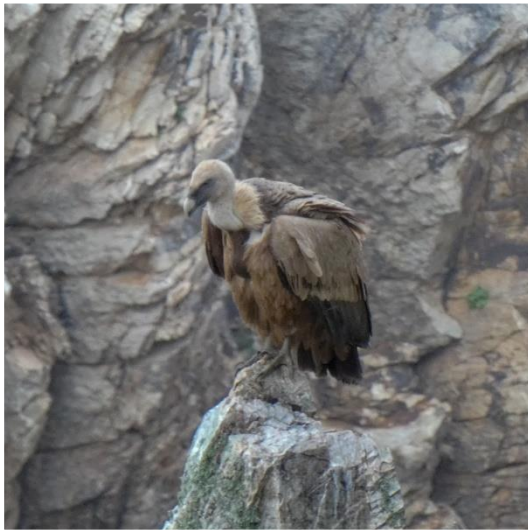


## Tour Report

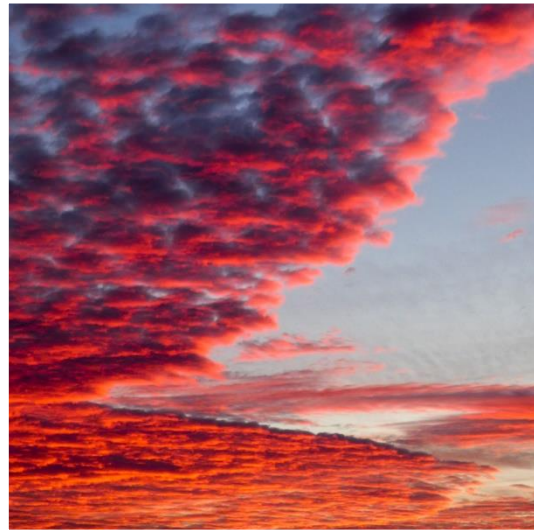
# Spain - Secret Wilderness of Extremadura

21-28 December 2019

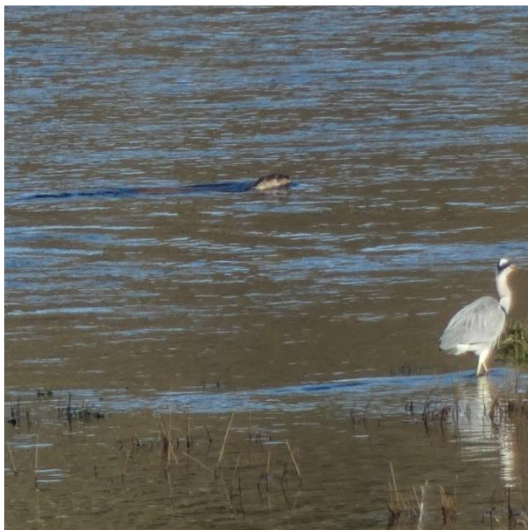
Griffon vulture



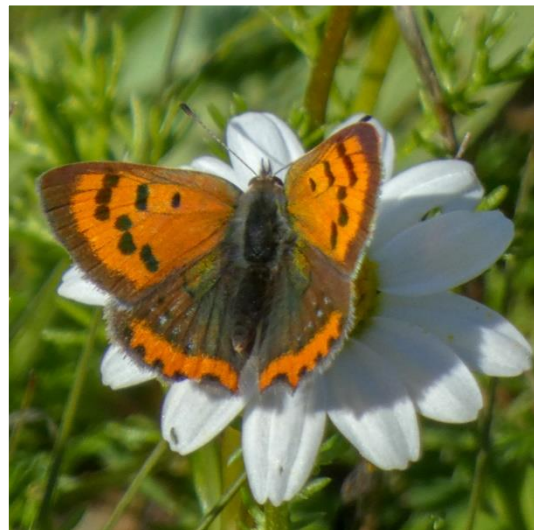
Sunset



Otter & grey heron



Small copper



Compiled by: John L. Muddeman

Tour leader: John Muddeman with 7 participants

## **Day 1: Arrive Madrid & transfer to Extremadura**

**Saturday 21 December 2019**

*Weather: Windy, cool and mostly cloudy, but with sunny spells & occasional heavy downpours; max. 16°C*

The flight from London to Madrid arrived a little earlier than scheduled, and luggage reclaim was even faster. Everyone gathered, we bought ourselves a takeaway picnic for lunch and found our minibus.

The walk out to the vehicle was in a welcome a patch of bright sunshine, in a stark contrast to the heavy rain of previous days, though the 2.5-hour drive was punctuated by a few heavy showers ripping across in the strong wind.

The trip was interrupted by a few short breaks. After travelling about 180 kilometres, we stopped for a drink and leg stretch at a motorway service station, and then we did a quick trip around the Arrocampo Reservoir to look at access options for a later visit. The autumn rains had, thankfully, come with a vengeance, filling pools, low field corners and even small streams with abundant water, plus the Almonte was basically in spate, though being on the back of a basically year-long drought, this was all still going to be only just enough. The landscape gradually turned greener and greener as we headed west and slightly south, with the *dehesa* and pastures in Extremadura a particularly brilliant and heartening bright green, and a few fields filled with either a wild mustard, *Brassica barralieri* and/or wild chamomile flowers, which added splashes of yellow and white colour.

A few birds were noted en route, starting with a little group of monk parakeets on the outskirts of Madrid, part of the large feral population now in and around the capital, but also including the first white storks back on their often enormous nests, a few western cattle egrets in the fields, several red kites wheeling beside the motorway and even a soggy-looking griffon vulture drying off on a tall pylon. Single western marsh and ringtail hen harriers put in brief appearances near Saucedilla, though a freshly dead Egyptian mongoose on the road here was a sad sight.

With dusk approaching we took a back lane to cut across towards our accommodation and, in addition to a few Iberian magpies flicking across, a great egret (until c. 15 years ago a major rarity here) was fishing along a temporary river in the *dehesa* close to where a few common cranes (feeding on acorns under the western holm oaks) was a terrific way to finish off near dusk.

