

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

ANDALUCIA 7-DAY TOUR

WITH MY TRES AMIGOS

DAVID, MARTIN & ALAN



MAY 25TH – June 1ST 2014

TRIP REPORT

LEADERS: BOB BUCKLER

DAY 1 – SUNDAY 25TH MAY 2014

MALAGA AIRPORT - GUADALMAR AND DESEMBOCADURA DE GUADALHORCE - SIERRA CRESTELLINA AND GAUCIN

IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK BIRDING IN SUNNY ANDALUCIA AFTER SPENDING NEARLY A MONTH IN OTHER PARTS OF SPAIN AND EASTERN EUROPE, i.e. EXTREMADURA, COTO DONANA, BULGARIA AND LESVOS.

At 11:30 ish I collected David, Martin and Alan from Malaga Airport and drove them to some waste ground near Guadalmar, this is the usual plan for my home-based Andalucia tour because both Eurasian Hoopoe and European Bee-eater are relatively easy to find there and both species give the tour a terrific kick-start.

As it was a Sunday there were hundreds of people milling about in the lovely sunshine and as a consequence we limited our visit the banks of a small river. We found several species within a few meters from the car, House Martin, Crested Lark, Jackdaws, Greenfinch, Barn Swallow and our first European Bee-eaters could be heard.



view over a Laguna at Guadalhorce, you can see the suburbs of Malaga in the background

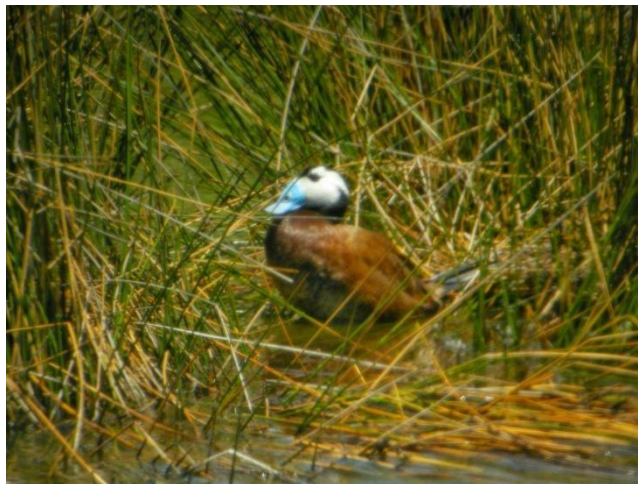
As we walked across sandy dunes we saw many noisy Monk Parakeets as they dashed about in small parties. a Common Kestrel appeared over the dunes and a Little Ringed Plover circled over us whilst calling constantly. A row of eucalyptus trees provided perches for the Bee-eaters giving us lovely views in the bright sunlight. We also found Turtle Doves, Spotless Starlings, Spotted Flycatcher, Red-rumped Swallow and our number two target species the Eurasian Hoopoe. It is always nice to find this species as it can be difficult to find in my local patch because the habitat is so different.



Eurasian Spoonbill seen at Laguna Grande, Guadalhorce Natural Park

After that rewarding episode we drove about 2km to the nature reserve at Guadalhorce, again a mass of people we walking, jogging, cycling, fishing, loafing and generally enjoying a sunny Sunday afternoon. This didn't spoil our birding one little bit, we walked to the hides along the main tracks and listed a good number of species.

At the first Laguna we came to we found two pairs of White-headed Ducks, this was our main target species and great bird for the guys to see. Along the tracks we encountered Zitting Cisticola, a Gull-billed Tern and a flyover Black-winged Stilt. Our visit to the first hide didn't produce much more than a couple of Common Pochard, Little Grebe, Common Coot and another pair of the White-headed Duck. A couple of butterflies caught our eye, Small Skipper, Common Blue and Clouded Yellow were seen on the reserve and earlier we noted Hummingbird Hawk Moth.



White-headed Duck

The large hide that overlooks Laguna Grande produced a lot more species, it was nice to see Dunlin in summer plumage standing next to Sanderling in winter plumage. They were joined by Ringed Plovers and a single Red Knot which was in the process of changing into its lovely red summer outfit. Other birds on this shallow Laguna were Whimbrel, Little and Whiskered Terns, Pied Avocet and several pairs of breeding Black-winged Stilts, one or two chicks were visible on the shingle banks.

On the way back to the car we heard a couple of Reed Warblers and saw Zitting Cisticola, Greenfinch and Goldfinches.



The Dunlin looking superb in summer plumage



From Malaga we drove 70km along the coast towards Gibraltar, we turned off and headed inland towards Gaucin which is nestled nicely in the coastal mountains. Gaucin is my home village and is where we will be based for the next seven nights. We stopped at Sierra Crestellina to look at vultures which turned out in good numbers to greet us. Griffon Vultures have a healthy colony of about 20-30 pairs on this huge mountain and a pair of Bonelli's Eagles also breed there. After a few minutes we located two of the eagles and one dropped down onto the nest and fed the single chick which sat up nicely for us after the adult had gone. This was the first sighting of the chick this year after fears that the eagles hadn't bred.

