

THE TRAVELLING NATURALIST

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SPAIN

Secret Wilderness of Extremadura

24 September – 1 October 2016

TOUR REPORT

Leader: John Muddeman

Extremadura has long been known as a prime destination for birdwatchers, yet most visitors set their sights only on the spring, without realising that late summer and autumn (and even winter), can be just as interesting, and almost as diverse too. While some of this interest is linked to the usual pattern of rainfall, with the first autumn rains usually starting late September, freshening up the countryside after the hot summer and prompting flowering of the autumn-flowering bulbs, these rains have become more variable both in quantity and timing of appearance over the last decade. Yet the resident and migrant birds are still here. Given the vagaries of the British weather, it's also often a great time to get away and enjoy some excellent autumn sunshine, plus see a few butterflies and other examples of the rich Mediterranean fauna.

Saturday 24 September

Madrid airport – Arrocampo Reservoir – C.R. Las Canteras

A lovely warm afternoon when we met in the recently renamed Adolfo Suarez airport, Madrid. Alastair and Janice arrived early, John a few minutes later than planned, and the rest of the group 45 minutes later, given a late take-off from Heathrow. However, this meant I could hire the minibus out and get it sent from Terminal 1 to Terminal 4, just in time for our arrival there after those who wanted had taken a late light lunch in arrivals.

The very warm conditions with thin high cloud meant it was an easy drive, with very few birds visible en route. This was until we noticed the first of three black-winged kite on wires beside the motorway.

With the sun due to set just after 8 pm, once refreshed, we headed for the Arrocampo Reservoir, only to pull up and reverse back into an unused car park in order to scope one of two more black-winged kites on poles, with an adult disappearing quickly off, but a juvenile hanging around for much longer, and great views, even though it was a little flighty too at times! This stop also produced our first common stonechats and even a distant hawfinch perched in a pine, for a cracking start to the tour.

The reservoir nearby was disturbed by two young fishermen, but even so, in the dead still conditions, we could hear lots. These included harsh little bittern calls, peeping common kingfishers, one of which sped over the bulrushes, trumpeting purple swamphens, several of which appeared later and even a furtive Eurasian reed warbler. Two red-rumped swallows flew over, a tail-less Eurasian wryneck made a surprise appearance and reappearance, and grey herons and little egrets in flight kept us busy too.

Astonishingly, two more wrynecks adorned the fences as we started off in the vehicle, on giving incredible close views, both as it fed on the ground and then when it flew up on to the fence, right beside us for almost minutes!

The next hide seemed less rewarding, but four great egrets flew off as we arrived, and as the sun dipped and the sky turned red in front, a wonderful pair of common cranes flew sedately in from behind us, then elegantly across the dipping sun and slowly off over the surrounding fields... What a sight! The (tens of?) thousands of spotless starlings pouring into the reservoir from the surrounding fields formed a long line across the sky, as several purple swamphens climbed up to also watch the sun set from the tops of large tussocks in the water. What a start! OK, so we arrived at our wonderfully remote rural accommodation somewhat later than planned, but with big smiles all round. A long day it may have been for some, but VERY well worth it!

Sunday 25 September

Monroy Road, Río Almonte, Monroy, Talaván reservoir, Hinojal steppes, Cáceres steppes, Río Magasca, Monroy Road

Taking advantage of a forecast of variable cloud during the day and milder temperatures than for the rest of the week, we started with a 'steppe day'. Lots of small birds were very noticeable right from the start, and we made a couple of short stops just to 'bag' a few of these whilst looking for some of the more special birds of the region. Crested Larks, common stonechats, the first of hundreds of northern wheatears, a couple of common redstarts, southern grey shrikes and corn buntings made up the bulk, though flighty Calandra larks took some time to finally pin down and a calling black-bellied sandgrouse was also seen by a couple before it dropped down into a dip and out of sight.

A couple of zitting cisticola, a Dartford warbler 'bouncing' across the road and a flighty willow warbler were interesting additions to the growing list, though birds were generally difficult to observe once we were out of the vehicle. Not so our first griffon and cinereous vultures spiralling up on the first thermals of the day, though they remained rather distant.

The Río Almonte was reduced to a series of pools, but this was still attractive to green sandpiper and white wagtail, with a blue rock thrush singing from the rocky valley side, numerous house and a few Eurasian crag martins at a bridge and even, on a grassier patch, three little ringed plovers, though these soon took flight. A raptor circling was our second short-toed eagle of the morning, being hassled at one point by a black-winged kite! A passing booted eagle was too high for the group to ID though.

A comfort stop was taken in Monroy before we moved on the Talaván Reservoir for lunch, though not before stopping for a juvenile hen harrier quartering some broom scrub near the road and then a quick look at the bottom end of the reservoir, where abundant dragonflies caught our eye, as well as those of a few tiny black bass leaping out of the water to try and catch ovipositing females in tandem. The first of several common snipe and a little stint were good finds in a hidden corner, along with a couple of brief common waxbills, though at the lunch spot a flock of northern lapwings rubbed shoulders with two common greenshanks.

Most of the rest of the afternoon was taken with a drive over the (now rather too sunny) Hinojal steppes. However, our first good calandra larks, tawny pipits, our only greater short-toed larks and dozens of northern wheatears and whinchats provided excellent 'recompense', especially when persistence paid off and we bumped into a couple of great bustards trying to steal away across the steppe. These turned out to be the first of three groups totalling 14 birds, which got closer and better as the afternoon wore on.

Cinereous and griffon vultures were drinking at one pool in the haze, but several came very low over our heads as they circled to gain height, giving stunning views, and a lovely adult Egyptian vulture which we'd seen hazily at distance, also reappeared and circled much closer, also giving super views.

We finally moved on, then took a stop en route for tea and/or ice cream, while watching a perched short-toed eagle, before taking some interesting small roads back to our accommodation. This turned out to be a good move too, with pied and spotted flycatchers in a little valley where a distant girl bunting sang, and wonderful views of our final group of great bustards close by on the ground before they finally took to the air and made a glorious 180° turn to fly back past us in parallel. Even the sunset required running out of the dining room for, mirroring the beautiful sky which had marked sunrise too. A fabulous complete day!

Monday 26 September

Zorita steppes, Embalse de Sierra Brava, Campo Lugar, Embalse de Alcollarín, Palazuelo

Plenty of driving to the south today, but yielding a long list of excellent sightings. The light high cloud, sometimes breaking but also thickening at times really helped to keep temperatures and conditions outside 'sensible' for birding.