We carried our cases up along the garden path to the Las Canteras guesthouse almost at last light, the spotlights illuminating Trujillo Castle in the distance being almost the only other lights visible from here, despite the views extending for many kilometres over the surrounding agristeppe.

## **Day 2: Zorita, Embalse de Sierra Brava, Madrigalejo rice fields, Campo Lugar road & Emb. de Alcollarín**

**Sunday 22 December 2019**

*Weather: Cool & overcast with occasional drizzle; a stiff breeze most of the day. Max. 15°C*

Given Spain's odd time zone position, we started breakfast at 8am still in the dark, leaving just over an hour later. It was cool and overcast, but with only occasional drizzle, as for the remainder of the day.

Taking into account the weather, I decided to head south, and start our search for some of the agristeppe specialities the region is famous for. We started, however, with a quick look at the local birds of our

immediate surroundings, including house sparrows, European stonechat and corn bunting, plus an Iberian grey shrike along the roadside as we left.

With so much good habitat still remaining in the region, it's no surprise that impromptu stops needed to be made when spotting something interesting as one drives around. We started by pulling off the road close to a small chapel when we spotted a fine group of griffon vultures – they were hanging in the south-westerly breeze to one side, clearly drying off after a wet night and previous few days. In addition to the 42 griffons present, a fine cinereous vulture gave us our first look and two elegant red kites drifted in and out of the group. As attention finally waned with the raptors, a number of small birds were noted in the fields and bushes around us, and turning to these we ended up seeing an excellent cross-section of the local smaller wintering birds: three Iberian grey shrikes, a few black redstarts, common stonechats, European robins, song thrushes, a couple of corn buntings, two tiny European serins, a fly-over hawfinch, several meadow pipits and a pair of crested larks, a wintering common chiffchaff and even three Spanish sparrows were all enjoyed in the quite bright conditions.

A roadside pool nearby was rather quiet, but still gave us our first views of three dapper and elegant black-winged stilts and a few northern lapwings, plus flighty single green sandpiper and common greenshank as well. Three chunky Eurasian crag martins as we were about to leave were an interesting sight, possibly having been driven down from higher altitudes by the recent weather.

The Sierra Brava reservoir is not a patch on its former glory, when cold winters 20 years ago pushed up to 150,000 wintering ducks and geese to its waters, but it still turns up surprises. A pair of passing Egyptian geese were not that welcome, being an aggressive and invasive alien species very much on the increase in the region, but a large flock of very distant northern pintail hinted that the reservoir was still good for some birds; a few common ravens, a couple of Eurasian crag martins and a harshly scolding Sardinian warbler in adjacent scrub were new for the day. A freshly dead adult viperine snake on the road seemed an unseasonal record, but the temperatures were quite mild and the heavy rain may have forced it out of an inadequate hibernating site.

After moseying off to find a comfort stop and bar for a refreshing drink, we returned for a wander round the nearby rice fields and to search for a quiet lunch spot. We stopped for our picnic on a small piece of track near a small road, but in the shelter away from the still chilling stiff breeze, but not before enjoying several hundred common cranes, a flighty group of 15 great bustards and just as flighty a pair of red avadavats, the latter an established escaped cage bird now present in abundance here. A pale morph booted eagle was a welcome surprise raptor drifting overhead, though a very few now winter in the region. Another surprise was in store when one of the party returned to note that they'd seen an Egyptian mongoose at very close range just around the corner! I walked round to take a look, with no sign, but when returning shortly later with one or two other party members, not just one, but two zig-zagged across the road a few hundred metres ahead of us before disappearing into the scrub.

While we drove out this way later in order to look for them, we had no luck, but did succeed in relocating the flock of male great bustards in a pasture, which this time did allow us to look at them in the scope. More great bustards, albeit at somewhat greater range, were also on offer on the nearby open agristeppe, which we enjoyed either from the vehicle or during short stops where we sheltered from the chilling breeze behind the van. Our first group of European golden plovers provided a colourful splash against the short green grassland, with noisy calandra larks and numerous Eurasian skylarks also moving about, some in response to a passing merlin; red kites, single western marsh harrier, common kestrel, a large group of common ravens, plus black redstarts, common stonechats, crested larks and a large flock of Spanish sparrows all added to the diversity. A dead red fox on the roadside was sad, but an indication that they are not uncommon here. A welcome surprise were five black-bellied sandgrouse which rose up from a fallow field slope below us and then finally pitched in on the opposite side of a shallow valley, even allowing us to appreciate the rusty cheek patch on one male, despite the range. A couple of European rabbits on a

roadside verge a little later were very much alive and it's good to see how they are returning to many areas after a long time of near complete absence!

We finished with an afternoon visit to part of the quite large Alcollarín reservoir, which despite being relatively new, is undergoing maintenance work, involving slowly draining it to remove the accumulated dead wood from the trees that were submerged when it was first and only partly filled, a few years ago. Indeed, the water levels were the lowest I've seen them there, meaning that the banks were further from the viewing tracks than normal, though with the scope we still obtaining some good views. Plenty of duck were scattered across the water surface, though were sheltering on the west side, mostly out of the wind and choppy water. Northern shoveler made up the bulk, with plenty of mallard, Eurasian teal and dapper Eurasian wigeon, too, plus much smaller numbers of Gadwall in smart fresh plumage and also single pairs of common shelduck and graceful northern pintail. Amongst the hundreds of great crested grebes, plenty of little grebes were hugging the shorelines and a couple of grey, black and white winter-plumaged black-necked grebes delighted too. Other treats included three black storks alongside their white cousins, a brief Eurasian spoonbill in flight, one great and a few little egrets, numerous white wagtails and, despite considerable searching, just one wader other than a flock of northern lapwings, with a single nervous dunlin rounding off a very rich day.

We returned in good spirits, especially since this was just the first full day of the tour, and we firmly crossed our fingers for the better weather forecast proposed for the morning. One last stop was called for close to our accommodation, where a fine ladder snake was lying prone on the road, sadly after just having been hit and killed by a passing vehicle. Strange to have found two adult snakes out on the road in late December.

