Moorhen            | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>    | √        |
| 39 | Eurasian Coot             | <i>Fulica atra</i>            | √        |
| 40 | Stone Curlew              | <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>    | √        |
| 41 | Black-winged Stilt        | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>  | √        |
| 42 | Northern Lapwing          | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>      | √        |

|    |                          |                                  |   |
|----|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 43 | Kentish Plover           | <i>Charadrius alexandrius</i>    | √ |
| 44 | Common Ringed Plover     | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>      | √ |
| 45 | Little Ringed Plover     | <i>Charadrius dubius</i>         | √ |
| 46 | Common Redshank          | <i>Tringa tetanus</i>            | √ |
| 47 | Black-tailed Godwit      | <i>Limosa limosa</i>             | √ |
| 48 | Dunlin                   | <i>Calidris alpina</i>           | √ |
| 49 | Eurasian Curlew          | <i>Numenius arquata</i>          | √ |
| 50 | Whimbrel                 | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>         | √ |
| 51 | Common Sandpiper         | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>        | √ |
| 52 | Green Sandpiper          | <i>Tringa ochropus</i>           | √ |
| 53 | Yellow-legged Gull       | <i>Larus michahellis</i>         | √ |
| 54 | Black-headed Gull        | <i>Larus ridibundus</i>          | √ |
| 55 | Lesser Black-backed Gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i>              | √ |
| 56 | Whiskered Tern           | <i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>        | √ |
| 57 | Pin-tailed Sandgrouse    | <i>Pterocles alchata</i>         | √ |
| 58 | Black-bellied Sandgrouse | <i>Pterocles orientalis</i>      | √ |
| 59 | Rock Dove /Feral Pigeon  | <i>Columba livia</i>             | √ |
| 60 | Turtle Dove              | <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>       | √ |
| 61 | Eurasian Collared Dove   | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>     | √ |
| 62 | Common Woodpigeon        | <i>Columba palumbus</i>          | √ |
| 63 | Common Cuckoo            | <i>Cuculus canorus</i>           | √ |
| 64 | Great Spotted Cuckoo     | <i>Clamator glandarius</i>       | √ |
| 65 | Eagle Owl                | <i>Bubo bubo</i>                 | √ |
| 66 | Tawny Owl                | <i>Strix aluco</i>               | √ |
| 67 | Scop's Owl               | <i>Otus scops</i>                | √ |
| 68 | Short-eared Owl          | <i>Asio flammeus</i>             | √ |
| 69 | Little Owl               | <i>Athene noctua</i>             | √ |
| 70 | European Nightjar        | <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>     | √ |
| 71 | Alpine Swift             | <i>Apus melba</i>                | √ |
| 72 | Common Swift             | <i>Apus apus</i>                 | √ |
| 73 | Pallid Swift             | <i>Apus pallidus</i>             | √ |
| 74 | Common Kingfisher        | <i>Alcedo atthis</i>             | √ |
| 75 | European Bee-eater       | <i>Merops apiaster</i>           | √ |
| 76 | Eurasian Hoopoe          | <i>Upupa epops</i>               | √ |
| 77 | Green Woodpecker         | <i>Picus viridus</i>             | √ |
| 78 | Great Spotted Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopus major</i>         | √ |
| 79 | Black Woodpecker         | <i>Drycopus martius</i>          | √ |
| 80 | Wryneck                  | <i>Jynx torquatta</i>            | √ |
| 81 | Skylark                  | <i>Alauda arvensis</i>           | √ |
| 82 | Calandra Lark            | <i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>    | √ |
| 83 | Wood Lark                | <i>Lullula arborea</i>           | √ |
| 84 | Crested Lark             | <i>Galerida cristata</i>         | √ |
| 85 | Thekla Lark              | <i>Galerida theklae</i>          | √ |
| 86 | Greater Short-toed Lark  | <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> | √ |
| 87 | Lesser Short-toed Lark   | <i>Calandrella rufescens</i>     | √ |
| 88 | Eurasian Crag Martin     | <i>Hirundo rupestris</i>         | √ |
| 89 | Barn Swallow             | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>           | √ |
| 90 | Red-rumped Swallow       | <i>Hirundo daurica</i>           | √ |