The extensive area of steppe south of Zorita is well known for its populations of steppic birds, and we started off proper with four great bustards flying over the reservoir while trying to count the innumerable waterbirds present. Indeed, these pitched into a spot close to where a black-bellied sandgrouse dropped in later, though another pair of sandgrouse gave us longer views as they circled round over nearby grassland where more great bustards were stalking around!

Back at the reservoir a single huge flock of great crested grebes held around 1,000 birds, while large numbers of mallard and northern shoveler were accruing and most of the abundant hirundineus well out over the water appeared to be sand martins. We also added our first black-headed and lesser black-backed gulls.

Plenty of stops were made as we traversed the nearby agri-steppe habitats, noting more great bustards, western marsh harrier, a little owl, plus the omnipresent northern wheatears, common stonechats and whinchats, plus a few calandra larks and a couple of tawny pipits scurrying across the flattened golden grass.

We also noted how the appalling use of herbicide had laid bare the remarkable quantities of rubbish along large stretches of the roadside, with the tall grass and 'weeds' along the other verge looking marvellous in comparison. I mused over how many locals consider the former to be the cleaner.

The morning's comfort stop was taken in a small bar where we rearranged tables outside to sit in the shade, with a common buzzard on a pole on one side and a short-toed eagle on a pylon on the other good company. The various pretty and curious moths which had come into the bar's lights were also duly noted and photographed, including the attractive stripy tiger moth *Cymbalophora pudica*.

The nearby Alcollarín reservoir, just two years old, is still filling, with its banks a haven for birds! Indeed, even the dam wall, before we arrived, had attracted a swarm of house martins, which thousands coming in to rest either half way down on a slight incline, or even by clinging to the vertical upper part, in the shade, near the top. As time was already marching on and the sun sufficiently round to the south, after looking through a close flock of over 200 little grebes for the single black-necked, we headed up the west bank. Thirty six Eurasian spoonbills, seven black storks, eight great egrets, two northern pintail and a juvenile black tern were some of the highlights among the abundant birds present, and while there were probably more surprises to be found, stomachs were rumbling and lunch called.

In the shade at some picnic tables not far away we could see plenty of birds on this different piece of water, including some of the rapidly expanding population of Egyptian geese, but also other 'better' new birds, starting with a fine selection of waders (11 species, including greenshank, common ringed plovers and a curlew sandpiper, plus a Eurasian teal and close spotted flycatchers and common kingfishers.

Having heard of some good birds down in the rice fields, which were already being harvested here, we headed south again and quickly started to enjoy yet more good new birds! A fine flock of glossy ibis picked amongst abundant gulls and egrets, and our first gorgeous black-winged stilts did the same. Western yellow wagtails fed busily on another nearby half-ploughed paddy, including several lovely blue-headed males, and after some traversing of tracks, including unsuccessfully 'chasing down' flighty hoopoes and stopping for a pair of close red avadavats as we went, found another couple of muddy fields with flocks of spotted redshank and ruff to round off a wader-rich day.

Another detour for one last bird was unsuccessful in the afternoon heat, but only took us a little way off course and got us to another interesting bar for our now scheduled afternoon drink and pit stop. Another terrific, very rewarding and diverse day.

Tuesday 27 September

Monfragüe: castle, Salto del Gitano, Villareal de San Carlos, pinewood, Portilla del Tiétar, Puente del Cardenal

A very clear and almost chilly dawn. Indeed the temperature had plummeted, but of course more than recovered what it had lost during the day to just pip the 30°C mark... and with almost no wind and rather clear skies it was 'scorchio' as someone put it!

After a brief stop en route to watch a notable gathering of griffon vultures which had clearly come up a slope after gorging on an unseen dead animal, only to stop for a first digestion in the shade (this was a significant point to note from animals used to these conditions), we headed straight to the Monfragüe castle. Unloading the vans we immediately noted numerous birds around, starting with wheeling red-rumped swallows, Eurasian crag and house martins at a rock face. The rushing sound of a griffon vulture carving through the dead still air as it came in to land almost overhead was only the first of many though! We stood and watched in awe at these, also noting a couple of high wheeling white-rumped swifts, a quietly chortling unseen blue rock thrush and a couple of calling Hawfinches as they sped over.

Walking up the rather quiet road paid off as a Eurasian sparrowhawk cruised over, and a few flighty European pied flycatchers were noted in the wild olive trees, but the views from the top were well worth

the seemingly tough last climb up the steep steps! Numerous griffon vultures were seen above and level with us, plus one or two below, the swifts –now three- passed low overhead as we crowned the castle, and the 360° views were simply magnificent. Our first young stag red deer was noted, despite rutting males heard widely around.

The nearby Salto del Gitano viewpoint was quite busy with visitors, but the birds were again excellent, including several cinereous vultures amongst the griffons, a fine male blue rock thrush, a very smart male black redstart, and calling Eurasian wren and circl bunting.

We finally pulled ourselves away, especially after seeing rising smoke and a fire engine passing at speed near where we were hoping to continue! A couple of small fields and vegetable plots opposite the small village were burning as we arrived, but two helicopters and half a dozen vehicles were in action putting the flames out. Indeed, after a refreshing drink we headed out to watch the remarkable flying skills to see not only how the bags of water hanging under the helicopters were opened with surprising accuracy over the fire, but then also watched at close range how the helicopters were coming in down below us to a large pool to fill up. OK, it was noisy, but very exciting, knowing it under control. John was also taken back to his working days...

We continued on, stopping for lunch in the shade of the pinewood, which was better for birds than first appeared. A rapidly moving flock of small birds included blackcap, Sardinian warbler, great tits and a surprise lesser spotted woodpecker. The woodpecker then flew over a couple of times and hung around the area calling for some time afterwards, also allowing Ben to find a feeding great spotted woodpecker hammering open a pine cone nearby. The first of a couple of European pied flycatchers was finally seen well, while again nearby, a short walk produced another mixed flock, this time including long-tailed tits, an exquisite firecrest, highly mobile European crested tit and, finally, a short-toed treecreeper. A terrific haul. A good patch of flowers nearby also produced abundant Spanish brown arguses, mallow skipper, Lang's short-tailed and long-tailed blues and small white for those willing and able to take the sun!

Another stop overlooking the reservoir ahead was hot, but a slight breeze and standing in the shade helped. Frustratingly, a female Spanish imperial eagle which had sped off barking noisily as we arrived failed to reappear, but at least four common kingfishers on the river, abundant and highly mobile griffon vultures, a passing black kite and two spiralling black storks made the wait more than worthwhile.