### **Day 3: Monfragüe: Peña Falcón, Puente del Cardenal, Villareal de San Carlos, La Tajadilla & Portilla del Tiétar**

#### **Monday 23 December 2019**

*Weather: Chilly start & foggy in Monfragüe until about 1pm; fine later with gorgeous sunset. Max. 16°C*

Today we had a very different start to the day, with it being mainly clear and bright, though chilly.

I decided to take a back road for the first part of the journey to Monfragüe National Park, and by sheer luck, as I glanced over into a rather boring pasture of monocultured grass, so a series of small white dots stood out. We stopped, having stumbled across a superb flock of seven lovely male little bustards in the middle of the field, plus another three somewhat further away. What a start! Little bustards are suffering one of the most significant and dramatic declines of all of the steppic birds present in Spain, and are becoming hard to find, despite still being abundant just over 20 years ago. A family of common cranes stalked through the same field, with a few more flying over later. A merlin went fast over and a pale common buzzard with a white patch on the back had me thinking of Bonelli's eagle for a few moments until it dropped down to hunt and came back up in a better pose.

Low cloud or fog was clinging to the ridgetops as we approached the park, turning the sky pale grey and diffusing out anything above the height of a low high-rise block. This hadn't deterred a few griffons from moving about though, using currents of air freshening as they funnelled through the narrow gap, carved out by the Tagus, in front and even below us. Indeed, several birds were already actively in breeding mode, coming down to the grassy slopes where they tore out beakfuls of grass and sometimes small twigs in order to line their nests. Flying back across to the towering cliffs of Peña Falcón opposite, they disappeared into the sheltered ledges and a few little caves where they were often met by their respective mates. Nesting starts very early with these birds, and this was a clear indication of imminent egg-laying. Indeed, the noisy mating procedure of these birds as they grunt-hiss repeatedly could readily be heard from where we stood.



A single cinereous vulture perched on the slopes opposite, though took flight as soon as we had set the scope up. This and another then circled low through the gap before effortlessly drifting off for good. A few smaller birds were around too, though tough to see well in the chilly conditions, including several blackcaps feeding on the wild olives, five fly-over hawfinches, singing Eurasian wren and a few song thrushes. A red kite, relatively unusual just here, drifted through before we left.

Another stop overlooking the river was rather quieter, but a fine male black redstart appeared on an old bridge below us. A couple of the group managed to spot a fine male blue rock thrush before it dashed off behind cover below us and a total of seven more hawfinches went over, or in front, with one perching long enough for most to see well.

A comfort break was calling, so we headed into Villareal de San Carlos, where after a warming drink in a small bar we made a visit to the visitor centre to watch a short film about the park in (pretty good) English.

Lunch was going to be late, but we headed off again, pausing as numerous vultures started circling over the road as the breaking cloud was allowing thermals to form. Indeed, around 80 griffon and eight cinereous vultures were circling over a ridge to one side and amongst them was a big prize, a large adult Bonelli's eagle, one of a regularly pair which nests quite close to here. A Eurasian jay was briefly spotted flying amongst the trees opposite, while a common kingfisher was heard way down on the river below us.

Lunch! We finally made it to the northern edge of the park at the famous Portilla del Tiétar viewpoint. A chill breeze was blowing despite the sun, so many headed into the little stone hide for shelter, disturbing a remarkably large horseshoe bat which had clearly taken up temporary residence there. Sadly, despite hanging up briefly again, it soon disappeared, but it was almost undoubtedly a greater horseshoe bat, a very rare species in the UK and difficult to see here too. The birds outside weren't bad either, with the constant to-ings and fro-ings of numerous griffon vultures, with many resting on the cliffs opposite, nearly double figures of impressive cinereous vultures circling off to one side, a 'barking' Spanish imperial eagle somewhere, but which refused to show itself, and a few more woodland and forest birds, including Iberian magpies, the local rather dark long-tailed tits, and a couple of annoyed Eurasian jays, rasping from the trees opposite. A single blue rock thrush showed to one or two people, as did a brief rock bunting, but a calling common sandpiper, uncommon here midwinter, was working its way along the water's edge and was seen well.

A wooded area nearby, including a fine stand of cork oaks held a few new birds for us, including a couple of calling Eurasian nuthatches, a short-toed treecreeper, more lovely long-tailed tits, and a pair of Sardinian warblers; two western marsh harriers, unusual here, flew overhead and a fine adult Spanish imperial eagle was finally spotted perched in the shade of a tree on the slope above. Though another planned pause at a comfort stop was thwarted with the bar being closed, at least we could enjoy a number of hind and young red deer feeding on the fresh grass under the cork oaks. A lovely sight!

We returned with a short walk in the little patch of pine plantation in the middle of the park. Despite hearing their typical trills, a couple of European crested tits refused to come into view, though a noisy coal tit, a much scarcer visitor here, did show well! Another calling short-toed treecreeper, a brief great spotted woodpecker, European robin and a couple more Sardinian warblers added to the mix.

We stopped again briefly twice during our return. First for me to remove a beautiful, quite large and very feisty horseshoe whip snake from the middle of the road where it was basking (but risked imminent death from being run over), and then again at the Peña Falcón viewpoint, though nothing new was present apart from three rock sparrows, which a couple of the group managed to see in flight as they leapt off the rock face and dashed off across the river.

As for the next few days, a small bat or two were noticed feeding around the buildings around dusk, highlighting just how relatively warm the weather was.

## Day 4: Belén Plain, Cabañas del Castillo & Trujillo

Tuesday 24 December 2019

*Weather: Beautiful, sunny, still & warm. Max. 19°C, though dropping again late afternoon*

A beautiful clear start with a lovely sunrise at breakfast got the day off to a cracking start.