Other species seen during our visit were Crested Lark, Stonechat, Red-billed Chough and a few more finches.



Sanderling and Red Knot

Just before we arrived in the village of Gaucin we saw another eagle circling over the road, we pulled over and watched the bird for a few minutes. it was a Short-toed Eagle and it was carrying a snake which it passed from talons to mouth as we watched, a nice sighting to end our day's birding. We had logged 49 species during our first half-day with a couple goodies head-lining the list!

DAY 2 – MONDAY 26TH MAY 2014

RIO GENAL - GENAL VALLEY FROM CASARES TO SECADERO - SAN ENRIQUE WOODS - LAGUNA TORREGUADIARO - PINAR DEL REY PINE WOODS - PALMONES EIVER MOUTH

We set off at 8:30am after a late breakfast (the guys wanted a lie in) heading down the mountainside to the Rio Genal. It was a bright and beautiful morning, cloud free and a lovely temperature. We stopped just outside Gaucin to look at 3 Honey Buzzards that were flapping their way up the hill towards the village and later from the river we saw another 14 Honey Buzzards, 2 Short-toed Eagles and 5 Booted Eagles, all migrating north over Gaucin.



Tres amigos - at PALMONES today with Gibraltar in the background

Back down on earth we found Serin, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Sardinian Warbler and both Grey and White Wagtails. A couple of Blackcaps sat out nicely and we heard Common Nightingale, Cetti's Warbler and Golden Oriole, a Great Spotted Woodpecker flew over us as we began to walk along the track upriver.



Rio Guadiaro viewed from the SECADERO track the

We stood near a row of poplar trees trying to track down the orioles and over the next 30 minutes we had several sightings of them including one individual in the scope. During that time we also saw Turtle Dove, Wood Pigeon, Cirl Bunting, Common Raven and Common Buzzard.

We then drove up the hill passed Sierra Crestellina where we made a quick stop to look at a Woodchat Shrike and a few Griffon Vultures.

The track down to the river towards Secadero is always a favourite of mine but today it was a little disappointing. The wind picked up and it was difficult to see many birds in the bushes and trees. A single Bee-eater sat forlornly on a wire and a Turtle Dove landed next to him and 'turred' to try to cheer him up. A few pairs of Little Ringed Plover milled around on the shingle banks as did White Wagtail and lots of finches came down to drink.



Serin

male

In the hedgerows and bushes we found Sardinian Warblers and Stonechats and not much else. A pale morph Booted Eagle circled low over the top of us and gave superb views to the guys and a little later we saw an adult EGYPTIAN VULTURE drifting along the ridge towards Crestellina.



BRIMSTONE BUTTERFLY

Further along the track we stopped and walked along the sandy banks looking for Western Olivaceous Warbler which proved elusive at first but showed well in the end. Along the river we saw Little Egret, Common Sandpiper, White Wagtails and more Little Ringed Plovers.

Next we drove to San Enrique woods where we had the best excitement of the morning, we decided to eat our picnic lunch on the entrance track to the woods. It was fairly quiet until a WRYNECK called out from the tree right next to us, what luck, the bird showed very well from a number of perches giving us excellent views, a second bird called from within the woods. Another target bird was the Tree Sparrow and one of them landed on the track in front of us, meanwhile a puddle further along the track provided a bathing pool for Serins and Cirl Buntings.



WRYNECK at San Enrique Woods



A second bird seen a little later

Our walk in the woods produced Spotted Flycatcher, Wren, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Hoopoe, Jay and Blue Tits. We made a very brief visit to the Laguna TORREGUADIARO and saw not a lot! The reeds have grown so high that you cannot hardly see the water, a waste of time now.

At PINAR del REY pine woods we spent an hour walking through this unique habitat of 'umbrella pines' and ended up getting great views of Crested Tit, Western Bonelli's Warbler and Iberian Chiffchaff.

PALMONES was also disappointing, we only saw six species there!! When usually there are at least 7-10 species of waders we saw only two, Kentish Plover and Ringed Plover, there were also only two gulls, Black-headed and Yellow-legged and one tern, a single Sandwich Tern. A couple of Yellow Wagtails took us up to the six species mark.



three of the six species seen at PALMONES, Sandwich Tern, Black-headed and Yellow-legged Gulls.

On the way home we stopped to look at the Lesser Kestrel colony near San Martin, a few birds were present, we also had a brief view of a Melodious Warbler. Throughout the day Alan had been keeping an eye on the butterflies, we listed several species including: Monarch, Cleopatra, Speckled Wood, Brown Argus, Small Copper and Bath White.