Another comfort stop nearby was well appreciated, especially given the hilarious English translations of some of the dishes, including the decidedly unappetising 'squit in batter' and the bizarre 'Iron Hills' (deriving, incredibly, from grilled pig snouts!!!). We hoped to make just one stop on the way back, in an attempt to see Bonelli's eagle, but in the nearly still conditions at over 30°C it was a tall order, despite parking and standing in the shade to try! Of course, just 200 yards down the road after starting our final return, a pair cruised swiftly over the treetops and one pitched into a tree way up the slope. Parking some way ahead where safe we walked back, and with great fortune relocated one of the birds sat, partly hidden, under the crown of a large cork oak, allowing scope views for all.

Needles to say, we arrived back late as usual, rather than the promised earlier return, but after a very rewarding day. This also allowed us to make an extended call-over before dinner, to cover the two days, taking us to a remarkable 127 species after just three and a half days. To put this into perspective, a full week in early spring 20 years ago used to yield 130-135 species!

A fun dinner was enjoyed by all, especially when desert was delayed by us going out to the see Saturn in Paco's telescope, and then during an impromptu photo session afterwards as the Moorish geckos again came out to catch the incoming moths, the stripeless tree frog was found in the corner and a few dark-eyed praying mantises came in to the lights!

Wednesday 28 September

Monroy Road, La Pulgosa track, Río Almonte, Casar de Cáceres, Trujillo

Leaving early to beat the heat, but given a moderate gusting wind, instead of our reservoir plan we headed out in completely the opposite direction across the steppes again. A couple of short stops were made en route, but despite seeing a flock of rock sparrows on the ground from the minibus, as soon as we got out, they moved over the little ridge and front and despite a few flying off, refused to reappear.

The old road on the western half of the Cáceres plains used to be excellent for steppic birds, and indeed plenty of work has been carried out on some of the huge estates there to favour these birds. A large hide on the roadside not far from the start was an interesting sign of the importance given to birdwatching tourism in the region. A small group of black-bellied sandgrouse flew off, raising hopes, though abundant crested larks, corn buntings, and northern wheatears, plus a few whinchats and northern lapwings were the order of the day. A small warbler on the roadside however led us to stop, and to our delight, a superb autumn plumaged spectacled warbler popped up in the broom scrub and showed well, including in the scopes.

Once the track was finally over, we made a short detour to go for another walk, most noting a pale morph booted eagle from the vehicle as we went, though the traffic meant it was impossible to stop. The stiff wind meant that the temperature stayed comfortable most of the time, though being largely in a narrow side valley of the Almonte River also afforded us some protection. A small group of red-rumped swallows and house martins circled round and round, landing occasionally on the bushes, a calling grey wagtail sped over, a thekla lark popped up onto an old roadside concrete bollard allowing scope views, and spotted and a brief pied flycatcher showed well too. A sudden burst of a 'chittering' call alerted us to a super flock of wheeling alpine swifts over the river, with some 35+ birds present, though some didn't see the species until one of two reappearances later. The river itself and its banks were practically devoid of birds, so apart from a brief firecrest, we more than content ourselves looking at the insects present, especially on the various small flowers present, though a number of stunningly gaudy male violet dropwings captured our attention and looked remarkable in the scopes! A small group of very confiding willow warblers on the walk back were well enjoyed too.

A very welcome drinks break was taken at a bar found by accident nearby en route, despite tremendous dust blowing off the fields and waste ground nearby, and then lunch was eaten shortly afterwards under the shade of an avenue of trees, overlooking a drying lake on the edge of the town! To have cattle and little egrets, eight Eurasian spoonbills, black-winged stilts, little ringed plovers and a variety of other waders and waterbirds over lunch was a real treat!

We finally moved on to a new site for me, thanks to a tip-off, and after a rather hot walk, greatly eased by the stiff wind, we looked out over the drying mud of a moderately sized reservoir at a selection of waders and ducks present. Indeed, almost immediately, one of the 'goals' was seen, with a stripy-backed bar-tailed godwit probing in the mud beside a stilt, with another belly deep in water off towards the middle! Plenty more watching finally turned up a tiny Temminck's stint also picking its way slowly along the edge, another excellent bird for the trip, while extra scanning also picked up an unexpected eclipse Eurasian wigeon amongst the mallards and gadwall present.

Returning a little earlier than usual, we detoured again, this time via Trujillo, and walked up for a wander round the old square and a refreshing drink. While the historical buildings took precedence, at least three pallid swifts wheeling over the centre were a great bonus.

Thursday 29 September

Emb. Alcollarín, Zorita, Emb. Sierra Brava, Vegas Altas Fields, Palazuelo Rice Fields

We returned to the Alcollarín reservoir given the great variety we'd seen there a couple of days before, and were certainly not disappointed. Indeed, given the strong wind still blowing, nearly all the waterfowl were sheltering on the eastern side, which was perfect given the morning light.

An incredible number of little grebes were present, and while I jokingly set a challenge for someone to count them, Diane boldly took his up, counting 1800 from just one spot before giving up! Many were tucked right under the base of the dam, diving and catching large numbers of small fish as we watched. While I also went through them, finding a couple of black-necked grebes in the process, the shore also held excellent concentrations of common coots (with no 'variants' amongst them), plus a wonderful mixed white group, including 11 great, over 100 little and plenty of cattle egrets, a few Eurasian spoonbills and numerous black-headed gulls. With groups of mallard, gadwall and northern shoveler too, it was a fabulous sight, especially when a hungry marauding western marsh harrier came low over and progressively spooked groups as it worked its way along the shore! Also excellent was a rather dark, but pale-headed gull which worked its way past us, this being a juvenile Audouin's gull. Although actually a very scarce regular migrant through the region in summer, this late record was one of only two or three this year.

A distant hunting peregrine was only seen at extreme range, despite perching on a rock to eat some unfortunate small victim, but was still a good addition. The smaller 'azud' round the corner was also excellent, with most of the birds of the previous trip, plus a couple of black-winged stilts, a couple of common kingfishers again, and an excellent selection of ducks and waders (with more present than first met the eye) as well. We couldn't find the white-headed duck seen the day before, but after even seeing a Cetti's warbler in flight twice, we headed round so that I could go and read the colour-ring combination on a dunlin. This achieved, it was slightly disappointing to see that it was 'only' from Galicia, but it's still an interesting record.

The now 'mandatory' (late) morning drinks break was taken at the "Little Buddha" bar in Zorita, and then we headed off down a long dusty track to another picnic table lunch spot overlooking the shores of the Sierra Brava reservoir. A couple of Iberian magpies waiting in the wings for us to finish showed how fishermen leave scraps behind for them, even though they wouldn't show for the photographers.

Time and opportunities were running out for finding one of the main targets of the tour, little bustard, so we headed off to a large area of crops criss-crossed by tracks, and despite the sun, dust and heat, drove round and round in our search. A single great bustard was a good reward, but apart from flighty crested larks, zitting cisticolas and red avadavats, there was nothing else. However, a silver lining to the cloud appeared when a final scan of yet another olive orchard suddenly revealed a roosting stone-curlew. And then several more!