We took an easy route for the day, starting from Trujillo and then went slowly out east over the well-known Belén Plain, which forms part of the huge area of agristeppe stretching from here across to Cáceres and beyond. We cruised slowly along the very good road (despite warning signs of a bad road surface) enjoying a large number of the commoner birds of the region, including numerous meadow pipits, corn buntings and common stonechats on the wires, but there were plenty of more special birds present too. Frequent red kites were either still on their roosting perches or starting to wander across the plains, while four large male great bustards powered across in flight, with another singleton later. The first of two Iberian grey shrikes graced a fence, while a pair of little owls on the remains of an old building gave great views in the bright light and a tiny zitting cisticola also graced another section of fence, staying long enough to give us great views from inside the minibus. Any number of crested larks were moving around, while at least one was actually a very similar streaky Thekla's, one flock was Eurasian skylarks, while small numbers of noisy calandra larks moved back and forth as well. The small pools on the plains here were not very interesting today, but still attracted a great cormorant, black-headed gull and several Spanish terrapins hauled out on another, but best of all was where a farmer had clearly dumped a dead sheep or two into a small hollow and dozens of griffon and cinereous vultures were going in to feed, or loafing around. Indeed, there were almost 90 griffons and at least 18 cinereous vultures to enjoy, as well as circling red kites and plenty of playful common ravens as well, making a fantastic sight.

We finally moved on, and drove through the narrow streets of a small village before heading off, deliberately slowly, through a fine area of open *dehesa*. This turned up trumps, with three fieldfares, a rather rare and erratically occurring winter visitor here – these were flying just above the treetops and off to one side, parallel with us and allowing some of the party to see their colours clearly before they turned, now with a mistle thrush in tow for comparison, before heading off northwards. We stopped too late in a more open area to see or hear them again, but did find a few woodlarks singing here, as hoped, as 'compensation'.

It was really quite warm when we hit the bottom of the Villuercas Mountains. We stopped briefly to take a quick look over the lovely small Río Almonte. Everything seemed very quiet, though one of the group won first prize with a brief white-throated dipper, which came out from under the bridge, bobbed on a rock mid-stream for a moment or two, then disappeared off upstream. A flighty grey wagtail was another classic bird of these areas of small rapids on a clearwater river.

Following reports of a wallcreeper at a site nearby, we continued up to the little hamlet of Cabañas del Castillo, which nestles under two prominent rock outcrops and has terrific views out over the surrounding countryside. It is admittedly a rather steep, though short, walk up towards the small 'pass', but the rocky terrain proved too much for most of the group, so we spread out to find ourselves comfortable spots to have our picnics and just enjoyed the balmy conditions. One of the group had asked earlier whether common house martins are normally present here in winter and this was settled with a yes, as one flew around amongst a small group of Eurasian crag martins, despite me saying that the latter were the norm! Several black restarts were on the rocks along with a number of blue rock thrushes, and calling blackcaps, blackbirds and European robins were numerous in the old olive orchards, but very hard to spot. Single calling great spotted woodpecker and Eurasian nuthatch were heard too, while a couple of rock buntings were present on the far side. The warmth had also pulled out some butterflies, and both large tortoiseshell and red admiral were present, both of which hibernate as adults and can be activated by warm weather.

After a drinks break in a small village en route, we returned across the plains to Trujillo where most of the group spent a couple of hours wandering around this fine small city before returning to our accommodation for a hot shower, and then abundant dinner to celebrate Christmas Eve.

## **Day 5: Monroy Road, Santa Marta de Magasca, Alcollarín Reservoir & Palazuelo rice fields**

**Wednesday 25 December 2019**

*Weather: A lovely cool start with a warm afternoon, despite thin high cloud. Max. 18°C*

We started off with a fine sunrise over breakfast where I handed out a little present for everyone in the group. Well, it was Christmas Day!

The agristeppe was looking fantastic, with a billiard table-like sward of tight, bright green fresh grass, broken occasionally by the little, angled shale outcrops often referred to locally as 'dogs' teeth'. Our first stop on a slightly higher mound gave views out over the surrounding fields where good numbers of small birds including calandra and Eurasian skylarks, crested larks and corn buntings were moving around, with a couple of the latter, as well as a fine Iberian grey shrike perched on the wires for good telescope views. Even a few raptors were about, though it was too early for thermals, and the two cinereous vultures which had clearly roosted on the ground off to one side of the road bounded or galloped off over the ridge to get out of sight and a couple of common buzzards adorned 'teeth'. Two single little owls were great to see out too, basking in the early sunshine after a chilly night, one which would have been perfectly camouflaged on its favourite dry-stone wall if it hadn't been silhouetted.

It was still quite chilly, so we birdwatched from the vehicle as we cruised slowly along this quiet back road, stopping occasionally for meadow pipits, or common stonechats or another Iberian shrike or two as we continued. We finally dropped down into a quite narrow gorge carved out over eons by a small river winding its way across this otherwise rather flat landscape. The slopes support good stands of wild olive and western holm oak trees, and provide home to quite a different range of species present on the open steppe above. A couple of firecrests called from the trees, but remained hidden, while Sardinian warblers, great tits, common chiffchaffs and common chaffinches were present, though it was a couple of eye level Eurasian crag martins which attracted our attention most. A couple of singing woodlarks remained unseen, as did a calling dunno, but a fly-over hawfinch was at least visible to a few.

A comfort break and drinks stop was called for and taken in the nearby village of Santa Marta de Magasca. Once finished, and after a quick look at the square (including a discussion about the oranges falling off the trees, as they are generally ornamental here in northern Extremadura and usually with the flesh too dry for eating), we decided to finally go to a site which I was hoping would provide us with the best chances of the four of the most iconic birds of the steppic habitats.

It was now less chilly in the strengthening sun as we turned off down an empty track, which was a good start. One of the tricks to birding these big areas successfully is knowing songs and calls, and indeed, almost immediately, above the 'twisling' calandra larks I could hear the 'barking' of pin-tailed sandgrouse in flight. They were difficult to locate, staying against the sun before dropping down beyond the nearest ridge, so we were back to square one. Not to worry though, as some concerted scanning produced a small flock of fine European golden plovers on the nearby slopes and a large solitary male great bustard stalked along the skyline before finally dropping out from our view. Much better to check the opposite side with the light behind us and indeed, out amongst a stony patch in a field a group of colourful pin-tailed sandgrouse was creeping across the ground, occasionally looking up to show us their colourful head and breast markings as well. A few then started moving and others came over from behind, revealing about 50 in total. A single much chunkier black-bellied sandgrouse then flew past us, giving good views in flight before it cruised off over a ridge and disappeared.

