

CENTRAL AND NORTHERN SPAIN
MAY 2009
with
Sandwich Bird Tours



Griffon Vulture

PARTICIPANTS

Alan and Sandy Roman, John and Pauline Beard, Ed and Jean Thomas, Brian and Liz Baltera, Eileen Stimson, Jean McDermott, Nigel Lawson, Sheila Seed,

LEADERS

Eustace Barnes and John van der Dol.

ITINERARY

26th April.

Arrival at Madrid airport. Drive to Miguel Esteban and then drive to Ciudad Real. Night Ciudad Real.

27th April

Early morning departure to the nearby Cabaneros National Park and on to Trujillo. Night near Trujillo.

28th April

Early morning along roads between Monroy and Santa Marta de Magasca to see steppe birds. Night near Trujillo.

29th April

Visited Montfrague to see Imperial Eagle and Eagle Owl. We then continued to Alamaraz wetlands for the afternoon. Night near Trujillo.

30th April

Departed from Trujillo crossing the dehesa north of Oropesa. We had a late lunch in the cool pine woods in the high Gredos and then descended to Avila. Night Avila.

1st May

Morning in the Sierra de Gredos at La Plataforma. Afternoon in pinewoods lower down. Night Avila.

2nd May

Morning birding the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama near Pedraza. Afternoon visit to Canyon del Duraton. Night Puerto Sto Tome.

3rd May

Early morning at the Canyon del Duraton watching Dupont's Lark. Journey north to Jaca, stopping in Sierra de Ayllon and Bardenas Reales. Night Jaca.

4th May.

All morning at the spectacular Col du Portalet. In the afternoon we visited the woodlands at San Juan de la Pena. Night Jaca.

5th May

All morning at Gabardito. Afternoon at Belagua pass in the deep snow. Night Jaca.

6th May

Drove to Zaragoza. Birding at the El Planeron reserve followed by lunch along the Rio Ebro. Night Tortosa.

7th May.

All morning birding the Ebro delta. Afternoon drive to Barcelona airport for our flight home.



Snow at Col du Portalet in the Pyrenees.

DAILY DIARY

This trip to Spain was designed to see the birds of both the Spanish steppe and high Pyrenees. Although spring in central Spain is always best late April into early May this year was cooler than usual and there had been a very cold dry winter preceding our visit. This did provide us with good conditions for seeing migrants and late displaying birds as well as more wetland birds than usual. However, in the Pyrenees it made our search for the alpine birds more or less impossible owing to dangerous walking conditions.

After arriving in Madrid on time we drove south to Miguel Esteban, arriving at 4.30pm. We quickly picked up White-headed Duck, Black-necked Grebe, Red-crested Pochard and a good number of Greater Flamingos. There were also large numbers of Whiskered Terns and Black-winged Stilts as well as late wintering Northern Shoveler, Pochard and two drake Garganey. We then headed off to Ciudad Real for a well earned rest and good meal to celebrate the successful start of the trip.



White-headed Duck

The following morning we travelled west to the famous Cabaneros National Park. The area is generally very good for raptors and birds of the dehesa. Our first stop produced Black Vulture, Short-toed and Booted Eagles and good numbers of Kites. At every stop we found Spanish Sparrows attending the numerous White Storks nests and at one such stop we also found a pair of roosting Black-shouldered Kites which was a pleasant surprise. As we worked our way around the park we picked up Griffon Vultures and single sub-adult Imperial and Golden Eagles along with our first Woodchat Shrikes, Azure-winged Magpies and Rock Buntings. We then continued our journey to Trujillo through the rolling maquis covered hills. Our three night stay was at the cosy Casa del Recuerdo run by our good friend Martin Kelsey.



Pastoral scene near Trujillo.