We finally opted to finish off with another look at the Palazuelo Rice Fields, these still being the only ones ploughed back in, despite the rice harvesting gathering pace and cut fields present scattered throughout, and one again enjoyed a fine selection of waders. Indeed, this time we finally managed to watch two lovely wood sandpipers in the corner of one field and even a lone juvenile black-tailed godwit wandering around another.

Time was slipping away, and despite one short pause on the way back, we headed back for a bit of down time in order to be ready for our evening meal out in Trujillo. This was in fact outside in the main square, and despite some poor serving, was enjoyed by all.

Ah, and of course, not forgetting that at one point during the afternoon we finally did see little bustards. A superb flock of nearly 30 feeding quietly in a field, some of them thankfully just 20 yards from the road, as these were the ones we spotted en route.

Friday 30 September

Emb. de Arrocampo, Almaraz, Presa de Valdecañas, 'El Sierro'

The wind had dropped to virtually nothing at dawn, and despite still being from the north east by the guesthouse, was clearly coming gently from the south west nearer Trujillo where smoke was rising from a fire... Fortunately this was easily controlled it seemed.

We returned to Arrocampo, which actually seemed very quiet to me, despite a superb black-winged kite on a roadside pole en route, a distant western osprey perched on a reservoir pylon and even a juvenile purple heron at short range. The latter sadly had clearly suffered a broken wing at some point though, just being able to fly back into cover along a bulrush choked channel a few minutes later.

Stopping at each of the hides in turn, we noted noisy purple swamphens, a couple of calling water rails, plenty of western marsh harriers, and among a variety of small birds, three different bluethroats in flight, though none for more than a couple of seconds until Diane noted one looking at her while perched in the bulrushes in front for a few seconds.

With the breeze rising and the Monfragüe vultures moving out to search for carrion over the area, we moved on and went for a drink. This completed we headed off to the Valdecañas Dam area for a look around, being most impressed by the variety of butterflies present on some flowering *Dittrichia* bushes at one high point, these including several gorgeous common swallowtails and a couple of fresh wall browns. A couple of long-tailed tits in the trees, passing hawfinches, wheeling Eurasian crag martins and passing griffon and cinereous vultures were all noted, but failing to find a decent lunch stop twice meant it was third time lucky, with significant numbers of griffon vultures on rocks opposite an added bonus to having found shade.

We took a short walk nearby later, with the cooling breeze near the ridge making this readily bearable, the added bonus of a fine golden eagle circling over making this more than worthwhile. There was little else useful to do however, so we started back much earlier than usual, stopping for ice-creams on the way, and then a visit to a local products shop in Trujillo to round off. A couple of bottles of Extremadura red were purchased for dinner by John, and we later enjoyed these greatly when accompanying a large tender steak for the main course. The wonderful vegetable soup for the first course was great too, these coming from one of Francisco's relatives who lives in the Villuercas mountains. Ben and Diane went off for a walk one way, spotting a red fox and numerous Spanish pond frogs, while Michael went another, simply enjoying the sights and sounds of the local countryside.

Saturday 1 October

Las Canteras, transfer to Madrid airport

With a mid afternoon flight, there was only really time for a leisurely breakfast, farewells to our hosts, loading up of the van, a comfort stop and drink en route and a refuelling stop close to Madrid. That said, it was particularly frustrating for Mike as we saw a remarkable total of six black-winged kites on the wires as we went, none of which we could stop for. A few cinereous vultures also bade us farewell as they circled over the motorway while the two small groups of old aircraft in flying in formation were practising for the military parades on 12 October during the Spanish National Festival.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for making this a very enjoyable trip. The seven black-winged kites noted en route just on our first afternoon seemed to suggest that the trip was going to be good, and it certainly was! Indeed the raptors in general were good, 'as expected' (i.e. hoped). While eagles proved harder than expected to find given the excellent weather throughout, with persistence we managed fine views of all five breeding species, including the displaying Spanish imperials, plus golden, perched Bonelli's, booted and most commonly, pylon-perching short-toed snake eagles. A late Egyptian vulture was massively outnumbered by huge griffon and cinereous vultures, and an early hen harrier and late single black kite showed how we were during the migration overlap. The vast dry plains are hard to search in autumn, and yet we found plenty of great bustards, a wonderful flock of the rapidly declining little bustard and a few flighty groups of black-bellied sandgrouse, plus a good selection of larks and other small passerines. However, the wetland areas we revisited on occasions definitely produced the bulk of the variety, with species ranging from the tiny zitting cisticolas, common waxbills and red avadavats, all the way up to Eurasian spoonbills, great egrets and even an early pair of common cranes. Indeed we ended up with an excellent 141 species recorded during the tour, more than what we used to record in spring 20 years ago. Francisco and Pilar, our hosts, did us proud again, resulting in a very enjoyable week all round.

I look forward to seeing you again, hopefully in the not too distant future, on another Travelling Naturalist tour.

SPECIES LISTS

BIRDS - AVES

GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS - Anatidae

Egyptian goose, *Alopochen aegyptiaca*: 10+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and several Embalse de Alcollarín and 11 Embalse de Sierra Brava on 29 Sep

Gadwall, *Anas strepera*: 3 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, 10+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, plenty various sites on 28 Sep, plenty various sites on 29 Sep, and 7 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Eurasian wigeon *Anas penelope*: 1 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep.

Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*: Noted on 5 days, with max. abundant Embalse de Sierra Brava+ on 26 Sep.

Northern shoveler, *Anas clypeata*: 15+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, abundant Embalse de Sierra Brava+ on 26 Sep, plenty various sites on 28 Sep, and abundant various sites on 29 Sep.

Northern pintail, *Anas acuta*: 2+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, (6+ Embalse de Alcollarín) on 29 Sep.

Eurasian teal, *Anas crecca*: 1 male Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 3+ Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and 6+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

Common pochard, *Aythya ferina*: 1 female Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and 1 male Embalse de Alcollarín on 28 Sep.

GROUSE, PHEASANTS & allies - Phasianidae

Red-legged partridge, *Alectoris rufa*: 20+ various sites on 25 Sep, 2 en route on 28 Sep, c.15 various sites on 29 Sep, and c.10 various sites on 30 Sep.

GREBES - Podicipedidae

Little Grebe, *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: 300+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, plenty Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, 2000+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep, and 3 various sites on 30 Sep.

Great crested grebe, *Podiceps cristatus*: 1000+ Embalse de Sierra Brava and 200+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 1 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and 1000+ various sites on 29 Sep.