|     |                           |                                  |   |
|-----|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 91  | House Martin              | <i>Delichon urbica</i>           | √ |
| 92  | Tawny Pipit               | <i>Anthus campestris</i>         | √ |
| 93  | Water Pipit               | <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>         | √ |
| 94  | Tree Pipit                | <i>Anthus trivialis</i>          | √ |
| 95  | White Wagtail             | <i>Motacilla alba</i>            | √ |
| 96  | (Spanish)Yellow Wagtail   | <i>Motacilla flava iberiae</i>   | √ |
| 97  | Grey Wagtail              | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>         | √ |
| 98  | White Throated Dipper     | <i>Cinclus cinclus</i>           | √ |
| 99  | Dunnock                   | <i>Prunella modularis</i>        | √ |
| 100 | Alpine Accentor           | <i>Prunella collaris</i>         | √ |
| 101 | European Robin            | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>        | √ |
| 102 | Common Nightingale        | <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>     | √ |
| 103 | Black Redstart            | <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>      | √ |
| 104 | Common Redstart           | <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>   | √ |
| 105 | European Stonechat        | <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>         | √ |
| 106 | Northern Wheatear         | <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>         | √ |
| 107 | Black-eared Wheatear      | <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>        | √ |
| 108 | Song Thrush               | <i>Turdus philomelos</i>         | √ |
| 109 | Mistle Thrush             | <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>         | √ |
| 110 | Eurasian Blackbird        | <i>Turdus merula</i>             | √ |
| 111 | Ring Ouzel                | <i>Turdus torquatus</i>          | √ |
| 112 | Blue Rock-Thrush          | <i>Monticola solitarius</i>      | √ |
| 113 | Rock Thrush               | <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>       | √ |
| 114 | Garden Warbler            | <i>Sylvia borin</i>              | √ |
| 115 | Blackcap                  | <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>        | √ |
| 116 | Western Orphean Warbler   | <i>Sylvia hortensis</i>          | √ |
| 117 | Sardinian Warbler         | <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>      | √ |
| 118 | Subalpine Warbler         | <i>Sylvia cantillans</i>         | √ |
| 119 | Dartford Warbler          | <i>Sylvia undata</i>             | √ |
| 120 | Spectacled Warbler        | <i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>      | √ |
| 121 | Zitting Cisticola         | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>        | √ |
| 122 | Cetti's Warbler           | <i>Cettia cetti</i>              | √ |
| 123 | Great Reed-Warbler        | <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i> | √ |
| 124 | Eurasian Reed-Warbler     | <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>   | √ |
| 125 | Melodious Warbler         | <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>      | √ |
| 126 | Western Bonelli's Warbler | <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>      | √ |
| 127 | Common Chiffchaff         | <i>Phylloscopus colybita</i>     | √ |
| 128 | Firecrest                 | <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>      | √ |
| 129 | Wren                      | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>   | √ |
| 130 | Spotted Flycatcher        | <i>Muscicapa striata</i>         | √ |
| 131 | Great Tit                 | <i>Parus major</i>               | √ |
| 132 | Coal Tit                  | <i>Parus ater</i>                | √ |
| 133 | Eurasian Blue Tit         | <i>Parus caeruleus</i>           | √ |
| 134 | Crested Tit               | <i>Parus cristatus</i>           | √ |
| 135 | Marsh Tit                 | <i>Poecile palustris</i>         | √ |
| 136 | Long-tailed Tit           | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>       | √ |
| 137 | Eurasian Penduline-Tit    | <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>          | √ |
| 138 | Eurasian Nuthatch         | <i>Sitta europaea caesia</i>     | √ |

|                       |                          |                                      |            |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 139                   | Wallcreeper              | <i>Tichodroma muraria</i>            | √          |
| 140                   | Eurasian Treecreeper     | <i>Certhia familiaris</i>            | √          |
| 141                   | Short-toed Treecreeper   | <i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>         | √          |
| 142                   | Southern Grey Shrike     | <i>Lanius meridionalis</i>           | √          |
| 143                   | Red-backed Shrike        | <i>Lanius collurio</i>               | √          |
| 144                   | Woodchat Shrike          | <i>Lanius senator</i>                | √          |
| 145                   | Eurasian Magpie          | <i>Pica pica</i>                     | √          |
| 146                   | Eurasian Jay             | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>           | √          |
| 147                   | Eurasian Jackdaw         | <i>Corvus monedula</i>               | √          |
| 148                   | Red-billed Chough        | <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>       | √          |
| 149                   | Alpine Chough            | <i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>          | √          |
| 150                   | Carrion Crow             | <i>Corvus corone</i>                 | √          |
| 151                   | Common or Northern Raven | <i>Corvus corax</i>                  | √          |
| 152                   | Spotless Starling        | <i>Sturnus unicolor</i>              | √          |
| 153                   | Eurasian Golden-Oriole   | <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>               | √          |
| 154                   | House Sparrow            | <i>Passer domesticus</i>             | √          |
| 155                   | Eurasian Tree-Sparrow    | <i>Passer montanus</i>               | √          |
| 156                   | Rock Sparrow             | <i>Petronia petronia</i>             | √          |
| 157                   | Snowfinch (White-winged) | <i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>        | √          |
| 158                   | Common Chaffinch         | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>             | √          |
| 159                   | Eurasian Linnet          | <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>           | √          |
| 160                   | European Goldfinch       | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>           | √          |
| 161                   | European Greenfinch      | <i>Carduelis chloris</i>             | √          |
| 162                   | Citril Finch             | <i>Carduelis citrinella</i>          | √          |
| 163                   | European Serin           | <i>Serinus serinus</i>               | √          |
| 164                   | Bullfinch                | <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>             | √          |
| 165                   | Hawfinch                 | <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> | √          |
| 166                   | Common Crossbill         | <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>             | √          |
| 167                   | Yellowhammer             | <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>           | √          |
| 168                   | Cirl Bunting             | <i>Emberiza cirlus</i>               | √          |
| 169                   | Corn Bunting             | <i>Miliaria calandra</i>             | √          |
| 170                   | Rock Bunting             | <i>Emberiza cia</i>                  | √          |
| 171                   | <b>Monk Parakeet</b>     | <i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>           | √          |
| <b>Total</b>          |                          |                                      | <b>170</b> |
| <b>H = Heard only</b> |                          |                                      | <b>1</b>   |