The following morning after breakfast we headed off to the plains near Santa Marta de Magasca, a stunning area, excellent for steppe birds and Bustards in particular. On arrival we found up to a dozen displaying male Little Bustards, a single female Great Bustard, Black-bellied Sandgrouse and a pair of Great-spotted Cuckoos. A little further on we found a stunning male Great Bustard followed by 15 Black-bellied Sandgrouse, numerous Montagu's Harriers quartering the fields and a superb pair of sub-adult Spanish Imperial Eagles roosting in a Eucalyptus copse. These birds then wheeled around us and were in view for up to half an hour. After this magnificent spectacle we continued our route through the plains seeing huge numbers of White Storks feeding more or less throughout the area along with huge numbers of Spanish Sparrows around Santa Marta de Magasca and Monroy possibly numbering 3500. We also saw passage Whinchat among the numerous Stonechats, over 100 Lesser Kestrels and 25 Montagu's Harriers in nearby open grasslands along with a pair of Bonelli's Eagle. These superb birds then proceeded to hunt as a pair over the fields in front of us before we headed off to lunch. This behaviour is common in this species. At our lunch stop we found a pair of Black Wheatears and a pair of Bonelli's Eagles, presumably the same pair. After lunch we headed west to an extensive area where nest boxes have been placed for Roller and Lesser Kestrels. Although we did see quite a number of Lesser Kestrels and Common Kestrels we failed to find any Rollers; evidently the arrival of this species was delayed by cold weather. We then returned to Trujillo in the afternoon for a rest and a fine evening meal to celebrate the day.



Roller.

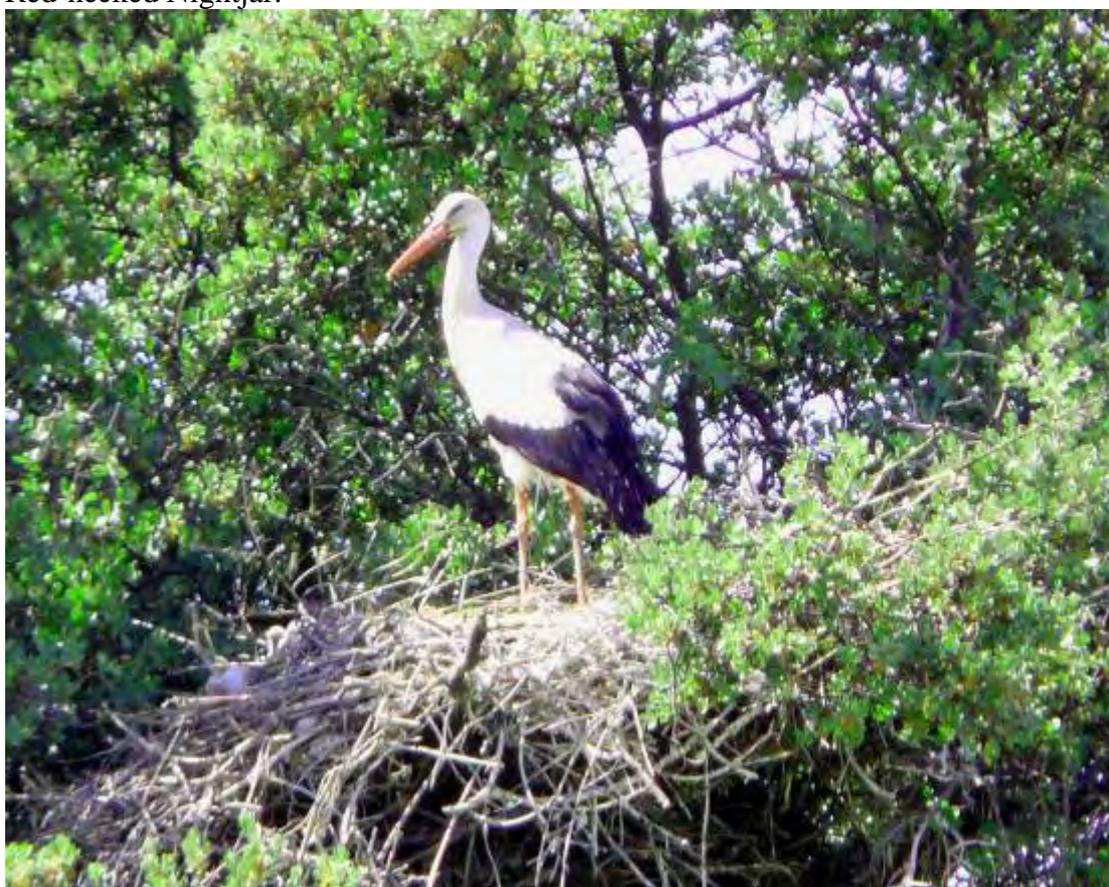
The next day started in the famous Montfrague National Park at the spectacular Penafalcon. The impressive number of Griffon Vultures at this site always provides an exciting distraction first thing in the morning. We also saw several pairs of Egyptian Vultures and two pairs of Black Storks attending their nests as well as numerous Black Vultures sailing over. The only swifts we saw were circling high above Penafalcon and only involved saw small numbers of both Alpine and Common Swifts that had just arrived.



Black Vulture.