Black-necked grebe, *Podiceps nigricollis*: 1 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and 2 Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep

STORKS - Ciconiidae

Black stork, *Ciconia nigra*: 7 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and 2 Portilla del Tiétar + 1 Trujillo on 27 Sep.

White stork *Ciconia ciconia*: Several en route on 24 Sep, 10+ Palazuelo on 26 Sep, and plenty there on 29 Sep.

IBISES & SPOONBILLS - Threskiornithidae

Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus*: 16+ Palazuelo on 26 Sep, and 17 there on 29 Sep..

Eurasian Spoonbill, *Platalea leucorodia*: 36 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 8 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and 4+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

HERONS & BITTERNS - Ardeidae

Little bittern, *Ixobrychus minutus*: Several heard Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep.

Western cattle egret, *Bubulcus ibis*: Plenty Embalse de Arrocampo+ on 24 Sep, lots various sites on 26 Sep, plenty Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and plenty various sites on both on 29 Sep, and on 30 Sep.

Grey heron, *Ardea cinerea*: Noted in small to moderate number daily at numerous sites.

Purple heron, *Ardea purpurea*: One injured juvenile Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Great [white] egret, *Ardea alba*: Good numbers of this formerly rare bird: 4 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, 7 Embalse de Alcollarín + 1 Palazuelo on 26 Sep, 11+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep, and 2 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Little egret, *Egretta garzetta*: Several Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, abundant Palazuelo+ on 26 Sep, 1 Portilla del Tiétar on 27 Sep, 2 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, 100+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep, and 2 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

CORMORANTS - Phalacrocoracidae

Great Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*: 200+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, abundant Embalse de Sierra Brava+ on 26 Sep, 1 Portilla del Tiétar on 27 Sep, 4 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, 12+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep, and 105+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

OSPREYS - Pandionidae

Western osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*: A distant perched bird Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

HAWKS, EAGLES & allies - Accipitridae

Black-winged kite, *Elanus caeruleus*: A remarkable 7 en route on 24 Sep, 1 on 25 Sep, 1(-2) Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep, and another remarkable 6 en route beside the motorway on 1 Oct.

Egyptian vulture, *Neophron percnopterus*: An adult over the Talaván steppes on 25 Sep.

Griffon vulture, *Gyps fulvus*: Abundant various sites on 25 Sep, plenty Campo Lugar+ on 26 Sep, abundant Monfragüe on 27 Sep, several Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and various sites on 29 Sep, abundant again on 30 Sep, and a few noted en route on 1 Oct.

Cinereous vulture, *Aegypius monachus*: Several various sites on 25 Sep, plenty Campo Lugar+ on 26 Sep, abundant Monfragüe on 27 Sep, 2 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, 1 Embalse de Sierra Brava on 29 Sep, a few various sites on 30 Sep, and a few more noted en route on 1 Oct..

Short-toed eagle, *Circaetus gallicus*: Three different birds noted widely daily from 25 Sep.

Booted eagle, *Hieraetus pennatus*: Just one pale morph bird en route near the Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

Spanish imperial eagle, *Aquila adalberti*: A displaying pair at one site on one day and an adult very briefly Portilla del Tiétar on 27 Sep.

Golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*: A subadult over Almaraz on 30 Sep.

Bonelli's eagle, *Aquila fasciata*: An adult pair in Monfragüe on 27 Sep..

Eurasian sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*: One past Monfragüe Castle on 27 Sep, and 1 Valdecañas Dam area on 30 Sep.

Western marsh harrier, *Circus aeruginosus*: Common, widespread and noted daily except on 27 Sep, max. 20+ on 29 Sep and 10+ on 30 Sep.

Hen harrier, *Circus cyaneus*: A juvenile female Talaván steppes on 25 Sep.

Red kite, *Milvus milvus*: 1 en route on 24 Sep, 1 Campo Lugar on 26 Sep, 10+ Trujillo plains+ on 27 Sep, 3-4 en route on 28 Sep, 2 various sites on 29 Sep, 2 Almaraz on 30 Sep..

Black kite, *Milvus migrans*: A late juvenile over the Portilla del Tiétar on 27 Sep.

Common buzzard, *Buteo buteo*: Common, widespread and noted daily except on 28 Sep, max. 6+ on 29 Sep and 1 Oct.

BUSTARDS - Otidae

Great bustard, *Otis tarda*: 14 various sites on 25 Sep, 18+ Campo Lugar road on 26 Sep, 10 en route on 28 Sep, and 1 Vegas Altas agricultural fields on 29 Sep..

Little Bustard, *Tetrax tetrax*: A fine flock of 27 were noted on 29 Sep.

RAILS, CRAKES & COOTS - Rallidae

Water rail, *Rallus aquaticus*: Heard Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, heard Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, and heard, with one seen briefly, Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Purple swamphen, *Porphyrio porphyrio*: 6+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, and 1 seen and plenty heard there on 30 Sep.

Common moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*: 2 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, and several there on 30 Sep.

Eurasian Coot, *Fulica atra*: Several Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep, lots Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 6 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, hundreds Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep, and a few Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

CRANES - Gruidae

Common crane, *Grus grus*: An early pair flying over Embalse de Arrocampo at dusk on 24 Sep.

STONE-CURLEWS & THICK-KNEES - Burhinidae

Eurasian stone-curlew, *Burhinus oedicnemus*: 3+ Vegas Altas agricultural fields on 29 Sep were a great find after failing to see them three times at other roosts.

STILTS & AVOCETS - Recurvirostridae

Black-winged stilt, *Himantopus himantopus*: 30+ Palazuelo+ on 26 Sep, 40+ Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and plenty Palazuelo+ on 29 Sep.

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS - Charadriidae

Northern Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*: 20+ Embalse de Talaván+ on 25 Sep, several various sites on 26 Sep, 1 Las Canteras on 27 Sep, several various sites on 28 Sep, lots various sites on 29 Sep, and a few various sites on 30 Sep.

Common ringed plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*: 3+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and 1 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep.

Little ringed plover, *Charadrius dubius*: 5 various sites on 25 Sep, plenty various sites on 26 Sep, plenty Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and lots various sites on 29 Sep.

SANDPIPERS, SNIPES & allies - Scolopacidae

Common snipe, *Gallinago gallinago*: 6+ Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, lots Palazuelo+ on 26 Sep, several Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, plenty Palazuelo+ on 29 Sep, and 2 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Black-tailed godwit, *Limosa limosa*: One juvenile Palazuelo on 29 Sep.

Bar-tailed godwit, *Limosa lapponica*: 2 individuals of this regional rarity Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep.

Spotted redshank, *Tringa erythropus* : 8+ Palazuelo on 26 Sep.