We rounded off with a good look at the raptors here, with dozens of red kites circling up over a valley off to the west of our position, but a large blackish shape in the crown of a huge Eucalyptus turned out to be a perched adult Spanish imperial eagle and real bonus. A couple of small flocks of 'pigeons' going over turned out to be stock doves too, a relatively scarce and overlooked winter visitor to the region.

We continued for a 'proper' visit to the Alcollarín reservoir where we could eat our picnics at tables and watch the birds close by. We hadn't planned on meeting another birding group there, but by staggering our stops and picnic times, we largely avoided clashing. Indeed, a quick look near the start produced four fine Kentish and a single greater ringed plover on the shallow drying shore, as well as large numbers of mixed waterfowl today spread widely out across the water in the nearly dead calm conditions. A few smaller birds including a zitting cisticola, crested larks and both common linnets and European serins together, enabling a little bit of ID testing, were also much in evidence. The warmth of the sun was also very evident out on a small mound, which we were using to gain height to look over the water, when I spotted the first of a few small white butterflies – green-striped whites. These are becoming very much scarcer now, compared to just 10 or 15 years ago, but are not uncommon in winter, albeit normally in late January, and this was a month earlier. Great views of one of this rather flighty species were had in the scope before it skipped off for good.

Moving round to the lunch spot, with a brief black stork and two great egrets of most note on the way, we decided to eat first, since it was already quite late, though one or two couldn't resist the allure of walking down to look over the adjacent small reservoir and check its birdlife. It was fun, since several of us knew people in the other group. The other guides also let me know of a pair of distantly circling golden eagles just as we were finishing, which we just about managed to see in the scope before they dropped from sight. I returned the favour to the other group by picking up a circling adult Bonelli's eagle shortly afterwards, which we all enjoyed as well before finally leaving them shortly after 3 o'clock.

Unable to spot a pied avocet which had been reported here for the past couple of days, and seeing that little had changed since our previous visit, we decided to try our luck in the rice fields to the south instead. Indeed, the heavy rain just prior to the trip had left excellent conditions in some of the paddies and, given the dry sunny conditions since, the tracks were readily negotiable. We headed out from one of the small agricultural villages and its huge rice silos, where hundreds of Spanish sparrows fed on spilt grain and rested on the fences, while nearby in a scrubby ditch, squeaking red avadavats and tweeting common waxbills sped about before dropping down into the vegetation to hide at the first chance. Where Africa meets India!

We cruised the tracks, looking for signs of fields with gulls, waders or ducks, though very little was flying around to give us any clues. Common cranes are always a thrill, and several hundred were present, with groups moving over later in the afternoon forming a lovely sight, as did small family parties stalking through the maize stubble, or 'ankle' deep in the paddies. A few wet fields were noted, though a wintering gull-billed tern 'evaporated' into thin air as quickly as it appeared, while a few common shelduck highlighted a good area and the fun began. Northern lapwing were scattered throughout, while a couple of wet pools held a large flock of over 30 common greenshank (usually seen in ones or twos elsewhere), a couple of great egrets kept their distance, a common redshank called and a flock of small waders, seen against the light, was difficult to distinguish as little stints or dunlins. At least the three Eurasian curlews – which were first heard, then seen – stalking around some drier fields, were easier. Two flocks of glossy ibis, a usually scarce species just here went over, though were clearly undecided where they should end up. A couple of Eurasian hoopoes were admired as ever, while amongst the regular western marsh harriers, two hen harriers were spotted, an adult male giving nice prolonged views, and a merlin sped over at one point as well. Small birds as we zig-zagged through the fields kept us on our toes too, including more avadavats and waxbills, common chiffchaffs, a common stonechat or two and, best of all, a couple of water pipits; and speeding along the tracks before diving into cover, were a couple of wintering bluethroats. A common kingfisher that was perched on the side of a small irrigation channel provided a fine splash of colour and tiny zitting cisticolas kept us on our toes as they flitted beside the tracks.



We returned a little later than planned, having made a brief stop on the edge of the road en route in order to hear the curious soft piping of the Iberian midwife toads which live along a tiny temporary stream line, sounding for all the world like a chorus of tiny scops owls.

It was an excellent finale to the day and we still had time to relax and shower before Christmas dinner!

## **Day 6: Puerto de Miravete, Jaraicejo, Río Almonte & Arrocampo reservoir**

**Thursday 26 December 2019**

*Weather: Cool start & foggy north of the mountains; largely fine & very sunny; max. 19°C*

There was another lovely sunrise at breakfast and we decided to head off north to the Arrocampo reservoir, which was created to cool the core of the adjacent Almaraz nuclear power station. Despite being long overdue for closure, the power station is still in use and the reservoir's waters consequently are constantly very warm year-round. This is great for some wildlife, and it attracts wintering little bitterns and the occasional squacco heron as a direct consequence; however, it also means that during periods of cold weather with stable conditions, intense banks of fog can form nightly, or indeed even persist for weeks if conditions permit. And so it was that as we descended after exiting the tunnel traversing the Miravete ridge, we hit dense fog. It was clearly unworkable, so once we'd back-tracked to the Miravete Pass, where in the sunny conditions we could see down over the sea of fog in the valley to the north, we went for a short walk along a sloping track. It was generally very quiet, but over 100 Eurasian crag martins were perching and wheeling around the mast on the hilltop and a few great and Eurasian blue tits called from the scrub and bushes where a calling Dartford warbler gave us the slip. A couple of wintering dunnocks could be heard peeping from the undergrowth, while some of us were lucky to see a fine rock bunting and then a female cirl bunting, while male cirl sang unseen from the trees somewhere.