As we worked our way through the park we found a further 12 Black Storks attending their nests and on the eastern edge of the park we saw an adult Eagle Owl, more Black Storks and many more Griffon and Black Vultures. We then headed to the Almaraz wetlands for our picnic lunch. Our field lunches always consisted of fresh baguettes, the best cheeses and cured meats, olives and fruit. The Almaraz reserve is good for Purple Swamphen, Little Bitterns, Purple Heron, Great Egret and Savi's, Great Reed and Reed Warblers, all of which we saw. This is an excellent wetland and well worth a couple of hours birding at any time of day.

In the afternoon we headed south to the rice paddies near Madrigalejos, where we saw our first Black-eared Wheatears, several pairs of Rollers and about 25 Red Avadavats before returning to Trujillo to celebrate yet another outstanding day. After dinner we took a short walk and managed to see an adult Long-eared Owl and a single Red-necked Nightjar.



White Stork on nest

Our final morning in the Trujillo area was spent exploring the plains near Santa Marta de Magasca. We saw a flock of Black-bellied Sandgrouse again and several more Great Bustards, along with good numbers of Black and Griffon Vultures and, of course, huge numbers of White Storks. We then returned to Trujillo for breakfast and prepared for our next journey to the Sierra de Gredos. Based in the spectacular medieval city of Avila we explored the high Gredos. The pine forests of this high sierra house Red Kite, Firecrest, Crested Tit, Bonelli's Warbler, Dipper, Redstart and Grey Wagtail amongst others. At higher altitudes amidst unrivalled scenery and large

numbers of Spanish Ibex, Rock and Ortolan Buntings and Rufous-tailed Rock Thrushes we had another spectacular day.



Spanish Ibex at La Plataforma.

On leaving Avila we headed for the Canyon del Duraton. This site proved to be very busy as it was Sunday but it can be one of the better areas to look for the elusive and highly localised Dupont's Lark. After some time we did manage to find a singing bird which we saw briefly.



Las Murallas de Avila



Canyon del Duraton.

The following day we returned to see at least two singing birds in the same area and managed great views of them singing and displaying. We also found Spectacled Warbler, numerous larks, Black-eared Wheatear, vultures and Chough. This area is a natural park with a very impressive deeply incised gorge cut down through Limestone and providing good breeding cliffs for the Griffon Vultures. The area is generally good for birds and we also managed to find Orphean and Subalpine Warblers, Woodlark and large numbers of raptors and Ravens.



Medieval Pedraza



Egyptian Vulture

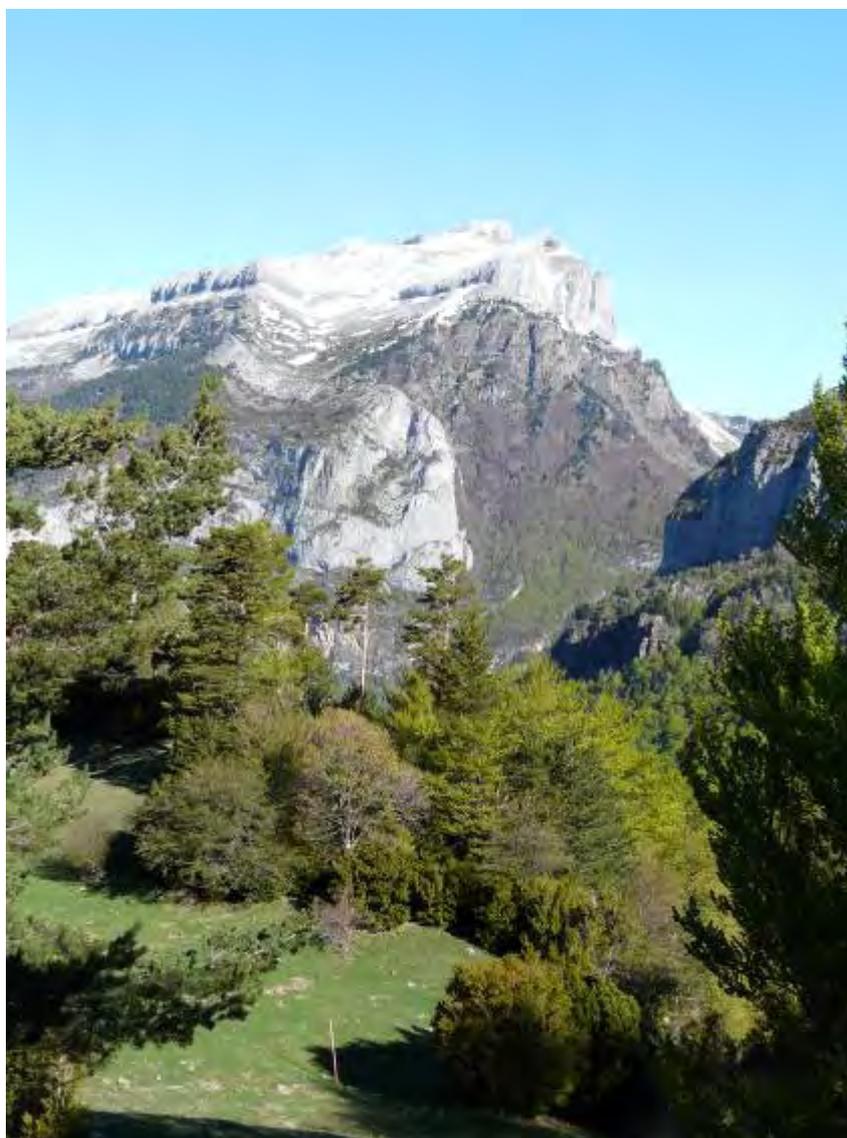
Our next journey took us north to Jaca in the Pyrenean foothills. Although long, this journey was planned to take us through some of the most pretty areas of rural Spain. These areas are unspoilt and we all enjoyed the tranquillity of rural life in the Sierra de Ayllon and Bardenas Reales. We also saw a good number of birds, including Cirl Bunting, Rock sparrow, Red-backed Shrike, Blue-rock Thrush, and our only Melodious Warblers.