Common redshank, *Tringa totanus* 7+ Palazuelo + 1 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 1 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and 1+ Palazuelo on 29 Sep.

Common greenshank, *Tringa nebularia*: 2 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, 3 Palazuelo & 2 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 3 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and 10+ Palazuelo on 29 Sep.

Green sandpiper, *Tringa ochropus*: Several various sites on 25 Sep, plenty various sites on 26 Sep, several Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, 2+ Palazuelo on 29 Sep, and heard Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Wood sandpiper, *Tringa glareola*: 2 Palazuelo on 29 Sep.

Common sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*: 2 various sites on 26 Sep, 2 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and 1 Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

Little stint, *Calidris minuta*: 1 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, and 17+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep.

Temminck's stint, *Calidris temminckii*: 1 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep.

Curlew sandpiper, *Calidris ferruginea*: 1 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep.

Dunlin, *Calidris alpina*: 5 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and 2 there on 29 Sep included a bird colour-ringed in Galicia on 29 Sep.

Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax* : 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24th, 19+ Palazuelo on 26 Sep, and 12 there on 29 Sep.

GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS - Laridae

Black-headed gull, *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*: Abundant Embalse de Sierra Brava + Palazuelo on 26 Sep, 5 various sites on 28 Sep, plenty various sites on 29 Sep, and 4+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Audouin's gull, *Ichthyaetus audouinii*: A fine juvenile Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep was a regional rarity.

Lesser black-backed gull, *Larus fuscus*: Abundant Palazuelo+ on 26 Sep, and again on 29 Sep, , plus 2 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Black Tern, *Chlidonias niger*: A juvenile Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep.

SANDGROUSE - Pteroclididae

Black-bellied sandgrouse, *Pterocles orientalis*: One Monroy Road on 25 Sep, 3 Campo Lugar road on 26 Sep, and 3+3 La Pulgosa road on 28 Sep.

PIGEONS & DOVES - Columbidae

Rock dove, *Columba livi*: Noted daily; as well as plenty of obvious feral pigeons, wild type rock doves were seen at a few sites on various days.

Common wood pigeon, *Columba palumbus*: A few en route on 24th, a few various sites on 27 Sep, singles en route on 28 Sep, and again on 29 Sep, and 8+ Las Canteras+ on 30 Sep.

Eurasian collared dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*: Common, widespread and noted daily in variable number, except on 28 Sep.

OWLS - Strigidae

Little owl, *Athene noctua*: Singles Monroy Road and Talaván steppes on 25 Sep, 1 Campo Lugar road + heard Las Canteras on 26 Sep, and heard Las Canteras again on 27 Sep.

SWIFTS - Apodidae

Alpine swift, *Tachymarptis melba*: 35-40 Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

Pallid swift, *Apus pallidus*: 3+ Trujillo on 28 Sep.

White-rumped swift, *Apus caffer*: 3+ Monfragüe Castle on 27 Sep, and 2 en route on 30 Sep.

KINGFISHERS - Alcedinidae

Common kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*: Widespread in small number and seen daily except on 28 Sep and 1 Oct; max. 4+ Portilla del Tiétar on 27 Sep.

HOOPOES - Upupidae

Eurasian hoopoe, *Upupa epops*: Common, widespread and noted in small to moderate number daily at numerous sites; max. 6+ on 26 Sep and 29 Sep.

WOODPECKERS - Picidae

Eurasian wryneck, *Jynx torquilla*: A surprise find were 3 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24th.

Lesser spotted woodpecker, *Dendrocopos minor*: Another great find was a calling male in Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Great spotted woodpecker, *Dendrocopos major*: And while looking for the lesser we found a female great spotted on 27 Sep.

FALCONS & allies - Falconidae

Lesser kestrel, *Falco naumanni*: Definitely identified individuals were only noted in steppe areas on on 26 Sep, and on 28 Sep.

Common kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*: Common, widespread and noted daily, but some of these records will relate to lesser kestrels.

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*: Just one distant bird, eating prey, Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

SHRIKES - Laniidae

'Iberian' grey shrike, *Lanius meridionalis*: Common, widespread and noted daily in small to moderate number; max. 30+ on 25 Sep.

CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES - Corvidae

Eurasian jay, *Garrulus glandarius*: Singles Monfragüe Castle on 27 Sep, and en route on 30 Sep.

Iberian magpie, *Cyanopica cooki* : Common, widespread and seen daily in variable number.

Eurasian magpie, *Pica pica*: Common, widespread and seen daily in variable number, though less numerous than Iberian magpie.

Western jackdaw, *Coloeus monedula*: Quite common and widespread, and noted in variable number daily except on 24 Sep.

Northern raven, *Corvus corax*: Widespread in small number, with 1-4 seen daily from 25 Sep.

TITS & CHICKADEES - Paridae

European crested tit, *Lophophanes cristatus*: One lovely bird Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Great tit, *Parus major*: Surprisingly difficult to find! 3+ en route on 25 Sep, several various sites on 27 Sep, and just 1+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

Eurasian blue tit, *Cyanistes caeruleus*: Also difficult to see at this time of the year! 3 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, 1+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, several various sites on 27 Sep, and 4 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

LARKS - Alaudidae

Calandra lark, *Melanocorypha calandra*: Abundant en route on 25 Sep, a few Campo Lugar road on 26 Sep, and abundant en route on 28 Sep.

Greater short-toed lark, *Calandrella brachydactyla*: 6 Talaván steppes were a great find on 25 Sep.

Crested lark *Galerida cristata*: Common, widespread and noted daily from 25 Sep.

Thekla lark, *Galerida theklae*: Rather overlooked, but birds specifically identified as follows: 1 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, 2+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 2 Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and 2 Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Woodlark, *Lullula arborea*: Only heard singing Monroy river on 25 Sep.

SWALLOWS & MARTINS - Hirundinidae

Sand martin, *Riparia riparia*: Lots Embalse de Sierra Brava on 26 Sep, 2+ Vegas Altas agricultural fields on 29 Sep, and a few Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*: Small to moderate numbers daily from 24th - 27 Sep, then just 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Eurasian crag martin, *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*: A few Monroy river on 25 Sep, abundant Monfragüe on 27 Sep, plenty Trujillo on 28 Sep, and several Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Common house martin, *Delichon urbicum*: Still common, widespread and noted daily from 25 Sep; many thousands Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep were spectacular!

Red-rumped swallow, *Cecropis daurica*: Common, widespread and noted daily in small to moderate number.