We tried our luck further down on an area resembling open heath, though eventually continued down into a tiny valley with huge, twisted cork oaks. An Iberian grey shrike graced the wire close to where we parked, a Dartford warbler called as we headed out, and a couple of flighty Thekla's larks went over, but only the shrike really gave us views. The birds in the woodland were thin on the ground too, but brief views were had of a short-toed treecreeper and a Eurasian nuthatch pair called loudly ahead before vanishing. The return walk was a little better, with more flighty views of a couple of Dartford warblers and a fine singing woodlark on a wire, well seen in the scope. It was only once we were on the move again in the car that a superb male Dartford warbler popped up onto some dry twigs just beyond the fence, then went up into a cork oak for a minute or so before dropping down again and into the same twigs, where it again showed for a few moments before flitting off for good.

A comfort stop and drinks break at a motorway services station nearby was very welcome and with little apparent change in the weather we headed off for lunch nearby at a spot overlooking the lovely Río Almonte at 'Three Bridges'. This turned out to be an excellent choice, since before we could even get there, we noticed a mass of vultures in a field adjacent to the road and with an ideal viewing spot – from within the vehicle – about 60 metres away. Dozens of griffon vultures were squabbling over a dead sheep as we pulled in to take a look, while slightly warier cinereous vultures kept their distance at the top of the field. Our presence put off some of the birds, but the hungriest came down and it was fun to watch their antics, either gliding directly in to drop onto the backs of those already feeding, or bounding in aggressively with neck arched forwards and wings outstretched; a few more serious squabbles erupted, with pecks and clawing going on, plus subsequent chases.

Our lunch was calling though, and in order to leave them in peace we continued down towards the river, giving us the chance to look out from the old toll bridge itself, both for birds along the watercourse and amongst the adjacent scrubby hillsides. Helpfully, this spot had a huge new covered picnic table, which we put to good use, even if the sun on our backs was almost too strong. A small group of common cranes flew

along the upper edge of the valley where mixed groups of griffon and cinereous vultures circled up and then moved away. A couple of Eurasian sparrowhawks, at least two red kites and even a peregrine joined them at different times, while smaller birds were abundant too, including a couple of fine Thekla's larks, European stonechats, several black redstarts, one grey and a few white wagtails, plus the odd common linnet and European serin to add to the diversity. One of the group picked up both a Dartford warbler and a pair of blue rock thrushes just up the road, as well as a few butterflies on the wing, including clouded yellow, small white and painted lady, showing just how unseasonably warm it was. An Iberian water frog called briefly from in the river somewhere, plus a few small Spanish terrapins hauled out on waterside stones were further testament to the relative seasonal warmth

The best was to wait until last though, when we took a last good long look from the bridge and I scanned a long way up river hoping for a kingfisher. OTTER! A large dog Eurasian otter was fishing in one of the large shallow pools upriver and surfacing regularly, allowing us turns at the scope to get really great looks. Indeed, it continued fishing (or could it be crayfishing?) for long enough for a nearby grey heron to fly over and try to get closer. The heron was clearly either trying to take advantage of the otter disturbing prey towards the shore, or to directly steal some of it, paralleling it up the bank as it moved. Interestingly, this is an association recently described for common kingfishers in Spain, though the kingfishers apparently fish as much for the scraps lost by the feeding otters as much as catching small fish disturbed by them. Most of us decided to walk round on the good road to try to get better views, which we did, eventually having to leave the otter to feed peacefully just as it, and the heron, disappeared up round the last bend in the river. Even the jubilant walk back to the minibus was enlivened by a couple of fresh small coppers on the wing, gleaming like orange jewels in the grass when they landed to sun themselves.

With the afternoon moving on, it was now or never, so we got back on the motorway and headed for the Arrocampo reservoir. Fog was still rising from the water as we approached, but thankfully it was a thin wall, which we went through and under and quickly emerged into much better conditions. We were just in time to spot a fabulous adult black-winged kite on a post beside the road. This moved down the power line a little way and sat briefly as we got into position, but it was typically flighty and moved off as soon as we tried to get out for photos, but not before giving excellent views.

The tracks were in a better state than I'd thought, so we headed off towards one of the little hides, and walked slowly around a raised area adjacent to the extensive bulrush beds, hoping for some activity. A cryptic common snipe dozed at the back, with a brief common kingfisher flashing past at speed, its electric blue back leaving a trail across our retinas. Calling purple swamphens, common moorhens, common coots and water rails could be heard occasionally from the thick vegetation, with one of the former climbing up to give brief views to a few of the group, while the harsh 'chatter' from a little bittern was heard a few times as well. Flycatching common chiffchaffs and noisily singing Cetti's warblers kept us alert, but we soon decided to move to another spot (which had a raised hide) to try our luck there.

A pool off to the left as we approached the second site appeared empty, but with patience we noticed a few birds, including single green and common sandpipers, and amongst mallard on the small reservoir opposite, a pair of feral Egyptian geese. The lack of wildfowl in particular meant a hasty retreat and we returned to the main area near the village, but then continued to where a large egret roost has been forming for years, to wait until dusk. A small group of Spaniards birdwatching from the ramp into the hide meant we carried on to an alternative viewpoint instead, and again spent time listening to the sounds emanating from the dense bulrush beds, such as little bittern, purple swamphen and water rail, though we had a couple of brief views of the swamphens as they clumsily flapped low over the vegetation before dropping quickly down out of sight. Indeed, it's odd to think that these birds can migrate long distances effectively. Small numbers of Eurasian reed buntings were coming in to roost, with one or two giving short views as they swayed at the tops of the bulrushes, and good numbers of western cattle egrets passed over, but clearly on their way to a roost some way off down the reservoir. A single glossy ibis circled over before heading off, while one great egret also put in a brief show before plunging into the vegetation for good. Western marsh harriers quartered occasionally, plus single Eurasian sparrowhawk passed through in the

hopes of snatching something and a lovely merlin also cruised over, the latter unusual just here, but probably also hoping to find small birds coming to roost!

We left shortly before dusk, returning to enjoy a stunning sunset along most of the route south of the tunnel as we progressed, with the sky turning fiery red then purple and, finally, a cold ash-grey just after we'd arrived back. It was a fine end to another very rewarding day.