Sierra de Pena.

The migration was very late this year and many species had not arrived yet. The single Red-backed Shrike we saw near Soria was the only one we saw. Normally at this time of the year they are common in the Pyrenees but we saw none there. We crossed the steppe of Bardenas Reales and found several Lesser Short-toed Larks and realised we had seen all of Spain's breeding larks in one day; quite an achievement. As is normal in Spain the whole day was filled with numerous sightings of raptors: Kites, Harriers, Buzzards and Griffon Vultures.

After a good nights sleep we headed up to Formigal anticipating extensive snows and a good chance of seeing Snow Finch near the road. It was not to be. Although there was certainly a lot of snow there was far too much of it and no chance of seeing the birds this year. Likewise the Alpine Accentors were nowhere to be found. Given the conditions the Snow Finches could have been anywhere and the Accentors thousands of feet lower poking around in gardens waiting for spring in the alpine meadows. We did see the Pyrenean form the Chamois, sometimes split as the Izard. There were numerous Alpine Marmots and a Red Fox. It was cold, the snow was very deep and we did not risk walking upslope in search of our target birds here.



Gabardito.

The following morning we drove west to the beautiful Hecho valley and climbed up to Gabardito. A short walk along a rocky trail put us beneath a towering granite cliff and we were soon rewarded with views of a male Wallcreeper. This was undoubtedly the most wanted bird of the trip and to see this bird so well was very satisfying. We heard the bird sing and were all able to watch it through the scope. On our return to the car park we saw three Honey Buzzards and two Lammergeiers over the valley. In the old beech woods we enjoyed seeing the Eurasian Treecreeper and comparing it with the more common Short-toed Treecreeper. The weather was fine and after another field lunch we headed off to Belagua for some high altitude birding on the French border. As it was, it was very overcast and the snow lay very thick, in some places 10m drifts lined the road. We did see a few Citril Finches, a pair of Ring Ouzels and several Crossbills but no Accentors or Snow Finches.



Belagua in snow.

It was the end of another spectacular day and we headed back to the fortified village of Berdun at the base of the Anso valley. We enjoyed a drink in the old square and a great meal in Emilio's before retiring to Jaca for the night.



Old Beech tree at Gabardito.

Our next journey took us south-east to Tortosa. The journey was broken with stops at the El Planeron reserve near Belchite and a couple of sites along the Ebro. We all had great views of Penduline Tits at our lunch stop along with the usual supporting cast of raptors and vultures. We then arrived in Tortosa in good time for a rest and pleasant meal in the city centre before the locals gathered in the bars to watch the Barcelona – Chelsea match. The night was noisy and the atmosphere charged and jubilant as Barcelona pulled an equalizer out of the hat in the 91st minute. Luckily this meant that Barcelona would play Manchester United in the final and wholesale urban destruction thereby avoided.