DAY 3 – TUESDAY 27TH MAY 2014

ENCINAS BORRACHES TRACK - LLANOS DE LIBAR - MONTEJAQUE CORK WOODS

This is why I love it here in Spain, the weather. Whilst poor old Britain is suffering a cold and very wet spell we had the best weather you could imagine, what a great morning, perfect blue sky and not a breath of wind, excellent for birding in the mountains.



Encinas Borraches track this morning

We set off from Gaucin after an early breakfast and headed towards Ronda, we stopped a couple of times along the way, the first stop was to look at a Rock Sparrow that was singing from a stone wall at the side of the road. Whilst watching the Sparrow we also found a Subalpine Warbler and a Melodious Warbler, a very productive stop.

Next we stopped near another stone wall to look for Blue Rock Thrush, instead a Red-legged Partridge flew out from the scrub as we got out of the car. We also found Linnets, Corn Bunting and a Black Wheatear but not the thrush.



Spanish Marbled White

We then spent the most pleasurable 3 hours that any birder can wish for, the weather was fantastic, the scenery simple stunning and the bird and butterflies were prolific. We stepped out of the car and entered the most beautiful landscape at the start of the Encinas Borrachea track, a Thekla Lark sang from the fence, a Stonechat darted to the top of the nearest bush and several butterflies danced passed us even though the sun was barely up.



Knapweed Fritillary

The first part of the walk took us through an open flat valley with scrub and rocky crags in the foreground, it was here that we found Black-eared Wheatear, Little Owl, Woodchat Shrike, Goldfinches and Linnets. Then we walked through heath-land where Dartford and Spectacled Warblers performed and a Woodlark sang to us. As we entered a cork wood a Common Cuckoo called nearby and a Eurasian Hoopoe could be heard in the distance.



Red-underwing Skipper

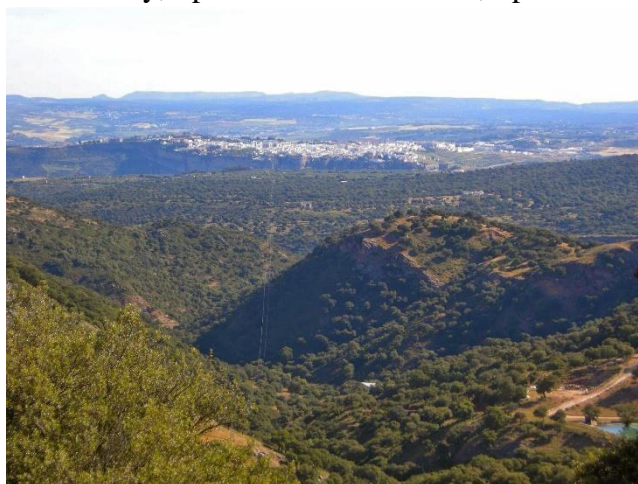
We tracked down an Orphean Warbler as it sang from the oaks, likewise we saw another Subalpine Warbler. Bonelli's Warblers could also be seen as they trilled from the oaks, in the distance we saw Blue Rock Thrush, Black Wheatear and Red Deer.



Woodlark

As we returned, Dave found a ROCK THRUSH singing from a pylon, what a terrific find, the bird flew up to display before dropping into cover on the far side of the valley, bird of day for me! We also found a lovely Southern Grey Shrike as we got back near the car and another Rock Sparrow showed well.

Several new butterflies were added to our list: Sage Skipper, Red-underwing Skipper, Rock Grayling, Black-veined White, Knapweed Fritillary, Spanish Marbled White, Spanish Gatekeeper and Little Skipper.



two views of Ronda, above taken without a zoom and below a digi-scope view from the same spot



the famous bridge at Ronda

Moving on after we had eaten our picnic lunch we sat down for coffee and then spent some time in the centre of Ronda to look over the bridge into the famous gorge. We saw Alpine and Pallid Swifts, Red-billed Chough and Lesser Kestrel.



record shot of Spectacled Warbler

At Montejaque Cork Woods we found an obliging Firecrest, more Bonelli's Warblers and a Kingfisher at the lake. LLANOS de Libar was hard work because the wind had picked up somewhat and it was hard to scope. Nevertheless, we saw several Black Wheatears, we had excellent views of Blue Rock Thrush, also Black Redstart, Crag Martin, Linnets, Rock Sparrow and in the sky we saw Griffon Vulture and Short-toed Eagle.



We called it a day at 5pm and drove back to Gaucin arriving around 6pm. It had been a wonderful day out with some excellent sightings.