CETTIA BUSH WARBLERS & Allies - Cettiidae

Cetti's warbler, *Cettia cetti*: Heard in dense riverside and streamside sites on 5 days, but one seen well Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

BUSHTITS - Aegithalidae

Long-tailed tit, *Aegithalos caudatus*: Heard Monroy river on 25 Sep, 2+ Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and 2 Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

LEAF WARBLERS & allies - Phylloscopidae

Willow warbler, *Phylloscopus trochilus*: 1 en route La Pulgosa road on 25 Sep, 1 Palazuelo on 26 Sep, and 3+ Río Almonte + 1 Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep.

REED WARBLERS & allies - Acrocephalidae

Eurasian reed warbler, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24th, and 1+ there again on 30 Sep.

CISTICOLAS & allies - Cisticolidae

Zitting cisticola, *Cisticola juncidis*: Quite common and widespread in lowland rice and arable field areas. Noted on 5 days, with max. 6+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

SYLVIID BABBLERS, PARROTBILLS, MYZORNIS - Sylviidae

Eurasian blackcap, *Sylvia atricapilla*: 1 male Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and 1 female Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Common whitethroat, *Sylvia communis*: 1 Campo Lugar road on 26 Sep, and 1 en route on 28 Sep.

Dartford warbler, *Sylvia undata*: Just 1 briefly en route Monroy Road on 25 Sep.

Spectacled warbler, *Sylvia conspicillata*: 1 superb bird La Pulgosa road on 28 Sep.

Sardinian warbler, *Sylvia melanocephala*: Tricky in autumn. A pair Monroy river on 25 Sep, 2+ on 26 Sep, 2 Monfragüe on 27 Sep, 2+ Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and 1 male Almaraz on 30 Sep.

CRESTS & KINGLETS - Regulidae

Firecrest, *Regulus ignicapilla*: One lovely bird Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and another more briefly Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

WRENS - Troglodytidae

Eurasian wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes*: Just 1 Monroy River on 25 Sep, and heard Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

TREECREEPERS - Certhiidae

Short-toed treecreeper, *Certhia brachydactyla*: One good bird in the Monfragüe pines on 27 Sep.

STARLINGS & RHABDORNIS - Sturnidae

Spotless starling, *Sturnus unicolor*: Abundant, widespread and seen daily in variable number, including many 1000s Embalse de Arrocampo on 24 Sep.

THRUSHES - Turdidae

Common blackbird, *Turdus merula*: Widespread; 1-3 seen daily from 25 Sep.

CHATS & OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS - Muscipidae

European robin, *Erithacus rubecula*: Just singles Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep.

Bluethroat, *Luscinia svecica*: 2-3 in flight for most of group Embalse de Arrocampo on 29 Sep.

Black Redstart, *Phoenicurus ochruros*: 2+ Salto del Gitano on 27 Sep.

Common redstart, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*: 5+ en route various sites on 25 Sep, and 2 en route on 27 Sep.

Whinchat, *Saxicola rubetra*: 30+ en route various sites on 25 Sep, several various sites on 26 Sep, 1+ Las Canteras on 27 Sep, 2+ en route on 28 Sep, 4+ Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

European stonechat, *Saxicola rubicola*: Abundant, widespread and seen daily at numerous sites from 25 Sep.

Northern wheatear, *Oenanthe oenanthe*: Also abundant, widespread and seen daily at numerous sites from 25 Sep; hundreds seen on 25 Sep.

Blue rock thrush, *Monticola solitarius*: 1 male Monroy River on 25 Sep, and 2 males Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Spotted flycatcher, *Muscicapa striata*: 1 Río Magasca on 25 Sep, 2+ Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, 1 Monfragüe on 27 Sep, 2+ Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

European pied flycatcher, *Ficedula hypoleuca*: 1 Río Magasca on 25 Sep, several Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, plenty various sites on 27 Sep, 1 Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and 1-2 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS & SNOWFINCHES - Passeridae

House sparrow, *Passer domesticus*: Common, widespread and seen daily, especially at Las Canteras.

Spanish sparrow, *Passer hispaniolensis*: Plenty Palazuelo on 26 Sep, and again on 29 Sep, and lots en route on 30 Sep.

Rock sparrow, *Petronia petronia*: A few seen of a flock of c. 15 Monroy Road on 28 Sep.

WAXBILLS, MUNIAS & allies - Estrildidae

Common waxbill, *Estrilda astrild*: 4 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, 2 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, and 2-3 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Red avadavat, *Amandava amandava*: A pair Palazuelo on 26 Sep, plenty Palazuelo + Vegas Altas agricultural fields on 29 Sep, and 1 male Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

WAGTAILS & PIPITS - Motacillidae

Western yellow wagtail, *Motacilla flava*: Common and widespread on passage. Noted daily except on 27 Sep and 1 Oct, all those subspecifically identified being ssp flava, the "blue-headed wagtail"; max. 30+ Palazuelo on 26 Sep and 29 Sep.

Grey wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea*: Heard Monroy River on 25 Sep, and 1 Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

White wagtail, *Motacilla alba*: 1+ Monroy River on 25 Sep, 5+ various sites on 26 Sep, 3+ Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, several Embalse de Alcollarín on 29 Sep, and 2 various sites on 30 Sep.

Tawny pipit, *Anthus campestris*: Several Talaván steppes on 25 Sep, 3+ Campo Lugar road on 26 Sep, and 1 La Pulgosa road on 28 Sep.

FINCHES & allies - Fringillidae

Common chaffinch, *Fringilla coelebs*: Several Monfragüe on 27 Sep, heard Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and 3 Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

European greenfinch, *Carduelis chloris*: 2 Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

European goldfinch, *Carduelis carduelis*: Several Monfragüe on 27 Sep, 1 en route on 28 Sep, and 1 Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Hawfinch, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*: 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 24th, 6+ Monfragüe Castle on 27 Sep, and several Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

BUNTINGS, NEW WORLD SPARROWS & allies - Emberizidae

Corn bunting, *Emberiza calandra*: Abundant en route on 25 Sep, plenty Campo Lugar road on 26 Sep, abundant various sites on 28 Sep, and again on 29 Sep, and several various sites on 30 Sep.

Cirl Bunting, *Emberiza cirlus*: Just 1 heard singing Río Magasca on 25 Sep.

MAMMALS - MAMMALIA

RABBITS & HARES – Leporidae

European rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*: After 1 dead on road on 24 Sep, just 1 seen Almaraz on 30 Sep.

MICE, RATS, VOLES & GERBILS - Muridae

Field vole, *Microtus agrestis*: 2 voles, possibly this species, seen crossing the road at night near Trujillo on 24 Sep

DOGS & allies - Canidae

Red fox, *Vulpes vulpes*: After 1 dead on road on 25 Sep, 1 Las Canteras in evening on 30 Sep.

WEASELS & allies - Mustelidae

Eurasian otter, *Lutra lutra*: Abundant spraint Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep.