On our final day we drove to the Ebro Delta for a full morning of birding. On arrival we spent a good deal of time looking out over a couple of huge lagoons at numerous wetland species. We added Night Heron and Squacco Heron to the list but there were also a lot of Purple Swamphens, Little Bitterns, Purple Herons, Great Egrets, Red-crested Pochards, Greater Flamingos and both Little and Great-crested Grebes. We all had good scope views of Savi's Warbler, now a very rare bird in the UK along with Great Reed and Common Reed Warblers. We then headed to the salt pans to find Slender-billed and Audouin's Gulls along with Sandwich, Gull-billed, Little, Common and Caspian Terns, the latter a pleasant and quite unexpected

surprise. We also saw Oystercatcher, Sanderling, Mediterranean Gull, 4 Collared Pratincoles and a small group of Tree Sparrows. We then enjoyed the final field lunch in a hide overlooking another huge lagoon before heading to Barcelona to catch our flight home; a process that unfolded without a hitch.

We ended the trip with a total of 203 species of birds and having covered 3468km. The combination of wildlife and landscape does make Spain the most important European country for enjoying our natural heritage. Apart from the high altitude species this trip was by far the best for the number of bird species recorded and was also the best sequence of routes between bases for landscape. However, we must not forget the mammals as we also managed to find both Spanish Ibex and Chamois (Izard) making this the best trip for mammals as well. Quite how we can improve the trip I don't know. Possibly find an access point to alpine meadows in the Pyrenees for Ptarmigan or a Capercaillie lek in Cantabria.



Audouin's Gull.

TRIP LIST.

A total of 203 compared to 181 on the 2007 tour.

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) Up to 40 seen at the SEO reserve near Miguel Esteban on La Mancha south of Madrid. This reserve holds one of the largest colonies in Europe of this pretty little Grebe with 220 pairs.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) A few seen at Miguel Esteban and in the Ebro Delta.

Great-crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) Seen at the Almaraz reserve, near Madrigalejos, and in the Ebro Delta.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) 1 near Candeleda and a few in the Ebro Delta.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) Three pairs at Miguel Esteban and several pairs in the Ebro Delta.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) Small numbers throughout.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) A few seen throughout.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) Up to 20 seen at Miguel Esteban.

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) 3 seen at Miguel Esteban. Common in the Ebro Delta.

White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) About 6 seen at Miguel Esteban. This is a highly localised and rather uncommon species.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) 2 drakes seen at the Miguel Esteban reserve.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) Fairly common.

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) Up to 10 seen at Almaraz, a single bird at Miguel Esteban and in the Ebro Delta.

Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) Seen at Belchite and a good number seen in the Ebro Delta.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) A few seen around Trujillo and in the Ebro Delta.

Great White Egret (*Casmerodius alba*) 2 seen at Almaraz Wetlands and in the Ebro Delta. This species has spread dramatically across Spain to nearly all wetland areas.

Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) Up to 15 at a nesting colony in the Ebro Delta.

Cattle Egret (*Bulbulculus ibis*) Very common throughout central Spain.

Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) A pair seen at Almaraz and in the Ebro Delta.

Spoonbill (*Platalea leucocordia*) A pair seen at Madrigalejos. A species that seems to be expanding its range in Spain.

Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) Up to 150 seen at Miguel Esteban. This species is now regular at this site. 1000 plus in the Ebro Delta.

Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) Seen at numerous sites on the Meseta near Trujillo.

White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) Common throughout.

Lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*) A pair at Gabardito.

Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) Abundant around Trujillo and in the Pyrenean foothills.

Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) A good number seen at Cabaneros and on the plains near Trujillo as well as in the Montfrague NP.

Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) Small numbers throughout.

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) 1 Cabaneros NP and another at Gabardito.

Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*) A single sub-adult at Cabaneros and a couple of sub-adults at Santas Marta de Magasca. Superb views of this very rare species.

Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) Only seen around Trujillo.

Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) Fairly common throughout.

Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*) A pair seen near Santa Marta de Magasca and probably the same pair seen along the Rio Almonte later the same morning.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) Less common than usual. The only area where good were noted was in the Sierra de Gredos.

Black Kite (*Milvus nigricans*) Very common.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) Seen at several sites from Almaraz to Bardenas Reales.

Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) Fairly common around Trujillo. Seen in small numbers elsewhere.

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) A ring-tail harrier almost certainly this species was seen near Miguel Esteban. Not counted in the overall total.

Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) A pair seen at Cabaneros NP. Excellent views of this local species in Spain.

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*).

Honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) Three seen at Gabardito.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) 1 near Santa Marta de Magasca.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*).

Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) Common in and around Trujillo.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) 1 Cabaneros, 1 Trujillo.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) Seen at several sites throughout.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*). Common.

Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) Heard at numerous sites throughout.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) Single near Cabaneros.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chlorops*).

Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*).

Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) Several seen at Almaraz. This is a species that has rapidly spread throughout Spain since a low point in the 1970's, when it was more or less restricted to the Coto Donana. Common in the Ebro Delta with up to 20 seen at one site.

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) Several males and females seen on plains around Trujillo. Excellent views of this stunning species.

Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) Fairly common around Trujillo. None seen anywhere else.

Pied Avocet (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) Common in the Ebro Delta.

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) Seen throughout.

Collared Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*) 4 seen in the Ebro Delta.

Little-ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) Seen at sites throughout.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) Seen in the Ebro Delta.

Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandinus*) Seen in the Ebro Delta.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) A few seen at Miguel Esteban and one near Trujillo.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) 5 seen in the Ebro Delta.

Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temmincki*) Common in the Ebro Delta.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) Numerous in the Ebro Delta.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleuca*) Seen in small numbers throughout.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) A few seen.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) Seen at Miguel Esteban.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostas*) 3 seen in the Ebro Delta.



Slender-billed Gulls

Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*) Common in the Ebro Delta.

Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouinii*) Abundant in the Ebro Delta.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) A few at Miguel Esteban and in the Ebro Delta.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*) 1 pair in the Ebro Delta.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus cachinnans*) A few seen around Trujillo and common in the Ebro Delta.

Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) Several small flocks in the Ebro Delta.

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) Common in the Ebro Delta.

Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilocta*) Good numbers seen south of Trujillo, at Miguel Esteban and in the Ebro Delta.

Black Tern (*Chlidonius niger*) 2 seen in the Ebro Delta.

Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonius hybridus*) Abundant at Miguel Esteban and in the Ebro Delta.

Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) 3 seen in the Ebro Delta.

Black-bellied Sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) Up to 15 seen near Santa Marta de Magasca.

Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (*Pterocles achata*) Heard only near Santa Marta de Magasca.

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*).

Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) Common throughout.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) Common.

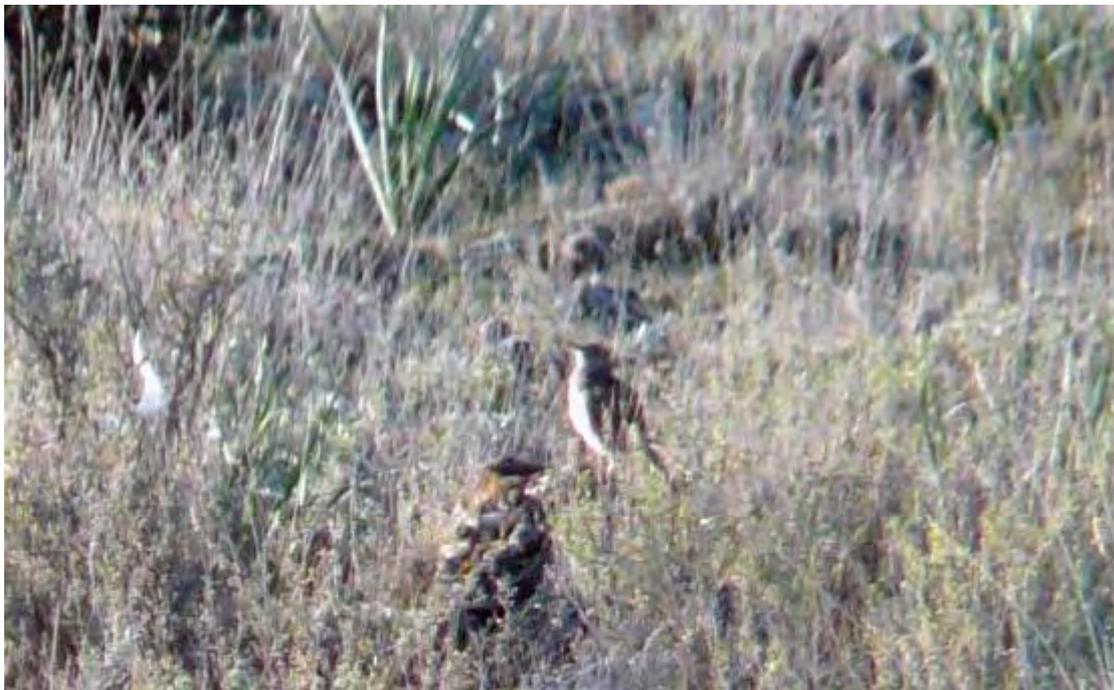
Eurasian Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Great-spotted Cuckoo (*Clamator glandarius*) Several individuals seen near Trujillo.