DAY 4 – WEDNESDAY 28TH MAY 2014

MARCHENILLA TRACK - LOS LANCES BEACH TARIFA - LA JANDA - VEJER - BARBATE MARSHES NATURAL PARK

What difference a day makes! Yesterday's weather was absolutely fabulous and today was pants! We awoke to wet and windy conditions and low cloud we couldn't see the end of the street. Fortunately it cleared a little as we drove down the mountains towards the coast at Algeciras.

Our first stop was at a secluded track near San Pablo where we spent a 'dry' hour or so looking for a couple of target species. One of the first birds we noticed was a Little Owl, this was our third of the day as we had seen two as we approached the track. Then we saw a couple of Sardinian Warblers a few Serins, Greenfinches, a Common Buzzard and lots of Goldfinches.

A sparrow caught the eye of Martin because it looked odd and sure enough on closer inspection we could see that it had the characteristics of both the House Sparrow and the Spanish Sparrow. This was indeed a hybrid and often called an Italian Sparrow, whether or not it is a distinct species is the subject of an ongoing scientific debate.



The Italian Sparrow showing a brown head with some grey, white cheeks, white supercilium and other features of both Spanish and House Sparrow.

Next we hit a purple patch when not one but two Rufous Bush Robins were heard singing, this was our main target bird. We had excellent views of one of them, a lifer for my guests and thrilling for me.



RUFOUS BUSH ROBIN - three pictures of this rare breeding bird of Spain



in full song just five meters from us

As we walked further along the track we added several more species to our day list; Booted Eagle, Shorttoed Eagle, Bee-eater, Corn Bunting, Red-rumped Swallow, Turtle Dove and Griffon Vulture. Then our second target species appeared, the Tawny Pipit. This bird also showed well as it delivered its' song from a pylon and from the wires, it also performed its display flight a couple of times, nice one.



The only picture I got of the Tawny Pipit

From the track we drove to the coast and hit very bad weather, it poured with rain and became very misty, this continued until we reached Tarifa. A lucky break in the gloom let us walk to the hide at Los Lances beach but it didn't last long. We had time to watch a few Kentish Plovers, Dunlins, Ringed Plovers, Yellowlegged Gulls, Sandwich Terns and Short-toed Larks before the rain came down again.

We took a coffee break hoping for the rain to relent but it never did so we set off for LA JANDA and to our great surprise the weather cleared up by the time we got there.

Our visit lasted a couple of hours, it was still a little too windy so we stayed In the car a lot, from there we watched hundreds of Cattle and Little Egrets, Glossy Ibis, White Storks, Grey Herons and not a lot else. We did see a few distant Collared Pratincoles, a Marsh Harrier, Common Kestrel, but generally it was very quiet.



hiding from a rain shower at La JANDA - the Marx Borthers

A drive along an avenue of white poplar trees took us close to a huge nesting colony of egrets and ibis, the noise was deafening and the smell off-putting but the sight was tremendous. We ate our lunch close by and notched up a few Turtle Doves as we ate, also a distant Black Kite, lots of Common Pheasants and we heard both a Cetti's and a Reed Warbler.



Turtle Dove at lunch time

After lunch we drove out of LA JANDA and headed towards Benalup, we saw our fourth Little Owl of the day at the 'smelly farm' and also another six Black Kites. We then found another superb species for the area in the shape of a Spanish Imperial Eagle, not one but two drifted high over us with some Griffon Vultures, what a great discovery.

Next we drove to Vejer to the site of the breeding colony of BALD IBIS, these introduced birds are doing well and now have two colonies on the cliffs below Vejer, the one we visited had 9 almost full grown chicks on view and several of their ugly parents, if I were a Bald Ibis chick and I saw what I was going to turn out like I may have a tendency to jump out of the nest and onto the main road in front of a truck!

Our last venue was the new natural park at BARBATE, this huge area of shallow lagoons and large islands is getting better and better. It now supports a large number of Collared Pratincoles, a few pairs of Stone Curlew, Short-toed Larks, Yellow Wagtail, Kentish Plover and provides a haven for roosting gulls and passing waders. There are also Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills and both Skylark and Calandra Lark in the surrounding meadows. We saw all of the above with special close views of the Pratincoles.



These birds were on the track and allowed close approach

After that excitement we called it a day and drove home in nice sunshine Until we got back to the village where the rain clouds lingered.

DAY 5 – THURSDAY 29TH MAY 2014

**SERRANIA DE RONDA - TEBA GORGE - LAGUNA DULCE - LAGUNA FUENTE DE PIEDRA -
TEBA BIRD OF PREY OBSERVATORY - GAUCIN SWEET CHESTNUT WOODS**

The weather returned to the usual gorgeous cloudless, blue sky today, all day! So you can assume that we had a great day out.

We started at 7:30am as we left Gaucin and drove to the mountains near Ronda, we had some unfinished business with a Rock Bunting. This bird had proven somewhat elusive over the last couple of days and today was no exception, we found Rock Sparrow, Blue Rock Thrush and Black Wheatear before the little blighter turned up. When it did show, it showed very well, we had tremendous close views from the car, thank you.