## **Day 7: Alcollarín Reservoir & Palazuelo rice fields**

**Friday 27 December 2019**

*Weather: Very fine & largely sunny with some light cloud; cool start, but warming later. 5-18°C*

This was our last day of birdwatching. In order to try to see a wide range of species, including some of the typical species here again (especially common cranes), plus give us the greatest chance of some new species without travelling too far, we headed straight back towards the Alcollarín reservoir.

We checked both sides of the reservoir this time, including going around the back of the upper part, taking our time to enjoy the wide variety of species present. Indeed, after a good start with thousands of northern shoveler, mallard, Eurasian teal, gadwall, Eurasian wigeon, great crested and little grebes, five Kentish plovers and single little ringed and common ringed plovers, a scan over the treetops revealed a pair of adult Bonelli's eagles perched in the crown of a tree close to the main track. After a quick look we rapidly drove round to get a better look, only to have the bad luck that just as we stopped and were about to get out to take a look with the scope from an adequate distance, two hunters stopped in their car right underneath the birds, one then got out and they flushed, never to be seen again! Arghhh!

Indeed, the birds seemed quite flighty today, with the four black storks at the start disappearing quickly, a Eurasian spoonbill in flight dropping down to feed behind a bank but then doing a Houdini act, and the white storks and small numbers of little egrets all keeping their distances. However, there was a wide range of numerous (mainly small) birds to keep us occupied as well, including Eurasian hoopoes, common kingfishers, Iberian grey shrike, Iberian magpie, common raven, crested and Eurasian skylarks, black redstart, European stonechat, European goldfinch, European serin and Sardinian warbler, amongst others, to keep us satisfied.

We took our picnic lunch at a local bar, enjoying drinks in the process, and it was warm enough for most of us to even be out at a table on the patio.

The rest of the afternoon was taken up with a convoluted trundle through the rice fields again, with the hope of seeing one or two new birds, as well as enjoying the good numbers and wide range of species which now associate with this otherwise very alien habitat in the region (even though rice has now been mechanically harvested here for several decades). Indeed, one of the first birds was Eurasian tree sparrow, with a strong flock on the fences beside us, though they were a little jumpy, being mixed in with the mobile Spanish sparrows. Repeated scanning and some short walks produced nine species of wader, including Kentish and European golden plovers, dunlin, Eurasian curlew and our first common redshank, plus excellent numbers of egrets and herons. This was particularly true when we came across a tractor mashing the rice straw back into a paddy, followed by a seething mass of black-headed gulls, western cattle egrets, white storks and little egrets, plus smaller numbers of great egret and grey heron, all looking for frogs and red signal crayfish exposed amongst the churning mud. Flocks of bugling cranes were present in some of the paddies, while a superb group of great bustards were loafing about in two groups in arable fields just above the paddies. The irrigation channels here are always worth checking too, and after noticing some spraint on the top of a channel, Eurasian otter tracks were noticed in the fine layer of sediment on the bottom of the channel lining, plus numerous remains of red signal crayfish, particularly their claws, one of their main prey items.

A few raptors were present, including red kite, western marsh and hen harriers, plus a couple of common kestrels, and as expected, a rich array of smaller birds was noted too. These included plentiful red avadavats and common waxbills, a surprise yellow-crowned bishop – another introduced bird slowly expanding its range east through the rice fields from Portugal – a couple of water pipits, crested larks and a few Eurasian hoopoes ... while two of the best birds were kept until late.

A search for bluethroat finally revealed one flying along a track. It dived into cover beside the track and then double-backed on us as we approached. Another, briefly in front of us, disappeared into a much thicker area of vegetation and so we stopped for a good look. It dropped into an irrigation channel, but then disappeared as well. As we waited for it to reappear, a dumpy straw-coloured bird appeared briefly on the edge of the channel before doubling back into the grass. Again we waited patiently and, to our amazement and delight, a male common quail popped out, teetered on the edge of the concrete channel, then after a slight pause sprang clean across the gap before disappearing into the grass on the other side. This was fantastic, not only because it had given such prolonged views, but because it was a lifer for one of the group, who'd heard many over the years but never seen one. The icing on the cake was to notice the bluethroat out on the sunny near side of a bank between paddies, preening itself behind thin vegetation. In the scope, it occasionally took some time to see, but performed well and finally gave us all good views, including hopping along under the shelter of the vegetation, very like a nightingale does. This corner was clearly something a little more special than much of the rest too, with a tiny mole cricket fished out of a small pool of water where it was haplessly 'swimming' around and shown to the group, and one of the group also noticed a large insect fly up and across in front of us – a stripy-eyed Egyptian grasshopper.

We finally called it a day quite early in order to return in time for people to relax and pack (in part), though driving through more fields en route meant one more stop for some lovely black-winged stilts in a paddy beside the road, making a fine ending to the day.

#### **Day 8: Transfer via Embalse de Valdecañas & lunch; later to Madrid**

**Saturday 28 December 2019**

*Weather: Rather fine & sunny again*

After the usual 8am breakfast, bags went down to the minibus and we were away at 9.15am. After dropping two members of the group off at the Trujillo bus station, as they were staying on for another week split between Cáceres and Toledo, we started our return drive, with a little bit of time to 'kill'.

We turned off towards the huge Valdecañas reservoir, at probably its lowest levels since it was originally flooded following the dry 2018/19 winter and subsequent drought until late October, and headed off down a track then across the grassy sandy ridges which are normally under water. The still cool, but sunny, conditions were perfect for long distance scoping, and apart from a few waterfowl, including eight common shelduck and over 130 greylag geese grazing the grass (remarkably, our first for the tour), our last new species was a rather off-course, whitish, immature greater flamingo which stood, almost forlornly, on the edge of the water, probably pondering where it should really be (even though they now breed in central Spain less than 100 kilometres from here).

We soon headed back to the main road and with my wife making arrangements for us, reached a bistro bar and restaurant west of Madrid at exactly 1pm, as hoped. We sat down to mixed tapas, plus, in a couple of cases, an extra dish or two of freshly cooked Spanish food. One o'clock in the afternoon is early for lunch in Spanish terms, but it meant that we could leave perfectly on time for the remaining 45-minute drive to the airport for the respective flights home. We made our farewells outside T4.