One pair seen mating near Santa Marta de Magasca. Often an unpredictable species.

Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*) A single adult seen at Montfrague.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio clamator*) Young heard and an adult seen near Trujillo.
 Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) 1 heard at Berdun.
 Scops Owl (*Otus scops*) Many heard at Trujillo. A single bird seen in Berdun.
 Eurasian Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) Seen during the day at San Juan de La Pena.
Red-necked Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*) A single bird seen at Trujillo and several others heard there.
 Common Swift (*Apus apus*) common.
 Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*).
 Hoopoes (*Upupa epos*) Common.
 Kingfisher (*Alcedo affinis*) Several recorded throughout.
 European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) Common.
 European Roller (*Coracicus garulus*) Up to 10 seen south of Trujillo near Zorita.
 None seen near Santa Marta de Magasca or elsewhere.
 Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridius sharpei*) Several heard throughout.
 Great-spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*) Fairly common.
 Common Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) Heard La Plataforma, Sierra de Gredos. Small numbers at Canyon del Duraton. Common in the Pyrenees.
 Crested Lark (*Alauda cristata*) Common.
 Thekla Lark (*Alauda theklae*) Fairly common.
 Woodlark (*Lullulla arborea*) Common.
 Greater Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) Seen at Canyon del Duraton and others at Bardenas Reales.
 Lesser Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella rufescens*) Seen at Bardenas Reales and in the Ebro Delta.
 Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha clandra*) Common around Trujillo. Also seen Canyon del Duraton, Bardenas Reales and El Planeron.



Dupont's Lark – record shot.

Dupont's Lark (*Chersophilus duponti*) 2 singing birds seen at Canyon del Duraton. Birds were watched at length feeding on the ground, singing from exposed rocks and intermittently giving short display flights. This is often considered a hard bird to see but at sites in the vicinity of this natural park they are extraordinarily local but not difficult to see.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) A few seen near Trujillo. A large colony noted near Soria.

Crag Martin (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) Common.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) Common. Very late flocks of migrating birds noted in the Sierra de Gredos and the Pyrenees streaming through the passes.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*) Common.

Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*) Fairly common in Extremadura.

Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) A few seen at sites throughout.

White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) 3 seen Sierra de Gredos.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) Fairly common.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) Small numbers throughout.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava ibericae*) Migratory birds found in the Sierra de Gredos and Pyrenees passing through in small flocks.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) Small numbers throughout.

Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*) Found in higher mountains.

Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*) Small numbers near Trujillo, Bardenas Reales and El Planeron.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*) Seen Cabaneros and in the Pyrenees at Formigal.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) Common.

Western Orphean Warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*) 1 pair seen at Pedraza and another at Canyon del Duraton.

Common Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) Common in the Sierra de Gredos.

Sardinian Warbler (*Sylvia melanocephala*) Very few recorded.

Subalpine warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*) Fairly common in Maquis scrub habitats.

Spectacled Warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*) Fairly common at Canyon del Duraton.

Great views of what can be an awkward customer.

Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*) 1 Sierra de Gredos and another in Montfrague.

Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidus*) Common in open areas.

Savi's Warbler (*Locustela luscinioides*) Seen at Almaraz and heard at Miguel Esteban. Several seen in the Ebro Delta.

Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) Common.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) Several at Almaraz and in the Ebro Delta.

Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) Seen and heard at Almaraz and Miguel Esteban.

Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglota*) 1 pair seen near Soria but no others.

Usually a common to abundant species at this time of year.

Chiff-chaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) 1 heard in Cabaneros NP. Normally more common.