We then drove up passed Ronda and onto the Campillos road where we stopped to look at a Bonelli's Eagle eyrie, two young birds sat on the nest they were big enough to fledge, very nice all the same and we never saw an adult.

Near Teba we drove passed the gorge and stopped at the bird of prey observatory where we spent an hour looking up at a huge rock face hoping for a sighting of a Peregrine Falcon. The falcon didn't show but we enjoyed views of Griffon Vulture, Red-billed Chough, Jackdaws, Common Kestrel, Black Wheatear, Crag Martin, Alpine Swift and in the olive groves we saw Hoopoe, Greenfinch, Serin, Sardinian Warbler and Goldfinch.



Bath White

Laguna Dulce was covered in birds as usual, many Common Coot were with Great-crested, Little and Blacknecked Grebes, we also saw Common Pochard and Red-crested Pochard, Purple Swamphen, Gull-billed Tern, Northern Lapwing, Greater Flamingo, Glossy Ibis, Little ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper, Hoopoe, Cetti's Warbler, Zitting Cisticola and lots of common species.



Lulworth Skipper

We drove around to the far side of the Laguna into arable farmland where we found a number of Crested Larks, Calandra Larks, a couple of Montagu's Harriers, Yellow Wagtails, Lesser Kestrel and we had good views of the Laguna. Several butterflies were on the wing as well as numerous dragonflies.



one of the six Greater Flamingos at Laguna Dulce

At Laguna Fuente de Piedra we were disappointed to see that most of the area had dried up, all of the pools around the visitor's centre had dried up and the main Laguna had shrunk dramatically. Thousands of Greater Flamingos had bred but they were quite far out. We did see Common Shelduck, Black-tailed Godwin, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Common Redshank and hundreds of Gull-billed Terns.

LATE NEWS CAME AFTER THE TOUR OF 3 SUCCESSFUL BREEDING PAIRS OF LESSER FLAMINGOS AT THIS SITE



a
common species but beautiful all the same, European Goldfinch

We returned via Teba and again stopped off to view the cliffs, again we were thwarted with no sign of the Peregrine Falcon.

Our last birding was done in the sweet chestnut woods near Gaucin, the sun was still hot but it was sheltered in the trees. We saw Eurasian Nuthatch a few times also Short-toed Treecreeper for the first time, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher and a few common species.

That was the end of another long day, I think we added about 10 species to our trip list with some excellent sightings included.

We all ate dinner sitting out in the local plaza, the sun was still strong and the air was very warm, summer has arrived in Spain I think.

DAY 6 – FRIDAY 30TH MAY 2014

LAGUNA DE MEDINA - LAGUNA JUNCOSA - BONANZA SALT PANS - LAGUNA TARELO - PINAR DEL LA ALGAIDA - TREBUJENA SALT MARSH

It was a long and hot day today but the guys were up for it, we drove from Gaucin at 7:30am and arrived at Laguna Medina at 9am. A long drive let's hope that at the end of the day we think it's worth it!

The weather was lovely clear skies all day, it reach 30C at the salt pans but we had a nice breeze to cool us down.

Along the route we notched quite a few species which included: Eurasian Hoopoe, White Stork, Montagu's Harrier, Black Kite, Griffon Vulture, Booted Eagle and lots of Cattle Egrets.

When we arrived at Laguna Medina the air was alive with bird song, Great Reed Warblers, Cetti's Warblers, Common Nightingales, Zitting Cisticola, Turtle Dove, Greenfinches, Goldfinches and Melodious Warblers were all giving some volume. We saw all of those species as we walked the track to the hide, but the best was seen by just me, a male Penduline Tit, I inadvertently flushed it before anyone else got a view! Viewing from the hide the pool itself was disappointing with just a few Mallard, Common Coot, Great Crested and Little Grebes. The surrounding scrub held Night Heron, Purple Swamphen, lots of Wood Pigeon and we saw Little Tern and Purple Heron flying over.



Banded Groundling - *Brachythermis leicosticta* (female)

Next we drove to Laguna Juncosa which in early spring was full of water and brimming with birds, today it was almost empty of both. A few Mallard, Common Coot swam about and on the shore we saw Little Ringed and Ringed Plovers, a single Black-tailed Godwit, Black-winged Stilts and a few Moorhen. A male Montagu's Harrier flew by just before we left.