Beech marten, *Martes foina*: 1 dead on road near Las Canteras on 25 Sep.

VESPER BATS - Vespertilionidae

Common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*: Small bats of (an) unknown species seen flying at Las Canteras most evenings from 26 Sep.

PIGS - Suidae

Eurasian wild boar, *Sus scrofa*: One very dead on road Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

DEER - Cervidae

Red deer, *Cervus elaphus*: 6+ Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and plenty heard Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Fallow deer, *Dama dama*: Heard Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

REPTILES - REPTILIA

Old World terrapins - Geoemydidae [=Bataguridae]

Spanish terrapin, *Mauremys leprosa*: Common and widespread in the reservoirs, pools, streams and rivers visited and noted on 4 days at various sites.

Geckos - Gekkonidae

Moorish gecko, *Tarentola mauritanica*: Abundant at Las Canteras, and the nightly moth slaughter was 'enjoyed' over dinner most days!

Wall/typical lizards - Lacertidae

Large Psammodromus, *Psammodromus algirus*: 1 fine specimen Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

AMPHIBIANS - AMPHIBIA

Tree frogs - Hylidae

Stripeless/Mediterranean tree frog, *Hyla meridionalis*: A resident individual at Las Canteras was noted most days! on 24th.

Typical frogs - Ranidae

Iberian water frog, *Pelophylax perezi*: Abundant at water, though only specifically noted Palazuelo+ on 26 Sep, and Las Canteras late on 30 Sep.

BUTTERFLIES – LEPIDOPTERA

Grizzled & Spreadwing Skippers - subf: Pyrginae

Mallow skipper, *Carcharodus alceae*: 1 Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Swordtails, Birdwings, Swallowtails & Festoons - subf: Parnassiinae

Common swallowtail, *Papilio machaon*: 2 Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and several Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Typical Whites - subf: Pierinae

Small white, *Pieris rapae*: Noted on 27 Sep, and on 28 Sep, and again on 30 Sep.

Yellows & Sulphurs - subf: Coliadinae

Clouded yellow, *Colias crocea*: Seen on 25 Sep, at Casar de Cáceres on 28 Sep, and Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Coppers - subf: Lycaeninae

Small copper, *Lycaena phlaeas*: Noted on 25 Sep, and again on 26 Sep, and 1+ Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Blues & Opals - subf: Polyommatainae

Lang's short-tailed blue, *Leptotes pirithous*: 1 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep, several on 27 Sep, and again on 28 Sep, and also Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Long-tailed blue, *Lampides boeticus*: 1 Las Canteras on 25 Sep, and 1 Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Holly blue, *Celastrina argiolus*: 1+ Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and 1 Las Canteras on 28 Sep.

Spanish brown argus, *Aricia cramera*: 1 Las Canteras on 25 Sep, lots Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and several Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.

Pashas & (tailed) Emperors - subf: Charaxinae

Two-tailed pasha, *Charaxes jasius*: 2 in flight Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Vanessids & smaller Fritillaries - subf: Nymphalinae

Painted lady, *Vanessa cardui*: Just 1 Embalse de Alcollarín on 26 Sep.

Larger fritillaries & Heliconians - subf: Heliconiinae

Cardinal, *Argynnis pandora*: singles Las Canteras on 27 Sep, Río Almonte on 28 Sep, and Las Canteras again on 30 Sep.

Browns, Ringlets & Satyrs - subf: Satyrinae

Speckled wood, *Pararge aegeria*: Just a few Monfragüe on 27 Sep.

Wall brown, *Lasiommata megera*: 1+ Monfragüe on 27 Sep, and 2+ Valdecañas Dam on 30 Sep.
Small heath, *Coenonympha pamphilus*: 1 Talaván steppes on 25 Sep, and 1 Río Almonte on 28 Sep.
Meadow brown, *Maniola jurtina*: Probably the commonest butterfly and noted on 5 days.

MOTHS - LEPIDOPTERA

GEOMETERS - GEOMETRIDAE

Vestal, *Rhodometra sacraria*: Large numbers en route on 24th, and noted Las Canteras on 25 Sep.

TIGER, ERMINE, FOOTMAN MOTHS & allies - ARCTIIDAE

Tiger moth sp., *Cymbalophora pudica*: 1 Campo Lugar on 26 Sep.

PROCESSIONARY MOTHS - THAUMETOPOEIDAE

Grass processionary moth, *Thaumetopoea herculeana*: 2 Palazuelo on 26 Sep, and 5+ Casar de Cáceres coffee stop on 28 Sep.

DAMSELFLIES & DRAGONFLIES - ODONATA

HAWKERS & EMPERORS - Aeshnidae

Migrant hawkler, *Aeshna mixta*: 1 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep.

Blue emperor, *Anax imperator*: 1 Palazuelo on 29 Sep.

Lesser emperor, *Anax parthenope*: 1 Embalse de Talaván on 25 Sep, plenty Palazuelo+ on 26 Sep, and several there again on 29 Sep.

CHASERS, SKIMMERS & DARTERS - Libellulidae

Northern banded groundling, *Brachythemis impartita*: 1 female Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

Broad scarlet, *Crocothemis erythraea*: Abundant and widespread in lowland rivers, reservoirs and pools, being seen on 4 days.

Long skimmer, *Orthetrum trinacria*: Abundant Embalse de Arrocampo, at the expense of all other dragonflies (it being a major dragonfly predator!) on 30 Sep.

Red-veined darter, *Sympetrum fonscolombii*: Even more abundant than Broad Scarlet, but only noted around bigger reservoirs and in rice fields on 3 days.

Violet dropwing, *Trithemis annulata*: 3 stunning adult males Río Almonte on 28 Sep.

OTHER SELECTED INSECTS - INSECTA

Egyptian locust, *Locusta migratoria*: 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

Red-winged grasshopper, *Oedipoda germanica*: Lots throughout the trip at numerous sites.

Blue-winged grasshopper, *Oedipoda caerulescens*: Lots throughout the trip at numerous sites.

Field Cricket, *Gryllus campestris*: Heard calling nightly outside Las Canteras!

Praying Mantis, *Mantis religiosa*: 2 Las Canteras on 24th, and 2+ species coming to lights Las Canteras on 27 Sep.

OTHER SELECTED TAXA

Red signal crayfish, *Procambarus clarkii*: 1 Palazuelo on 29 Sep.

LARGER FISH - PISCES

Common carp, *Cyprinus carpio*: Seen at various sites on 27 Sep, and 1 Embalse de Arrocampo on 30 Sep.

American large-mouthed bass, *Micropterus salmonoides*: Incredibly, seen launching themselves from the water at Embalse de Talaván trying to catch flying dragonflies on 25 Sep.