Western Bonelli's Warbler (*Phylloscopus bonelli*) 1 seen in the Sierra de Gredos. Also found to be common in stunted oak woodlands near Soria.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*) Seen in the Sierra de Gredos, Pyrenees and other upland areas.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) 1 in the El Planeron reserve near Belchite.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) Common.
 Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) Abundant.
 Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) Common.
 Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*) 2 heard Sierra de Gredos.
 Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) A few seen in the Sierra de Gredos.
 Common in the Pyenees. Seen on migration elsewhere.
 Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*) 1 pair Trujillo, fairly common at Hoces del Duraton.
Black Wheatear (*Oenanthe lucura*) 1 pair Rio Almonte
 Whinchat (*Saxicola rubra*) Several seen near Trujillo and in the Pyrenees. This species has usually passed through at this time.
 Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) Common.
 Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*) Seen at several sites.
Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) 3 seen in the Sierra de Gredos and several in the Pyrenees. A lovely species.
 Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) 1 heard and seen in the Sierra de Ayllon. Usually only found in the Pyrenees.
 Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) Small numbers throughout.
Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) Several pairs noted at Belagua pass.
 Great Tit (*Parus major*) Fairly common.
 Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*).
 Coal Tit (*Parus ater*) Common in higher mountains.
 Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*) 1 heard at Gabardito.
 Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*) Fairly common from the Gredos northwards.
 Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*) A few throughout.
 Bearded Reedling (*Panurus biarmicus*) Small family flock heard and seen at Miguel Esteban.
Penduline Tit (*Remiz pendulinus*) A pair nest building along the Ebro river.
 Eurasian Nuthatch (*Sitta europea*) Seen in Gredos mountains and in the Pyrenees.
Wallcreeper (*Trichodroma muraria*) A singing male seen at Gabardito. Superb scope filling views of this bird were had by the whole group. Probably the overall favourite bird of the trip.
 Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*) Seen at Gabardito.
 Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*) Common.
 Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius (excubitor) meridionalis*) Fairly common in Extremadura.
 Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) 1 seen on passage south of Soria. Not seen at all in the Pyrenees, where usually common at this time of year.
 Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*) Common.
 Azure-winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyanus*) Abundant in central Spain
 Common Magpie (*Pica pica*) Abundant.
 Eurasian Jay (*Garulus glandarius*) A few seen throughout.
 Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) Fairly common.
 Red-billed Chough (*Phyrrocorax phyrrocorax*) Fairly common at Canyon del duration and in the Pyrenees.
 Alpine Chough (*Phyrrocorax graculus*) Common in the Pyrenees.
 Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*).
 Raven (*Corvus corax*) Pairs seen throughout. A group of 60 seen near Pedraza was

unusual.

Spotless Starling (*Sturna unicolor*) Common.

Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*) Heard at many sites. We did not specifically look for this species but it is common in suitable habitat.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispanicus*) Common in Cabaneros area and around Trujillo. Near Monroy we saw over 3500 birds in two separate flocks.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*) A few seen in the Ebro Delta and heard elsewhere.

Rock sparrow (*Petronia petronia*) Commonly seen in suitable habitat.

Chaffinch (*Fringila coelops*) Common throughout.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*) Seen around Trujillo and further north.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) Common.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*) 1 pair Sierra de Gredos.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*).

Citril Finch (*Serinus citrinella*) Heard in the Gredos and a few seen at Gabardito and Belagua.

Serin (*Serinus serinus*) Abundant.

Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) Seen in Cabaneros NP.

Bullfinch (*Phyrrhula phyrrhula*) A pair at San Juan de La Pena and another at Gabardito.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) In winter flocks at Formigal. An unusual sight in May when males are usually singing on breeding grounds.

Cirl bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*) A few seen in the Sierra Ayllon.

Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*) 1 seen in the Sierra de Gredos. None on the breeding slopes.

Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*) Several pairs seen throughout.

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*) Abundant

Red Avadavat (*Amandava amandava*) A flock of 25 seen near Madrigalejos.

MAMMAL LIST

A good number of mammals were seen as the cold winter and persistent snows had forced them lower.

Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) Several seen near Montfrague

Fallow Deer (*Cervus dama*) Seen near Candeleda.

Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) Several seen throughout.

Spanish ibex (*Capra hircus pyrenaica*) Common at La Plataforma in the Sierra de Gredos.

Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) 4 at Col du Portalet and another 4 at Belagua. Some authorities consider the Pyrenean populations to be a separate species the 'Izard'.

Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*) Seen around Trujillo.

Common Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) Common.

Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) 1 seen at Gabardito and another at Formigal.

Alpine Marmot (*Marmota marmota*) Common at Portalet.



Male Ibex in the Sierra de Gredos

BUTTERFLY LIST

Relatively few butterflies were seen this year as it was colder than usual.

Marsh Fritillary
Queen of Spain Fritillary
Spanish Fritillary
Clouded Yellow
Pale Clouded Yellow
Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Southern Festoon
Painted Lady
Brimstone
Dappled White
Small Heath
Speckled Wood
Moroccan Orange Tip
Orange Tip
Small Copper
Black-eyed Blue