It took about 40 minutes to reach the saltpans at Bonanza, we passed through El Portil and notched a Eurasian Magpie along the way. We then passed through the busy town of Sanlucar before reaching the 'pans' and even they were very quiet, the hordes of migrating waders that are usually present in spring were gone and only hundreds of Greater Flamingos, Pied Avocet and Black-winged Stilts remained. We also saw Kentish Plover, Ringed Plover, Sanderling in summer plumage and a good number of Black Kites flew overhead. We ate lunch at a small pumping station where we watched Little Terns, Slender-billed Gulls and Spoonbills at fairly close range.



great views of the beautiful Slender-billed Gull

From the salt pans we drove around to Laguna Tarelo where we had a most successful hour. An island in the middle of the pool held a mixed breeding colony of Eurasian Spoonbills, Little and Cattle Egret and Squacco Herons one of our target species, we saw several fledged chicks being fed by adults.



one of
the many Night Herons partly hidden in the tamarisk scrub

Then we found a Little Bittern another of our most wanted species, this bird flew to a high perch and showed well for a few minutes before disappearing. As we searched through the ducks we found 8 MARBLED DUCKS, a real treat for us and a bonus bird for the trip list, we had great views of them albeit distant ones.

Other species seen included lots of roosting Night Herons and both Common and Red-crested Pochard, Gadwall and lots of Common Coot, none with Red-knobs on! A short walk on the Algaida pines produced little, a single Spotted Flycatcher, Sardinian Warbler and many Black Kites, whilst looking at the kites we saw a Red Kite drifting on high and a few Griffon Vultures.



Little Egret taken at the salt pans

Our drive through the salt marsh at Trebujena was enjoyable and there were many birds to see but none were new for us and we never found a Lesser Short-toed Lark, our target species. A huge flock of Blacktailed Godwits was impressive and a great many Pied Avocets joined them in the marsh. We also saw quite a few Yellow Wagtails, Crested Larks and Zitting Cisticola.

Time was moving on and so must we, we had a 2 hour drive back. We broke this up with an ice cream stop and later a caffeine boost was needed. All of us agreed that our sighting of over 80 species made it worth the long trek.

DAY 7 – SATURDAY 31ST MAY 2014

SIERRA DE LAS NIEVES

It was the last full day today for my three guest fromJ Oxfordshire, Alan, Dave and Martin. They wanted an early start and an early finish so that thecould do some 'rubber-necking' in the afternoon around the village.

Several species were missing from the list so we decided to go to the wonderful natural park at Sierra de las Nieves near Ronda to see if we could add any new ones.



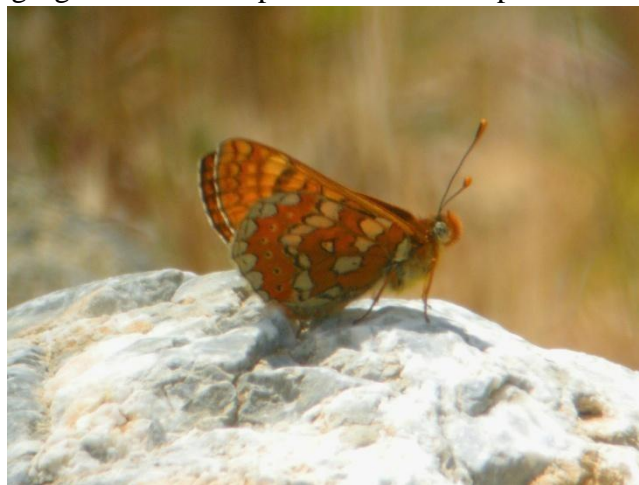
Black Wheatear a common sight in the rocky gorges

It was yet another fantastic morning, exquisite light, no wind, a lovely temperature and the most wonderful scenery all around us, sometimes I have to pinch myself to remind me that I haven't yet gone to heaven!

We arrived around 8:15am and parked near the entrance where open meadows dotted with scrub, fir trees and picnic tables can be found. A Hoopoe was the first bird seen, it was feeding on the grass verge of the car park, it was a nice start. A short walk produced our first Great Tits and Long-tailed Tits, we also saw Linnets, Goldfinch, Corn Bunting and we had our first sighting of a Common Cuckoo.

We then drove a couple of kilometres into the park and stopped in a cork oak wood, our intention was to walk for a couple hours looking for new species and then return to the car for the drive back to Gaucin.

In the woods we found European Robin, Bonelli's Warbler, Blackcap, Jay, Chaffinch, Blue Tit and we heard a Common Nightingale. As we progressed along the track the landscape changed, we moved out of the woods and into a steep-sided rugged gorge which then opened out to a flat plateau of rocky scrub.



Marsh Fritillary

As the landscape changed so did the species of birds, we were now finding Black Wheatears, Northern Wheatears, Common Stonechats, Linnets, Cirl Buntings and Red-billed Chough. A section of heathland

produced Dartford Warbler, Woodlark and more Stonechats. We also found Serins and higher up we saw Lesser Kestrels and Griffon Vultures.

We then walked higher into mature pine woods where we encountered, Eurasian Nuthatch, Firecrest, Coal Tit, Crested Tit and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk.