# Checklist



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	<b>BIRDS</b>	<b>AVES</b>								
1	Common quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>							✓	
2	Red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>			✓		✓	✓		
3	Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>								Int.
4	Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>								✓
5	Egyptian goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
6	Northern shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		✓			✓		✓	
7	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		✓			✓		✓	
8	Eurasian wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>		✓					✓	
9	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	Northern pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		✓					✓	
11	Eurasian teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓			✓		✓	
12	Great bustard	<i>Otis tarda</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓	
13	Little bustard	<i>Tetrax tetrax</i>			✓					





14	Pin-tailed sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles alchata</i>					✓			
15	Black-bellied sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles orientalis</i>		✓			✓			
16	Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
17	Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>					✓			
18	Common wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
19	Eurasian collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Water rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					H	H		
21	Western swampen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>						✓		
22	Common moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>						✓		
23	Eurasian coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>		✓				✓	✓	
24	Common crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
26	Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		✓			✓		✓	
27	Black-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		✓						
28	Greater flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>								✓
29	Black-winged stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		✓					✓	
30	Northern lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	European golden plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>		✓			✓		✓	
32	Common ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>					✓			

33	Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>							✓	
34	Kentish plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>					✓		✓	
35	Eurasian curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					✓		✓	
36	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓			✓		✓	
37	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>						✓	✓	
38	Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			✓			✓	✓	
39	Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
40	Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>					H		✓	
41	Common greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓	
42	Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
43	Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
44	Black stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓	
45	White stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
46	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Glossy ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>					✓	✓		
48	Eurasian spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>							✓	
49	Little bittern	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>						H		
50	Western cattle egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	
51	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

52	Great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
53	Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓			✓		✓	
54	Black-winged kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>						✓		
55	Griffon vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Cinereous vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
57	Spanish imperial eagle	<i>Aquila adalberti</i>			✓		✓			
58	Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>					✓			
59	Bonelli's eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>			✓		✓		✓	
60	Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓		
61	Western marsh harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
62	Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	✓				✓		✓	
63	Red kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
65	Little owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>			✓	✓	✓			
66	Eurasian hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
67	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		H	H		✓	✓	✓	
68	Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>			✓	✓				
69	Common kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
70	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓		

71	Peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				✓		✓		
72	Monk parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	✓							
73	Iberian grey shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
74	Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			✓			✓		
75	Iberian magpie	<i>Cyanopica cooki</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
76	Eurasian magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
77	Western jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
78	Northern raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
79	European crested tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>			H					
80	Eurasian blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
81	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
82	Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>				✓	H	✓	H	
83	Eurasian skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
84	Thekla's lark	<i>Galerida theklae</i>		✓		✓		✓		
85	Crested lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
86	Calandra lark	<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
87	Eurasian crag martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
88	Common house martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>				✓				
89	Cetti's warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>		H			H	✓	H	

90	Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			✓	✓				
91	Common chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
92	Zitting cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
93	Eurasian blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
94	Dartford warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>						✓		
95	Sardinian warbler	<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	
96	Common firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>			✓			H		
97	Eurasian wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			✓	✓		H		
98	Eurasian nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			H	H		H		
99	Short-toed treecreeper	<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>			✓	H		H		
100	Common starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓		✓				
101	Spotless starling	<i>Sturnus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
102	Common blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
103	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>				✓				
104	Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
105	Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				✓	H			
106	European robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	
107	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>					✓		✓	
108	Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	



109	Blue rock thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			✓	✓		✓		
110	European stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
111	White-throated dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>				✓				
112	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
113	Spanish sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
114	Eurasian tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>					✓		✓	
115	Rock sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>			✓					
116	Yellow-crowned bishop	<i>Euplectes afer</i>							✓	
117	Common waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>					✓	✓	✓	
118	Red avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>		✓			✓		✓	
119	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>				H		H		
120	Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓		
121	White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
122	Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
123	Water pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>					✓		✓	
124	Common chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	
125	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>		✓	✓		✓			
126	European greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>		✓				✓		
127	Common linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

128	European goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
129	European serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
130	Corn bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
131	Rock bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>			✓		✓			
132	Cirl bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>			✓			H		
133	Common reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>						✓		
	<b>MAMMALS</b>	<b>MAMMALIA</b>								
1	European rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>		✓	✓					
2	Greater horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>			✓					
3	Vesper bat sp	Vespertilionidae		✓	✓	✓	✓			
4	Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		✓		✓				
5	Egyptian mongoose	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	✓	✓				✓		
6	European otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>						✓		
7	Red deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>			✓					
	<b>AMPHIBIANS &amp; REPTILES</b>	<b>AMPHIBIA &amp; REPTILIA</b>								
1	Iberian midwife toad	<i>Alytes cisternasii</i>					H			
2	Natterjack toad	<i>Epidalea calamita</i>						✓		
3	Iberian water frog	<i>Pelophylax perezi</i>						H		
4	Spanish terrapin	<i>Mauremys leprosa</i>				✓		✓		

5	Horseshoe whip snake	<i>Hemorrhois hippocrepis</i>			✓					
6	Ladder snake	<i>Rhinechis scalaris</i>		✓						
7	Viperine snake	<i>Natrix maura</i>		✓						
	<b>BUTTERFLIES</b>	<b>LEPIDOPTERA</b>								
1	Small white	<i>Pieris rapae</i>						✓		
2	Green-striped white	<i>Euchlose belemia</i>					✓			
3	Clouded yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>					✓	✓		
4	Large tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>				✓				
5	Red admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				✓				
6	Painted lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>						✓		
7	Small copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>						✓		
	<b>OTHER INVERTEBRATES</b>									
1	Mole cricket	<i>Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa</i>							✓	
2	Egyptian grasshopper	<i>Anacridium aegyptiacum</i>							✓	
3	Signal crayfish (sp)	<i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i>							✓	