Northern Wheatear

It was now starting to cloud over but it stayed quite warm, we spent quite a lot of time looking at butterflies, we must have seen 15-20 species with some nice ones catching our eye, we saw: three Fritillary, Queen-of-Spain, Knapweed and Marsh, plus Rock Grayling, Dusky Heath, Black-veined White, Cleopatra, Clouded Yellow, Dusky Meadow Brown, Spanish Gatekeeper, Sage Skipper and several others.

Our return journey was quite a lot quicker but we did stop to look at more birds and butterflies, we added Sardinian, Melodious and Spectacled Warblers to our list and kept a constant eye on the skyline looking for Eagles, we found only Booted Eagle and more Chough.



the final walk of the trip - back to the car

We returned to the car and drove back to the picnic site where we sat to eat our lunch, then we packed up and called it a day, well not quite because we drove out of the park and stopped at the first restaurant we came to and ordered coffee. We sat on the terrace looking back over the park still in the hope of seeing Golden Eagle but all we got was Short-toed Eagle.

After our coffee we drove back to Gaucin to finish the tour, it was 3pm when we got back and the guys wanted to visit the castle and walk around the village before dinner, a nice touch to end the tour with.

DAY 9 – SUNDAY JUNE 1ST 2014

DESEMBOCADURA DE GUADALHORCE NATURAL PARK

I took DAVE, MARTIN and ALAN back to MALAGA airport for their return flight to the UK. and as I have to collect my darling wife a little later I planned a full day's birding in the area. However, the weather decided otherwise. Some of the darkest clouds I have ever seen gathered over Malaga and I spent just 1 hour birding before the rain started, I am sure my dearest had something to do with it!

I only went to one small part of the reserve on the east bank of the old river, where I took as many pictures as I could in appalling light conditions.

I listed the following:

black-winged Stilt, Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Sanderling, Hoopoe, Whiskered Tern, Little Egret, Audouin's Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Black-headed Gull, Slender-billed Gull, Mallard, Gadwall, Redshank, Collared Dove, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Spotless Starling, Goldfinch and Linnets. I tried to photograph most of them



AUDOUIN'S GULL - IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY YOU CAN SEE FISHING LINE PROTRUDING FROM THE BIRD'S BEAK, HE WAS CONSTANTLY TRYING TO REMOVE IT - NOT A HAPPY FUTURE ME THINKS



8

AUDOUIN'S GULL - 2cy



LITTLE EGRET



EURASIAN HOOPOE - he was calling from the rocks on the shore, not long after a female arrived, pulling on the beach is easy in Spain I guess?



KENTISH PLOVER



RINGED PLOVER



SANDERLING - you don't often get to see this species in summer plumage, very pretty too! What is a summer plumage Sanderling doing in Spain in June?? It should be much further north by now.



SLENDER -BILLED GULL, unfortunately this bird is oiled



Spotless Starling



very common in Spain now - BLACK-WINGED STILT - remember Sammy at Titchwell? He took up residence there from 1993 - 2005, he was very lonely I saw him trying to mount an Avocet, imagine the offspring, AV-A-STILT!



WHISKERED TERN - a record shot taken in very bad light and at distance



rain clouds gathering over Malaga

SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR MAY 25TH – JUNE 1ST 2014

	Species	Scientific name	
1	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓
2	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	✓
3	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓
4	Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	✓
5	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓
6	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	✓
7	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓
8	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓
9	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓
10	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	✓
11	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓
12	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	✓
13	Bald Ibis	<i>Geronticus eremita</i>	✓
14	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	✓
15	Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	✓
16	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓
17	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓
18	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	✓
19	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	✓
20	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓
21	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	✓
22	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	✓
23	White-headed Duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	✓

24	European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	✓
25	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓
26	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓
27	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	✓
28	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	✓
29	Spanish Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>	✓
30	Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circus gallicus</i>	✓
31	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus fasciatus</i>	✓
32	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	✓
33	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓
34	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	✓
35	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipitor nisus</i>	✓
36	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	✓
37	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓
38	Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	✓
39	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓
40	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falcon Peregrinus</i>	✓
41	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	✓
42	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	✓

43	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓
44	Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	✓
45	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓
46	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	✓
47	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓
48	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	✓
49	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	✓
50	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓
51	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	✓
52	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	✓
53	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	✓
54	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓
55	Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	✓
56	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓
57	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	✓
58	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	✓
59	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	✓
60	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓
61	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓
62	Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus genei</i>	✓
63	Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus michahellis</i>	✓
64	Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓
65	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	✓
66	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	✓
67	Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	✓
68	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	✓
69	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandwicensis</i>	✓
70	Rock Dove /Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia feral</i>	✓
71	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓

72	Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓
73	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	✓
74	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	✓
75	Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	✓
76	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	✓
77	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓
78	Pallid Swift	<i>Apus pallidus</i>	✓
79	Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	✓
80	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	✓
81	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓
82	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓
83	Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	✓
84	Great-spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	H
85	Greater Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla [cinerea]</i>	✓
86	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	✓
87	Thekla Lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>	✓
88	Calandra Lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	✓
89	Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>	✓
90	Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	✓
91	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓
92	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	✓
93	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	✓
94	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	✓
95	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓
96	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava iberiae</i>	✓

97	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓
98	Rufous Bush Robin	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	✓
99	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓
100	Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	✓
101	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	✓
102	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	✓
103	Black-eared Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	✓
104	Black Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe leucura</i>	✓
105	Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola salitarius</i>	✓
106	(Rufous-tailed) Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	✓
107	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	✓
108	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	✓
109	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	✓
110	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	✓
111	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	✓
112	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	✓
113	Western Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais opaca</i>	✓
114	Melodious Warbler	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	✓
115	Subalpine Warbler	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	✓
116	Sardinian Warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	✓
117	Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	✓
118	Western Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	✓
119	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	✓

120	Western Bonelli's Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	✓
121	Firecrest	<i>Regales ignicapilla</i>	✓
122	Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	✓
123	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula striata</i>	✓
124	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	✓
125	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓
126	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	✓
127	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>	
128	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	✓
129	Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	✓
130	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sittia europaea</i>	✓
131	Short-toed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>	✓
132	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	✓
133	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	✓
134	Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius senator</i>	✓
135	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica Pica</i>	✓
136	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus grandarius</i>	✓
137	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	✓
138	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	✓
139	Common or Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓
140	Spotless Starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	✓
141	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓
142	House/Spanish Sparrow (hybrid)	<i>Passer italiae</i>	✓
143	Rock (Petronia) Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	✓
144	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓
145	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringella coelebs</i>	✓
146	European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	✓
147	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	✓
148	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	✓
149	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	✓
150	Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	✓
151	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	✓
152	Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	✓
This Total of 152 includes the Penduline Tit seen by me - 'leader only'. and the Great-spotted Woodpecker which we only heard (H)			

BUTTERFLIES /REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS//MAMMALS			
1	Black-veined white	<u><i>Aporia crataegi</i></u>	✓
2	Large white	<i>Pieris brassica</i>	✓
3		<u><i>Artogeia rapae</i></u>	✓
4	Small white	<u><i>Pontia daplidice</i></u>	✓
5	Bath white	<i>Anthocharis belia</i>	✓
6	Moroccan Orange-tip	<i>Colias hyale</i>	✓
7	Berger's Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias crocea</i>	✓
8	Clouded yellow	<u><i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i></u>	✓
9	Brimstone		

	Cleopatra	<i>Gonepteryx cleopatra</i>	✓
10	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	✓
11	Lang's Short-tailed Blue	<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>	✓
12	Holly blue	<i>Cetastrina argiolus</i>	✓
13	Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>	✓
14	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	✓
15	Spanish Chalk-hill blue	<i>Lysandra albicans</i>	✓
16	Adonis blue	<i>Lysandra bellargus</i>	✓
17	Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	✓
18	Painted lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	✓
19	Large tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis polychloris</i>	✓
20	Small tortoiseshell	<i>Aglaia urticae</i>	✓
21	Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>	✓
22	Knapweed fritillary	<i>Melitaea phoebe</i>	✓
23	Marsh fritillary	<i>Eurodryas aurinia</i>	✓
24	Spanish Marbled White	<i>Melanargia ines</i>	✓
25	Rock Grayling	<i>Hipparchia alcyone</i>	✓
26	Meadow brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	✓
27	Southern gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia cecilia</i>	✓
28	Spanish gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia bathseba</i>	✓
29	Dusky heath	<i>Coenonympha dorus</i>	✓
30	Speckled wood	<i>Pararge aegeria aegeria</i>	✓
31	Wall brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	✓
32	Sage skipper	<i>Muschampia proto</i>	✓
33	Small skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	✓
34	Lulworth Skipper	<i>Thymelicus acteon</i>	✓
35	Large skipper	<i>Ochlodes venatus</i>	✓
36	Red-underwing Skipper	<i>Spalia sertorius</i>	✓
	Hummingbird Hawk-Moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	✓
	Owly-Sulphur	<i>Libelloides coccajus</i>	✓
	Copper Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis</i>	✓
	Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	✓
	Red-veined Darter	<i>Sympetrum fonscolombii</i>	✓
	Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	✓
	Spanish Ibex		✓
	Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓
	Egyptian Mongoose		✓
	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	✓
	Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	✓

	Ocellated Lizard	<i>Timon lepidus</i>	✓
	Marsh Frog	<i>Rana ridibunda</i>	✓
	European Pond Terrapin	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>	
	Iberian Rock Lizard	<i>Lacerta monticola</i>	